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UNDERSTANDING THE BENEFITS OF EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FOR EXECUTIVE
LEADER DEVELOPMENT: A MIXED METHODS APPROACH

by

Bruce F. Loveless

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

May 2021

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to understand the benefits of using experiential learning methods (such as outdoor activities) for executive leader development from the perspective of senior corporate, government, and nonprofit leaders. Increasingly, executive development programs are embracing “learning by doing” by incorporating experiential activities. Although most programs are influenced by developmental psychology (such as stage theory), this study integrated perspectives from adult, transformative, and experiential learning with common practices in outdoor adventure education into a new conceptual framework for experiential leader development with four types of experiences: *intrapersonal*, *interpersonal*, *managerial*, and *environmental*. This study fills a gap in research literature regarding what, if anything, makes experiential methods beneficial for senior executive learning, growth, and development. It also sought to understand how the perceived benefits transfer, if at all, back into the workplace for these executives after program completion.

A mixed methods research design systematically explored experiential learning methods perceived by senior executives as most beneficial. Research participants included senior leaders who completed an executive leadership expedition with the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) in the past 10 years. This exploratory sequential research employed three main phases: (a) in-depth interviews of 12 former NOLS executive program participants ($n = 12$), (b) development of a customized survey instrument, and (c) survey of the entire population of NOLS executive program alumni ($N = 130$).

Experiential activities that stimulate personal reflection, introspection, and provide feedback are the main source of leader development benefits in executive programs. Findings confirmed critical *intrapersonal* benefits such as expanded *self-awareness*, while *interpersonal*

experiences discovered during multivariate regression analysis included benefits from *shared vulnerability* and *shared sense of accomplishment* when executives experience emotionally impactful activities together outdoors. Further, some executives benefit from “relearning to follow,” by revisiting unfamiliar roles with their peers that can be challenging and enlightening for experienced leaders accustomed to “being in charge.” Experiential activities help some “see” themselves in ways that could have significant leader development benefits both during and well after program completion. From these findings, we can examine learning methods used in more traditional executive programs through a different lens, potentially revealing benefits to the leadership development field more broadly.

Keywords: executive development, leadership development, experiential learning, adult development, outdoor adventure education, transformative learning, developmental theory

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Executive Leadership Development

With the need for leaders never more urgent, executive leadership development programs are being reimagined and redesigned. Increasingly, they are including experiential learning methods (such as outdoor activities) that push senior leaders outside of their comfort zones, to improve emotional intelligence, increase self-awareness, and expand perspectives. Beyond the natural benefits of the outdoors (fresh air, environmental beauty, physical and mental separation from work and home), emotionally impactful experiences in a novel outdoor setting with unfamiliar activities and uncertain outcomes requires focused attention, raised consciousness, and improved observing, noticing, and listening. Moreover, in the outdoors, leaders encounter themselves, their own anxieties and tolerance for uncertainty, and the power of vulnerability shared with their peers.

Advanced executive development programs are designed to help prepare current and future leaders in corporate, government, and nonprofit organizations for positions of increased scope and responsibility. These programs use various methods such as 360-degree assessments, one-on-one coaching, and experiential exercises that emphasize the importance of introspection and self-awareness for personal growth and development (Mirvis, 2009; Rooke & Torbert, 2005; Watts, 2012; Schön, 1983; Senge, 1990). Although practices vary, what executive programs have in common are activities designed to have lasting impact on the leader's personal reflection, critical communications skills, understanding of themselves and others, and engagement with the larger world (Mirvis, 2009; Roglio & Light, 2006).

Among other reported benefits, research has suggested the most effective leadership programs use experiential learning methods that enable executives to access more and better

emotional information when forming key judgments and making critical decisions (George, 2000; Kendall & Kendall, 2017; Shepherd, 1984). Some researchers believe that a typical week-long program can promote long-term development, arguing well-designed programs use methods that open windows for executives into new ways of making sense of their leadership abilities and create potential for development sometimes well after the program is completed (McCauley et al., 2006; Palus & Drath, 1995).

According to Strebel and Keys (2015), in the *IMD Guide to Mastering Executive Education*, what is most needed is executive development that sticks: “It is not just learning about facts. It is about content linked to context [and emotions] that is retained by the executive and applied outside the learning setting in the workplace, learning that generates changes in attitudes, beliefs and behaviors;” what they call “high-impact learning” (p. 3). Their colleagues at the IMD Business School recommend experiential methods (including outdoor activities, among others) for the most impactful executive development. Most important, “if used properly, outdoor activities can expose covert and unconscious dynamics in both individuals and groups, providing raw material for meaningful behavioral leaning” (Petriglieri & Wood, 2005, p. 252).

Increasingly, executive programs are embracing the concept of “learning by doing” in the outdoor environment. When used effectively in executive development programs, “outdoor activities provide participants with an opportunity for increased self-awareness, understanding how they perceive (and are perceived by) others, and a clear idea of how they work in groups and how groups work” (Petriglieri & Wood, 2005, p. 255). Perhaps the most valuable “take-away” from experiential learning activities is the ability for executive leaders to access and understand the deeper determinants of individual, interpersonal, and group behavior, and to

exercise greater responsibility as senior leaders “back home” well after the program is completed.

Problem Statement

Although there is a growing body of theory and research that attests to the importance of increased self-awareness and emotional intelligence to develop executive leaders (Eurich, 2018; George, 2000; Goleman, 1998; Mirvis, 2009), there is limited research that helps us understand the potential benefits, if any, of using experiential methods in leadership development programs from the perspective of the executive participants. While previous studies have recognized the emotionally impactful benefits as integral to executive development (Kendall & Kendall, 2017; Mirvis, 2009; Shepherd, 1984), missing in part is an understanding of the potentially significant leader development benefits as perceived by the actual executive participants themselves, especially those methods that may have long-term developmental benefits.

Purpose of this Study

This study seeks to understand the leadership development benefits, if any, of using experiential learning methods (such as outdoor activities) in executive development programs, from the perspective of the senior executive participants. To that end, it will systematically explore what activities executive program participants perceive are the most beneficial to their leadership development, with particular interest in methods that have the most lasting impact after program completion. This exploratory study will help fill a gap that currently exists in the research literature regarding what, if anything, makes experiential methods more beneficial for senior executive learning, growth, and development.

Specifically, it seeks to understand *How* the most beneficial methods work and *Why*, from the perspective of the executive leader. Most important, this study seeks to understand to

what extent the leader development benefits of experiential methods transfer, if at all, back into the work environment after the executive program is completed. Accordingly, this study will focus on capturing the perspectives and amplifying the voices of the executive participants who have completed a leadership development program where experiential methods are used prominently.

Significance of this Study

Although research into experiential learning methods remains mostly in formal educational settings, there is potential to bring those concepts more fully into the executive leadership development field. Although the broader benefits of outdoor adventure education are well established, there are additional untapped benefits from more fully integrating the experiential learning perspective into traditional executive development programs. Likewise, there is potential to focus more research on the outdoor adventure environment for the benefit of multiple fields, and in particular, to transfer those benefits more broadly into the fields of executive education and executive leader development. Given the influential positions held by these senior leaders, the increasingly complex processes they oversee, and the potential impact they have on the work lives of so many others, understanding how to improve executive leader development with more effective learning methods could have significant implications for these executives and the complex organizations they lead.

Research Questions

The following specific research questions will guide this inquiry:

1. *Benefits:* In what ways, if any, do participants indicate their leadership benefited from the executive leadership program, either during or after the program was completed?

2. *Methods*: According to participants, what activities (or learning methods) used during the executive program benefited their leadership the most?
3. *Transfer*: To what extent, if at all, do participants indicate that the leadership benefits of the executive program transferred back into their work environments after the program was completed?

Primary Participants and Research Setting

To closely examine the perceived leader development benefits of experiential learning methods used in an outdoor setting, this study focused on executive program alumni from the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) who completed a NOLS executive leadership expedition during the past 10+ years. Although somewhat of an outlier among executive programs because of its unique 7-day (6-night) format in the wilderness, the NOLS programs routinely host participants with extensive leadership experience from all sectors including a wide-range of commercial industries, federal and local governments, military services, and nonprofits. Recent participants in the NOLS executive leadership expeditions have included doctors, judges, college professors, senior military officers, business and leadership consultants, nonprofit and corporate executives from global financial, high-tech, international development, and defense industries, among others. After an initial exploratory phase of this study consisting of in-depth interviews with purposefully selected NOLS program alumni, access to the entire population of former NOLS executive expedition participants (approximately 130) was obtained through close coordination with senior field instructors for NOLS executive leadership expeditions, with the approval and guidance from NOLS senior staff.

The NOLS executive leadership expeditions are typically 1 week in duration within an outdoor environment that is inherently experiential by design and setting, organized around

either backpacking or sea kayaking adventures. NOLS programs are hands on and physically active, yet afford time for reflection and contemplation often not common in a senior executive's typically busy work life. In addition to the novel setting and psychological intensity created in an unfamiliar environment, experiential learning activities during NOLS expeditions frequently include role playing (rotating the designated leader of the day), peer feedback sessions (daily debriefs or after action reviews), reflective dialogue (personal storytelling with peers), and team-building exercises that rely mostly on unplanned, emergent outdoor challenges (like the changing weather and terrain), among others.

Research Design Overview

This study employed a multiphase exploratory sequential design (see Figure 1) intended to expose the voices and reveal the perspectives of these senior executives. It began with a qualitative phase consisting of semistructured interviews of NOLS executive leadership expedition participants to first identify and explore the perceived benefits of using experiential methods in this unique executive development program. The purpose of the first phase was a qualitative exploration of the perceived benefits of specific experiential learning methods used in the NOLS program to then facilitate development of a customized survey instrument for use in a follow-on quantitative phase.

The intent of the mixed-methods research design was twofold: (a) first, to explore and understand the perceived leader development benefits from using experiential learning methods in executive programs by interviewing a small number ($n = 12$) of former executive participants in the qualitative phase (for depth of understanding), and (b) second, to survey the larger population ($N = 130$) of former participants in the follow-on quantitative phase (for breadth of

understanding) to assess the extent to which the initial qualitative findings generalize to a larger population (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Figure 1

Multiphase Exploratory Sequential Research Design

Note. Adapted from *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, by J. Creswell & V. L. Plano Clark, 2018, p. 66. Copyright 2018 by SAGE Publications.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Developing the Executive Leader

Executive leadership development programs are designed to prepare the most senior leaders in an organization for positions of greater scope and responsibility. In the corporate (or for-profit) sector, these senior leaders are commonly referred to as the “C-suite” or at the “C-level.” In the nonprofit sector, this level typically includes the Executive Director and associated direct reports. Likewise, civilian government officials at this level are often referred to as “senior executives,” as members of the Senior Executive Service (SES) of the federal government (apart from political appointees), for example. For the military, this level includes “Flag Officers” with the military ranks of general or admiral. Typically, executives in these programs have at least 15 years of management experience and have held positions of leadership responsibility for over 100 people.

These senior executives regularly participate in programs designed to equip them with competencies to lead at the “enterprise level,” often in large geographically-dispersed organizations, and to manage personnel, budgets, and technologies for strategic purposes (Conger & Xin, 2000; Spearly, 2006). Moreover, some executives in these developmental programs have risen from more narrow functional areas and are challenged to lead across organizational boundaries and multiple areas where, in their new role, they must now provide guidance and oversight to areas where they may have limited career experience or specific expertise.

Executive Education and Executive Development

Corporations, nonprofits, and governments (including militaries) have been using executive development programs since the late 19th century. Most began at colleges and

universities as functionally specific short courses, such as marketing or finance, used to build upon company-sponsored technical education. Often they were designed to provide advanced management training to mature, highly motivated, and experienced managers who were being groomed for more senior positions. The early pioneers of executive education in the United States included short duration (1–2 weeks) nondegree courses developed at Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) during the 1920s and 1930s, followed by longer 15-week programs at Harvard Business School, for example, focused on war production competencies during World War II (Crotty & Soule, 1997; Wuestewald, 2016). Following the war, similar “training” courses were developed to help reorient the U.S economy back to civilian purposes.

As was common with early executive education, “sequential classroom lectures from subject matter experts would impart functional skills, that is, knowledge specific to the technical aspects of management theory: budgeting, line and staff operations, leadership and organizational change theories, industry related knowledge, and so forth” (Wuestewald, 2016, p. 71; Daniels & Preziosi, 2010). Additionally, these programs relied heavily on case studies commonly used in business, law, and medical schools. Although the cognitive approach and case-based learning continue as effective learning methods important for imparting functional knowledge, they may be less effective for grooming “social-behavioral skills” of the most senior leaders (Daniels & Preziosi, 2010), such as the soft skills of communication, emotional intelligence, team building, collaborative problem solving, or even transformational leadership (Beechler et al., 2013; Conger & Xin, 2000; Crotty & Soule, 1997; Wuestewald, 2016).

Today’s nondegree or noncredit executive development programs evolved from a variety of degree programs such as the MBA, the executive MBA, and other special interest topics like

strategic thinking, executive decision-making, and leading innovation. In the United States and abroad, the top nondegree executive programs have become widely known and accepted, and most are ranked annually in publications such as *BusinessWeek*, *The Wall Street Journal*, and *Financial Times* (Hura, 2013; see Figure 2). Executive programs usually offer courses of relatively short duration intended to develop the capabilities of current and future organizational leaders (Hura, 2013). Typically, in-residence courses range from 1–5 weeks in duration and are tailored to meet the needs of particular industries. Although expensive, such short-term programs are often favored by industry leaders for their focus, relevance, and immediacy.

Beyond university-based approaches, there is a broad range of executive development that includes in-house company equivalents and consultant-based programs. Along with business schools, there has been rapid growth in executive courses offered by consulting firms including McKinsey and PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), as well as online providers such as Coursera and Udacity. Many larger companies, such as IBM, GE, and Motorola, created in-house executive programs in the late 20th century, drawing from industry-specific experts and focused on company-specific issues (Crotty & Soule, 1997). At the same time, external training and consulting firms emerged to offer both open enrollment (off-the-shelf) and customized (tailor-made) executive development programs for both large and small organizations.

Figure 2*Executive Program Rankings 2020 – Open Enrollment*

<div> <div> <div>FT</div> <div>.com</div> </div> <div>FINANCIAL TIMES</div> </div> <div>Executive Education - Open</div> <div>FT.com Business School Rankings</div>					
Rank in 2020	Rank in 2019	Rank in 2018	Three-year average rank	School	Country
1	1	1	1	IMD Business School	Switzerland / Singapore
2	6	2	3	University of Oxford: Saïd	UK
3	5	5	4	Insead	France / Singapore / Abu Dhabi
3	4	6	4	University of Michigan: Ross	US
5	1	7	4	Stanford Graduate School of Business	US
6	3	8	6	University of Chicago: Booth	US / Hong Kong / UK
7	10	12	10	University of Pennsylvania: Wharton	US
8	11	14	11	HEC Paris	France
9	8	11	9	ESMT Berlin	Germany
10	6	3	6	Iese Business School	Spain / US
11	9	22	14	Columbia Business School	US
12	22	16	17	UCLA Anderson School of Management	US
13	14	19	15	Fundação Dom Cabral	Brazil
14	12	32	19	Washington University: Olin	US
15	16	21	17	Esade Business School	Spain
16	21	23	20	Essec Business School	France
17	14	15	15	University of Toronto: Rotman	Canada
17	18	25	20	Stockholm School of Economics	Sweden / Russia / Latvia
19	26	27	24	University of Cambridge: Judge	UK
20	27	33	27	Western University: Ivey	Canada / China

Note. Adapted from *Financial Times*, 2020.

Executive Development Methods

A wide range of learning methods are used in executive development programs, often to accommodate different individual learning styles and varying program objectives. These methods can take place in the classroom, outdoors, or on the job, and a combination of methods may yield the best results (McCauley et al., 2004). Some are highly personalized and incorporate intense feedback from peers, subordinates, and supervisors. Many require active and often intense engagement in a simulation, role playing, or “real-life” organizational problem solving (Allen & Hartman, 2008). Table 1 displays a partial list of common learning methods along with a brief description.

The Developmental Perspective

The distinction between developing *leaders* and developing *leadership* is an important one (Avolio et al., 2009; Day, 2000). For this study, *leader* development focuses on developing the individual leader (with emphasis on intrapersonal skills), whereas *leadership* development focuses on processes that usually involve multiple individuals (with emphasis on interpersonal skills) and is more concerned with enhancing the leadership capacity of a team or larger organization. However, the challenges facing senior executives today are usually too complex and ill-defined to be addressed successfully through short-term leadership interventions. Accordingly, the field of executive *leader* development tends to focus more on developmental science, employing practices designed for personal growth and development that can take a long time, even several years, to emerge. “In other words, there has been a change in focus associated with studies of leadership development broadly defined, away from leadership research and toward understanding and enhancing developmental processes” (Day et al., 2014, p. 64).

Table 1*Common Executive Development Methods*

Method	Description
360° Feedback Action Learning	Known as multirater or multisource feedback, provides feedback from supervisors, direct reports, peers, and others who work closely with the individual executive. “Learning from concrete experience and critical reflection on that experience – through group discussion, trial and error, discovery, and learning from and with each other . . . [to] address actual workplace issues or problems, in complex situations and conditions” (Zuber-Skerritt, 2002, pp. 114–115).
Executive Coaching	Helping relationship formed between a client and coach using a variety of behavioral techniques to help the client achieve mutually identified goals to improve professional performance and personal satisfaction and to improve the effectiveness of the client’s organization within a formally defined coaching agreement (Kilburg, 2000, p. 67).
Games	“consists of interactions among players placed in a prescribed setting and constrained by a set of rules and procedures” (Hsu, 1989, p. 409).
Group Reflection	Reflective dialogue that often occurs after an event within the context of a learning activity. Often conducted after a team-building or action learning activity to help participants make connections and capture learning.
Individual Reflection	Often occurs with activities such as journaling, and challenges participants to focus on topics such as goals, personal purpose, and experiences.
Outdoor Challenge	Outdoor activity that challenges participants to focus on tasks and objectives. Could include elements of outdoor adventure education or wilderness education.
Outdoor Adventure Education	“a set of carefully sequenced and integrated experiential learning activities conducted (primarily) in the outdoors and designed to [stimulate] participant behavior change” (McEvoy & Buller, 1997, p. 209).
Simulations	To “create experiential environments within which learning and behavioral changes can occur and . . . managerial behavior can be observed” (Keys & Wolfe, 1990, p. 308). Simulations require “trainees to analyze complex problems and make decisions” (Yukl, 2002, p. 376).
Team Building Exercises	Emphasizes “working together in a spirit of cooperation and generally has one or more of the following goals: (1) set team goals and priorities, (2) analyze and allocate the way work is performed, (3) examine how a group is working, and (4) examine relationships among people doing the work” (Moorhead & Griffen, 2004, p. 536).

Note. From “Leader Development: An Exploration of Sources of Learning, by S. Allan & N.

Hartman, 2008, *SAM Advanced Management Journal*, 73(1), pp. 77–80.

As distinguished from executive education, development is an ongoing, dynamic, long-term change or evolution because of various learning experiences (London & Maurer, 2004).

More specifically, leader development is defined as “the expansion of a person’s capacity to be effective in leadership roles and processes” (McCauley et al., 2004, p. 2). *Leader development*

focuses on the individual and the areas in which they often need to improve to be more effective leaders as they move to new positions of greater responsibility. *Leadership development* is different in that it typically focuses on an organization's capability to get work done together in groups, through its many leaders (McCauley et al., 2004). According to Nahavandi (2015), "They differ in terms of their focus on a person or the organization and to the degree to which they are customized for individual participants" (p. 311; see Figure 3).

Figure 3

Horizontal and Vertical Development

Note. From *The Art and Science of Leadership*, by A. Nahavandi, 2015, p. 312. Copyright 2015 by Pearson.

Developmental Theory and Executive Development

Most executive programs are influenced by theories and perspectives that emerge from the field of adult development and developmental psychology, often drawing from a constructive-developmental framework based on the work of Kegan and his colleagues (Kegan, 1982, 1994; Kegan & Lahey, 2001). Many well-known programs, both in the United States and

international markets, employ similar developmental (or stage theory) concepts that stem from Kegan's work to better understand an executive's capacity to deal with increasingly complex demands in both their professional and personal lives. Similarly, many thought leaders in the executive development field have constructed frameworks and models that draw on Kegan's theoretical stages, such as Wilber's (2001) integral model or the Full Circle Group's universal model of leadership underpinning their popular Leadership Circle Profile assessment tool (Anderson & Adams, 2016).

Frequently used as the foundational theory for executive coaching programs, the constructive-developmental framework forms the theoretical basis for most 360-degree feedback instruments and several of the learning methods described previously (see Table 1). For this study, the developmental perspective neither assumes that the reader is familiar with constructive-developmental theory (or stage theory) nor does it seek to cover it in great depth. However, the concepts and language of developmental theory and the constructive-developmental framework provide important foundational understanding to help us consider the implications for executive leader development and future research.

The Deeper Work of Executive Development

Developmental theory provides insights to help us understand the potential benefits of executive programs more broadly, and constructive-developmental theory focuses specifically on the inner experience (*intrapersonal*) essential for designing the most effective learning methods for executive programs (e.g., leader development interventions). For example, Rooke and Torbert's (2005) work on action logics offers developmental insights, suggesting the learning methods that cause executives to challenge their assumptions about leading and organizing are very effective at "consciousness-raising" for potential longer term development (Mirvis, 2009).

Further, they highlight programs with “intense experiences” that provide “the shock of dissonance that stimulates them to reexamine their worldviews” (Rooke & Torbert, 2005, p. 6) as offering the most potential for reflection that can have longer term benefits.

It is important also to differentiate between the two types of executive development described by developmental psychologists: *horizontal* and *vertical* development. Both are important, but occur in different ways and often at varying rates. *Horizontal* development refers to the gradual accumulation of new knowledge and skills, the primary focus of traditional executive education. It occurs without a fundamental change in worldview, meaning making, or consciousness. *Vertical* development in adults (and executives), on the other hand, is far less common and entails the literal transformation of a person’s view of reality. In such cases, the person often learns to see the world with “new eyes” and experience new and unique forms of interpreting the internal and external world (Cook-Greuter, 2004). Figure 4 provides a visual relationship between *horizontal* and *vertical* development.

Figure 4

Horizontal Growth and Vertical Transformation

Note. From *Industrial and Commercial Training*, by S. Cook-Greuter, 2004, p. 277.

Especially appropriate for studying executive development in outdoor adventure programs, is the metaphor from Cook-Greuter and Soulen (2007) to illuminate the concept of *vertical* development. They compare the executive leader, appropriately so, to a hiker:

At each turn of the path up the mountain, hikers can see more of the territory they have already traversed. They can see multiple turns and reversals in the path. The climbers can see farther into and across the valley. The closer they get to the summit, the easier it becomes to see behind to the shadow side and uncover formerly hidden aspects of the territory. Finally, at the top, they can see beyond their particular mountain to other ranges and farther horizons. The more hikers can see, the wiser, more timely, more systematic and informed their actions and decisions are likely to be. This is so because more of the relevant information, connections, and dynamic relationships become visible. (Cook-Greuter & Soulen, 2007, p. 183)

Similar to the NOLS executive program examined in this study, other outdoor programs that take senior executives on leadership expeditions into the wilderness use small-learning teams, autobiographical writing, psychodrama, and emotionally impactful “consciousness-raising” experiences in nature to open windows for both *horizontal* growth and *vertical* development.

A previous review of research literature (McCauley et al., 2006) cites more than 30 studies that employ the constructive-developmental framework to better understand leadership effectiveness and performance. Although each has a different way of labeling, describing, and assessing the stages of development, Kegan (1982, 1994) and Loevinger and Torbert (Loevinger, 1966, 1976; Torbert et al., 2004) are the theorists whose constructive-developmental frameworks have been most used in the management and leadership literature. McCauley et al. (2006) summarized the basic propositions and assumptions of constructive-developmental theory as follows:

- People actively construct their understanding and way of making sense of themselves and the world (rather than merely “taking in” an objective world).

- There are identifiable patterns that describe how people make meaning referred to as stages, orders, levels of development, orders of consciousness, ways of knowing, worldviews, organizing principles, and/or action logics.
- Stages of development unfold in a logical, specific sequence from birth to adulthood. Each successive order transcends and includes the previous order.
- In general, people do not regress (although they may experience temporary regression). Once a stage of consciousness is constructed, the previous stage loses its organizing function yet remains a perspective that can be reconsidered and/or revisited. Executive development programs often use learning methods that cause participants to experience “temporary disequilibrium” or even temporary regression, and to revisit a previous stage. This intentional disruption in meaning making can be critical for *horizontal* growth and may stimulate *vertical* development.
- Later stages are more complex than earlier stages because subsequent stages include all earlier stages. Later stages are not better in any absolute sense, but may be more adequate for a given situation and set of circumstances in a relative sense.
- *Vertical* “developmental movement” from one stage to the next is driven by limitations in how a person constructs meaning. This can happen when increased situational complexity demands a more complex way of understanding self and the world.
- A person’s stage of development influences what they notice or can become aware of, and therefore, what they can describe, articulate, reflect upon, influence, and change.

(p. 636)

The theories and frameworks developed by Kegan, Loevinger, Torbert, Cook-Greuter, and others offer a multistage journey through human consciousness, tracing how one develops from simple to complex ways of knowing, relating to others, and engaging in the world. Their central argument is that *how* a leader knows is at least as important, if not more important, than *what* a leader knows. A growing body of research drawing on several sometimes-integrated developmental frameworks suggests executive leaders who operate with more developed meaning-making systems are more likely than others to lead in ways considered effective within modern complex organizations. The concepts and language of developmental theory provide important foundational references for how we discuss and consider the implications for executive development programs and the learning methods they use.

Integrating Perspectives for Executive Leader Development

Figure 5 provides additional context for this study as it attempts to synthesize existing research regarding executive programs with adult and experiential learning theories to gain new perspective on executive leader development methods, underpinned by developmental theory.

Figure 5

Integrating Perspectives and Learning Methods for Executive Leader Development

Adult Learning and Transformative Methods

From an adult learning perspective, the focus of this study is largely on transformative learning methods that stretch the executive participants outside of their “comfort zone” and change their frame of reference (mindset, habit patterns, meaning-making perspective), possibly leading to impactful transformational change for the executive leader (Mezirow, 1997). Mezirow believed the transformative learning processes could begin only after we first experienced what he called a “disorienting dilemma”—an unexpected incident that unavoidably showed the person involved that they were not perceiving and understanding reality in accurate enough ways (Mezirow, 2009). Research demonstrates that competencies associated with transformative learning—being receptive to alternative viewpoints, emotionally open, capable of change, being reflectively aware and astute at guiding actions, and being able to motivate others—have the potential to help executives become better, more effective leaders (Brock, 2010; Carter, 2013; Ciporen, 2010; Isopahkala-Bouret, 2008; Lee, 2009).

Experiential Learning and Outdoor Adventure Education

Likewise, from an experiential learning perspective, the focus for this study is mainly on methods used in outdoor adventure education (OAE) because the intensity of the outdoor environment may present the greatest potential for developmental movement, while at the same time highlighting the most effective learning methods to stimulate growth and development for senior executives. In particular, Ewert and Sibthorp (2014) emphasized the combined effect of the outdoor setting, adventurous activities, the facilitation skills of the instructors, and the time available for processing and personal interpretation. As they pointed out:

Participants are often forced to step outside of their comfort zones and do something rather than simply watch something happen . . . thus learning within the milieu of OAE

becomes more action centered, participant based, and holistic than traditional classrooms. (Ewert & Sibthorp, 2014, p. 40)

Although limited research evidence thus far has suggested outdoor adventure settings are ideal for transformative executive development, decades of research at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) have shown experiential learning is most profound for executives when it stretches their boundaries and takes them to the edge of their comfort zones (McCauley et al., 1998).

Developmental Theory and Executive Learning

Table 2 allows us to consider the intersections and potential linkages between themes and the bodies of research literature from which they emerge. Beyond the methods used in executive develop programs, this study draws on the scholarly discussions related to the potential developmental benefits of both adult and experiential learning. In doing so, it relies on a renewed focus on the most emotionally impactful and potentially most lasting developmental benefits of executive programs. Table 2 provides important context by integrating existing research on executive programs with adult and experiential learning theories to gain a new perspective on executive leader development, and to identify important developmental themes for future research.

Taken together, these integrated perspectives (see Figure 4), underpinned by the insights of developmental theory, could reveal the needed intersection of research, theory, and practice to create an ideal executive development experience with the greatest potential long-term benefits for the executive leaders. Further, as more executive programs embrace the concept of “learning by doing” in the outdoor environment to increase self-awareness and push participants to their limits, executive development can potentially open windows for executives into new ways of

making sense of their leadership abilities and provide opportunity for development well after their program is completed. Finally, there is potential to focus more research on the outdoor adventure environment for the benefit of multiple fields, but in particular the fields of executive education and executive leader development.

Table 2

Emerging Themes From Research Literature

Body of Literature	Research Literature > Selected Sources	Emerging Themes
Executive Leader Development Programs	<i>The Leadership Quarterly</i> <i>Journal of Executive Education</i> <i>Journal of Leadership Education</i> <i>Academy of Management Journal</i> <i>Journal of Management Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside the Box • Perspective, Worldview, and Life-Changing • Emotionally Impactful • Consciousness Raising • Heat Experiences
Adult and Transformative Learning Methods	<i>Academy of Management Learning & Education</i> <i>Journal of Transformative Education</i> <i>Journal of Applied Psychology</i> <i>The Psychologist-Manager Journal</i> <i>Psychoanalytic Inquiry</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disorienting Dilemma • Temporary Disequilibrium • Disrupted Meaning Making • Developmental Movement • Vertical Development
Experiential and Outdoor Adventure Education	<i>Journal of Experiential Education</i> <i>Journal of Adventure Education and Outdoor Learning</i> <i>Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership</i> <i>Research in Outdoor Education</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outside of Comfort Zone • Cognitive Dissonance • Elevated Sensemaking • Optimal Engagement • Flow

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Research Design

Although previous studies have recognized the potentially lasting impacts of using experiential learning methods during executive development programs (Kendall & Kendall, 2017; Mirvis, 2009; Shepherd, 1984), missing in part is an understanding of the significant leader development benefits as perceived by participants, especially as they reflect upon their experiences well after completion of the program. To that end, this study began with exploratory interviews of senior executives who completed a National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) executive leadership expedition in the past 10 years to first identify and then closely examine the perceptions and descriptions provided by these executive participants. Findings of these in-depth interviews allowed, in part, the development of a customized survey instrument to illuminate their subjective experiences, personal reflections, and potentially thick descriptions. Moreover, the purpose of the interviews was to create an executive-level survey instrument that would be viewed as both credible and meaningful by the larger population of NOLS senior executive alumni. If done well, while responding to the survey, at least some of these senior executives would journey back to their time at NOLS by reflecting on the experience, and possibly even evoke additional introspection.

Accordingly, as depicted in Figure 6, this study employed a mixed-methods research design to expose the voices and reveal the perspectives of these senior executives. It began with a qualitative phase consisting of semi-structured interviews of a small number of NOLS leadership expedition participants to identify and examine their perceived benefits of using experiential methods during the NOLS executive program. The purpose of the first phase was a qualitative exploration of the perceived benefits of specific experiential learning methods as

recalled from memory by the senior executives, to then facilitate development of a survey instrument for use in a follow-on quantitative phase.

Figure 6

Mixed-Methods Research Design

Note. Adapted from *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, by J. Creswell & V. L. Plano Clark, 2018, p. 66. Copyright 2018 by SAGE Publications.

As is common with mixed-methods research, the intent of the multiphase design was twofold: (a) to identify and closely examine the perceived leader development benefits of using experiential methods in executive programs by interviewing a small number ($n = 12$) of recent NOLS leadership expedition participants in the qualitative phase (for depth of understanding), and (b) to survey a much larger population ($N = 130$) of NOLS executive participants in the follow-on quantitative phase (for breadth of understanding) to assess the extent to which the qualitative findings generalize to a population (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018).

Multiphase Exploratory Sequential Research Plan

As advocated by Creswell and Plano Clark (2018), this study employed a multiphase exploratory sequential research plan (see Figure 5) with four basic steps: (a) develop and implement the qualitative (or interview) phase; (b) draw from the qualitative results to then

develop and construct a customized survey instrument, tailored specifically for NOLS executive leadership expedition alumni; (c) develop and implement the quantitative (or survey) phase by employing the survey; and finally (d) interpret and integrate the mixed-methods results to develop key findings and potential recommendations that might transfer to the broader executive leadership development field.

Preliminary Phase

In the years immediately preceding this dissertation study, preliminary research was conducted by the same researcher to better understand the potential benefits of using similar experiential learning methods in outdoor executive development programs. The preliminary phase (see Figure 7) included four alumni participants of a NOLS executive leadership expedition in 2015 who were interviewed regarding the use of one very specific learning method, personal storytelling, as a unique experiential activity used by NOLS and other executive programs to share and integrate the rich work-life experiences of senior executives. The purpose of this preliminary research was to understand in what ways executives perceived their leadership benefited from the personal storytelling activity with their peers, either during or after completing the program. Although only four executives were interviewed ($n = 4$) in the preliminary phase, the findings supported the basic premise and aspirations of this dissertation, that some experiential learning methods used in executive programs, under certain conditions, can have significant and lasting leader development benefits.

Figure 7*Exploratory Sequential Design With Preliminary Phase*

Note. Adapted from *Designing and Conducting Mixed Methods Research*, by J. Creswell & V. L. Plano Clark, 2018, p. 94. Copyright 2018 by SAGE Publications.

Conceptual Framework

As part of the preliminary phase, I developed a broader understanding of executive programs during two additional in-depth interviews with senior faculty instructors and leadership development experts, one from the NOLS instructor faculty and one with recent experience facilitating the leader development programs at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL). From these preliminary phase studies (interviews with executive participants and associated faculty), along with the review of the relevant research literature (Chapter 2), a conceptual framework for experiential leader development (see Figure 8) was created to help guide data collection and analysis for this dissertation study. This conceptual framework, informed by the research

literature and preliminary phase studies, shaped this dissertation's research design and provided analytical guidance throughout, from the research proposal to data collection to analysis of findings.

Figure 8

Conceptual Framework for Experiential Leader Development

As anticipated, themes that emerged during the analysis of interview data aligned to at least one (if not more than one) of the four types of experiences described within the conceptual framework, often combining to describe and illuminate the overall leader development benefits of using experiential methods in executive programs. The four types of experiences described in the conceptual framework include: (1) *intrapersonal* experiences, (2) *interpersonal* experiences, (3) *managerial* experiences, and (4) *environmental* experiences. Moreover, these experiences within the conceptual framework provided critical structure and analytical guidance to this study,

facilitating the identification of key variables for follow-on quantitative data analysis (to be discussed later in the quantitative or survey phase of this chapter).

Research Setting

The NOLS executive leadership expeditions were chosen for research partly because the program curriculum includes significant experiential methods, such as role playing and personal storytelling, a key dimension of the purposeful criteria-based sampling approach used in this study (Patton, 2014). For this study, the focus of the participant interviews was on three specific types of NOLS executive expeditions: (a) the Executive Leadership Expedition (ELLE), (b) the All-American Leadership Expedition (AALE), and (c) the Executive Leadership Kayak Expedition (ELKE). All three are 1-week expeditions with nearly identical course content and the same basic structure and design intended to improve skills and capabilities of leaders as they “disconnect from front-country routine, and reconnect with [their] desire to innovate and inspire on an Executive Expedition” (NOLS, 2021).

Moreover, the NOLS executive leadership expeditions routinely host senior participants with extensive practical leadership experience in all sectors including private industry, government, and nonprofits. Although NOLS executive expeditions require many of the essential skills needed in the professional world—effective communication, problem-solving, positive influence, and delivering results—the program is based on an experiential outdoor education model that allows participants to be removed from the distractions of their normal professional and personal lives, creating a safe holding environment for them to explore “consciousness-raising” practices, apart from traditional executive development programs commonly used in a classroom setting.

Qualitative (Interview) Phase

The purpose of the qualitative phase was to identify and closely examine the leader development benefits of using experiential learning methods as perceived by former NOLS executive leadership expedition participants. In-depth, semistructured interviews were conducted with NOLS executive alumni to closely examine the perceived benefits of experiential methods and outdoor activities in executive development programs. Figure 9 provides a roadmap for the data collection and analysis followed during the qualitative (or interview) phase of this study. Beyond the literature review and preliminary phase research, data collection also included selected documents used to prepare me for interviews, using key documents and publications for additional context regarding NOLS leadership developmental methods, providing insight into the specific NOLS executive leadership expeditions.

Figure 9

Data Collection and Analysis Process

Preparatory Document Analysis

Prior to in-depth interviews of former participants of the NOLS executive leadership expeditions, a few key documents were examined closely for foundational context, to further refine and better inform questions that might emerge during the course of those interviews. The preparatory documents included the *NOLS Leadership Educator Notebook* (Gookin & Leach, 2009) I obtained as a previous NOLS executive participant in 2015. Another important document was a small handbook *NOLS Wilderness Wisdom* (Gookin, 2012) I obtained while visiting NOLS headquarters in Wyoming in the summer of 2019. Both publications reveal the commitment to leadership development at NOLS since its founding in 1965 by legendary American mountaineer Paul Petzoldt, including the integrated teaching ideals of expedition behavior, learning leadership experientially, and fundamentally recognizing “the wilderness itself teaches leadership” (Gookin & Leach, 2009, p. 5). Petzoldt also believed it is critical for leaders to reflect upon and discuss their experiences to determine what to repeat and what to change, observing and receiving feedback from peers while practicing and expanding their leadership skills in the process.

During the preliminary phase of this study, some participants suggested additional documents for review, including articles written by recent executive expedition participants. One of these documents in particular, written by a senior executive who participated in the same 2015 NOLS expedition as I participated in, described the most meaningful part of his experience as follows:

Over the course of our adventure, each person had the opportunity to tell their “Leadership Journey,” their personal narrative about how they had arrived at this place and time. . . . Each of us elected to trust the group and share our honest, authentic, troubling, and miraculous stories. Our collective willingness to be vulnerable built a powerful sense of camaraderie and trust that fueled our success over the different terrain and also our joy and laughter at each exhausted end of the day. (Jarvis, 2015, p. 4)

Similarly, an article by an executive expedition participant from 2016 considered the leadership lessons learned by tending to a llama (pack animals used for NOLS backpacking expeditions) as a metaphor for the daily practice of leadership in the workplace, such as serving others and listening when challenged, and especially “knowing when to lead and when to follow” (Spungin, 2016, p. 2). More recently, an article by a former executive participant from 2019 emphasized the benefits of “stepping off the treadmill,” a metaphor for the separation from work which is needed by some in order to step back, reflect, and be more productive over the long term (Antonetti, 2019).

Collectively, from the preliminary phase research, the literature review for this study (Chapter 2), and the preparatory document analysis, potential “a priori” codes were developed for use in the analysis of the interviews and for follow-on data analysis in the quantitative (or survey) phase of this study. Likewise, these preparatory documents helped further refine the interview guide I used (see Appendix C) and were referenced frequently during the interviews and initial transcript coding. In this manner, “a specific series of codes *qua* categories to apply to interview transcripts” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 75) were developed and were similar to protocol or “a priori” coding. Most important, these documents allowed me to reacquire the appropriate taxonomy of the NOLS executive leadership expeditions in preparation for participant interviews (Saldaña, 2016, pp. 174–176).

Participant Selection

Central to this exploratory phase of the study was its focus on revealing the voices and collecting the perceptions of the senior executive participants. As previously suggested, the primary participants for the qualitative phase all completed an executive leadership expedition at NOLS where the curriculum includes a significant experiential learning component, the key

dimension of this purposeful criteria-based sampling approach (Patton, 2014). Interview participants were purposefully selected (convenience sample, $n = 12$) using the following criteria: (a) each participant completed a NOLS executive leadership expedition, (b) no more than four participants (one third or less) had completed a NOLS expedition at the same time as me (to help manage positionality), and (c) at least 3 of the 12 interview participants were women (one fourth or more, similar to NOLS executive expeditions). An overview of the sampling strategy for the qualitative phase interviews is provided in Figure 10.

Figure 10

Sampling Strategy and Participant Selection Criteria

Maximum-variation sampling was intentional, with interview participants including senior executives from all sectors (commercial/private industry, government/military, and nonprofit), and from a wide range of geographic regions across the United States. Gender and

ethnic diversity also resembled a typical NOLS executive leadership expedition cohort, with some limited representation of people of color (Latino and Black). In addition to the participant selection criteria in Figure 10, an ideal purposeful sample included three groups of participants to help ensure data saturation: Group 1, only four who attended a NOLS expedition along *with* me as a fellow participant; Group 2, four who attended a NOLS expedition *without* me, but were *acquainted with* me through the network of NOLS alumni prior to the interview; and Group 3, four who attended a NOLS expedition *without* me and were *not previously acquainted with* me.

To set up the interviews, participant contact information (such as email addresses) was obtained through close coordination with NOLS executive expedition field instructors who assisted me in identifying ideal interview participants based on the purposeful criteria-based sampling. After an email introduction provided by a NOLS faculty instructor (if needed), each prospective participant received a personal email from me, providing an introduction and invitation for the interview. As a reminder, I am a NOLS executive expedition participant and, as a colleague, was able to call on fellow executive alumni to set up the interviews that did not require introductions. Once the interview was scheduled in Zoom and confirmed, each participant received a confirmation email within 48 hours of the interview along with a 1-page executive summary (see Appendix A) of the research topic that included the three primary research questions and a research consent form (see Appendix B).

Participant Interviews

Semistructured interviews were conducted with 12 former participants of the NOLS executive leadership expeditions to identify and closely examine the perceived leader development benefits of using experiential methods in executive programs. The interviews were intended to help confirm the four types of experiences within the conceptual framework, reveal

important themes from the executive participant perspective, and help identify potential constructs to be used during survey development. The interviews complemented and partly confirmed some perceived benefits of experiential learning methods, as revealed previously in both the existing research literature and preliminary phase findings. For example, anticipated themes (from preliminary findings) included improved *self-awareness*, shared *vulnerability*, the importance of being a good *follower*, and the value of *peer learning*. Other more complex themes, arising largely from the research literature, included getting *outside of your comfort zone*, *temporary disequilibrium*, *life-changing* or *worldview* perspective changes, as potential hints of developmental movement (*vertical* or *horizontal*).

Additionally, the qualitative interviews helped identify potential dependent and independent variables for use in constructing and employing the survey instrument and were essential for use in follow-on quantitative data analysis. For potential dependent variable(s), data describing the different ways that executive participants perceived their leadership had benefited from specific experiential learning methods was particularly useful. The primary intent of the qualitative phase (interviews) was to open up potential follow-on questions for the quantitative phase (survey) that moved beyond the specifics of the experiential learning methods (the “what”) to understanding the potential impact or benefits of those methods to the individual executive’s growth and leader development (the “how” and “why”).

The in-depth interviews took place between April 17 and June 1, 2020. A single 45- to 60-minute, semistructured interview was conducted virtually and one on one with each participant using online video-teleconferencing software. All 12 interviews were conducted using either Zoom or Webex with audio recordings transcribed using a commercial transcription service (e.g., Rev.com). Transcripts were produced in Microsoft Word format for follow-on

coding and analysis of the data. Detailed field notes were created during and/or immediately after the interviews, with expanded notes generated within 48 hours of completion of each interview. The interview guide (see Appendix C) was used just prior to the interview for researcher preparation, during the interviews when possible to guide me, and then just after the interview as a checklist to aide with expansion of field notes and initial coding.

Although the interview protocol provided a guide, the interviews became more of a “conversation with a purpose,” as Dexter (1970) would likely have described them. Because participants were experienced senior executives, the interviews were “a process in which a researcher and participant engage in a conversation focused on questions related to a research study” (DeMarrais, 2004, p. 55) with limited predetermined wording. Here again, the “purpose of interviewing, then, is to allow us to enter into the other person’s perspective” (Dexter, 1970, p. 426), and, as is central to this study, I was seeking the perspective of senior executives who participated in a leader development program in which I was also a former participant.

With the conversational interview approach, there was intentional room for responses to emerge from the open-ended questions, such as, “Can you give me an example?,” allowing me to work from the “bottom-up” as varying participant perspectives built toward broader themes (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). For example, one hypothetical question that emerged during the interviews was intended to identify a lasting memory for each participant from their NOLS expedition experience. This emergent question allowed participants to reflect on what they remembered most from their expedition, such as a particular event or experience that continues to stand-out to them. It also allowed me to explore if the memory was related to a specific learning method or type of activity, or simply a memorable moment for other reasons, such as the beauty of the outdoors or possibly a moment of fear. Seeking a more general theme, another

emergent question was asked of each interview participant: “If someone were to ask you to describe a moment that stands-out the most from your NOLS experience, what’s the first thing you think of when you think back to that week in the Winds?” Hypothetical questions ask interview participants to speculate about something or what someone might remember about a particular event, if asked (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 120).

As the interview guide reflects (see Appendix C), interviews were guided initially by the three primary research questions, aligned with the anticipated response categories of *benefits*, *methods*, and *transfer*. In many ways, using these three short labels for each question allowed me to ask fewer questions by simply introducing the topic, aligned with the three research questions. As Merriam and Tisdell pointed out, “The fewer, more open-ended [the] questions, the better . . . having fewer broader questions unhooks you from the interview guide and enables you to really listen to what your participant has to share” (p. 126). In this manner, the inductive approach of exploratory interviews was used to identify potentially new questions and possibly emergent themes based on the small-sample qualitative results of the interview.

Representative Case Cohort

Table 3 provides a list of all interview participants for the qualitative (or interview) phase of this study. A pseudonym was assigned to each participant; the pseudonym selected referenced a central theme that emerged during the interview and partly reflecting how the interviewee appeared to perceive and/or described their personal NOLS experience. The table highlights the geographic, sector, ethnic, and gender diversity of this cohort. Notice two thirds of this representative cohort are women, two thirds represent nonprofits, and one fourth are people of color. The geographic diversity is notable as well, with interview participants representing and

living on both coasts of the United States, from the Mid-Atlantic states to Southern California, across the Midwest, and one living in Canada.

Table 3

Representative Case Cohort and Primary Interview Participants

Participant (Pseudonym)	Geographic Region	Sector / Industry	Ethnicity	Gender
"Communications"	Toronto	Defense Technology	White	M
"Writing"	San Diego	Commercial Real Estate	White	M
"Frustration"	San Diego	Information Technology	Latina	F
"Influence"	Washington DC	Nonprofit	White	F
"Following"	San Diego	Nonprofit	White	M
"Beginner"	Cleveland	Engineering	White	M
"Confidence"	Kansas City	Nonprofit	White	F
"Observing"	Los Angeles	Aerospace	White	M
"Nature"	Seattle	Nonprofit	Black	M
"Courage"	Cleveland	Professional Sports	White	M
"Discomfort"	Charleston	Entertainment / Television	White	M
"Tension"	San Diego	Real Estate	Latina	F

These 12 participants were chosen for interviews to provide approximately the same number of participants as in a typical NOLS executive leadership expedition (not counting the instructors or pack animals, when assigned). Further, this hopefully at least somewhat representative cohort includes a blend of those who completed either the sea kayaking or backpacking expeditions or, in some instances, both. For example, at least two in this cohort completed the sea kayaking version of the NOLS executive expedition in Alaska, instead of backpacking in Wyoming, as their primary NOLS experience. Two others completed both sea kayaking and backpacking, separately. The remaining eight interview participants completed the more traditional NOLS backpacking expedition in Wyoming (with llamas).

Qualitative Data Analysis Procedures

Although developing full case studies for each interview participant was not desired for the qualitative phase of this study, Polkinghorne's (1995) two different analytical approaches, *narrative analysis* and the *analysis of narrative*, were both appropriate to consider given this study's focus on revealing the perceptions and examining the personal reflections of these senior executives through in-depth interviews. In this study, although focused primarily on identifying the perceived leader development *benefits* of using experiential *methods* in executive programs, the *analysis of narrative* approach proved more applicable as themes emerged from participant responses collected during the interviews and were categorized or coded during qualitative data analysis. Moreover, the primary purpose of the in-depth interviews was to develop illuminating survey constructs and potential key variables for use in the follow-on quantitative survey phase.

Just as the interviews were guided by the three primary research questions, participant responses captured within the interview transcripts were grouped and aligned with the anticipated response categories of *benefits*, *methods*, and *transfer* as the first cycle in the data analysis process. Because of the semistructured interview approach (supported by an interview guide), I documented and organized responses question by question. In this way, the three primary research questions served effectively as first-cycle *structural* codes (or pre-codes) for transcript data analysis (Patton, 2014). For example, for questions about perceived leader development *benefits*, responses to each primary research question were grouped together and aligned in a manual "response table" format I developed (see Table 4). As anticipated, analysis then involved an inductive interpretation of the response data aligned with each research question, as initial codes, categories, and themes emerged. Table 4 shows this initial alignment of anticipated responses with the three "modified" primary research questions (modified for

simplicity during the interviews). It also includes a right-hand column to be used during follow-on coding and analysis of the response data.

Table 4

Response Categories Aligned With Primary Research Questions

Response category	Modified research questions from interview guide	Potential codes / themes
(Benefits)	1. In what ways did your leadership <u>benefit</u> from the NOLS experience, either during or after it was completed?	
(Methods)	2. What activities (or learning <u>methods</u>) during your NOLS experience benefited your leadership the most?	
(Transfer)	3. To what extent did the leadership benefits of the NOLS program <u>transfer</u> back into your work environment after the program was completed?	

Multicycle Data Coding

From the interview transcripts, a researcher-designed manual response-table format was used to begin “making sense out of the data” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2017, p. 202). In the center column of Table 5 are *Selected Responses* from one of the 12 participant interviews, presented here as an example to describe the multicycle coding process. The same process of data analysis and initial coding aligned with the three primary research questions in the left-hand column (Response Category) of Table 5 was used for all 12 interview transcripts (see Appendix D). This manual response-table format allowed me to begin identifying potential codes or themes for further analysis, as depicted in the right-hand column of that same response table. Data coding followed several cycles, moving from codes to categories to preliminary themes, requiring additional cycles both manually and within the qualitative data analysis software MAXQDA. As

data analysis unfolded, common themes emerged from individual participant perspectives, moving to broad patterns and ultimately, to broader understandings (Denzin, 2012).

Table 5

Sample Responses From a Senior Executive Interview Participant

Response Category	Selected Responses	Potential Codes / Themes
(Benefits)	<p>1. In what ways did your leadership benefit from the NOLS experience, either during or after it was completed?</p> <p>“You’re exposed to <u>new layers of yourself</u> that are maybe not be new, but old and recovered.” (Intrapersonal)</p> <p>“The NOLS experience takes you outside your normal experience to give you the opportunity to look back upon and <u>contemplate aspects of leadership</u> that are important.” (Intrapersonal)</p> <p>“It gives you a <u>window on your leadership</u>, the experience allows you to gaze upon it in a more objective way as opposed to just, you know, go through it.” (Intrapersonal)</p>	<p>Rediscover Yourself</p> <p>Reflection</p> <p>Overcome Adversity</p> <p>Introspection</p> <p>Window on Your Leadership</p>
(Methods)	<p>2. What activities (or learning methods) during your NOLS experience benefited your leadership the most?</p> <p>“That (<u>personal storytelling</u>) was impactful to me because...it forces you...to contemplate the various trajectories of your life and how they resulted in you...being where you are....and <u>made me contemplate myself and my leadership more than I expected it to.</u> (Intrapersonal)</p> <p>“When you’re <u>the leader for a day</u>...like one of the days, I was a leader, we went up to the peak of a mountain. And it was a pretty strenuous uphill hike...that was fun. Challenging. And you know, I haven’t led people out...without much direction and without really knowing where I was going before.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p> <p>“That is different from everything else because <u>nature is implacable</u>, you’re not going to talk it out of being cold and you’re not going to talk your legs into not being tired. They are. So I think that those kinds of things almost have to come in that sort of environment.” (Intrapersonal and Environmental)</p> <p>“You’re pulled <u>out of your comfort zone</u> and asked to lead on things where you’re not that competent. And that’s different, because we’ve gone forward in our careers, we’ve steadily progressed and we’ve gotten more and more competence and we’re not asked to do things that we have no idea how to do very often. (Intrapersonal)</p>	<p>Personal Storytelling</p> <p>Shared Vulnerability</p> <p>Leader of the Day</p> <p>Face Challenges</p> <p>Extreme Outdoors</p> <p>Sense of Responsibility</p> <p>Being in Nature</p> <p>Outside Comfort Zone</p> <p>Incompetence</p>

Response Category	Selected Responses	Potential Codes / Themes
(Transfer)	<p>3. To what extent did the leadership benefits of the NOLS program transfer back into your work environment after the program was completed?</p> <p>“I always, you know, lead at work. And that’s important too because I think that leaders have <u>to be aware of what followership is</u> all the time because most of the people around them are following. So, you have to be able to tune in to that part. Otherwise you’re a less effective leader.” (Interpersonal and Intrapersonal)</p> <p>“You don’t get pushed to that level. And when you become an <u>executive behind a desk</u>, and I remember one hike where we kept going and going and going and I was pulling the llama behind me and we looked and...our goal was way the hell up there...It was a point where I was just putting one leg before the other and I said, I have to get there, but it’s going to be one step at a time.” (Intrapersonal)</p> <p>“Anxiety is part of that, you know, ‘<u>Can I do it?</u>’ Will this project succeed? You know, ‘Will I be able to talk to this person I’m on the phone with,’ and, ‘Doing what I want them to do.’ You know, all that stuff is in the gray. It’s part of <u>how you operate as a leader</u>. When you’re in leadership roles.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal and Managerial)</p> <p>“You know, and be aware, self-aware. I think self-awareness was a good thing for me too, because, you know, <u>I’ve been in that bubble of being a leader for a long time</u> and when I’m thrust into a situation where everybody else is a leader and most of them are better at the basic tasks that we’re confronted with than I am. That’s <u>humbling</u>. So it was a good, it was <u>good dose of humility</u> too.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p>	<p>Followership</p> <p>Tune Into</p> <p>Following</p> <p>Push Through</p> <p>Discomfort</p> <p>Overcome</p> <p>Anxiety</p> <p>Self-Confidence</p> <p>Self-Awareness</p> <p>Humbling</p> <p>Humility</p>

First-Cycle (Structural) Coding

At this initial stage of qualitative data analysis, coding was rudimentary and, while possibly too premature to begin “theming the data,” the manual response-table format I used was sufficient to support first-cycle coding. The pre-codes of *benefits*, *methods*, and *transfer* in the left-hand column (Response Category) of Table 5 are aligned with the three primary research questions. These pre-codes provided *structural* coding for each segment of data in the center column of the table, to first code and later categorize that body of data. Similarly, coded segments of data were collected together within each *structural* code (or research question) for later more detailed coding and analysis. Following (or as a part of) first-cycle coding, MAXQDA

software was used to support more advanced coding processes and future data analysis cycles, as all transcripts and response tables were loaded into MAXQDA separately (see Appendix D).

Second-Cycle (Descriptive) Coding

With interview data now structurally coded according to one of the three primary research questions, the second-cycle followed a more traditional *descriptive* coding process, beginning with both “a priori” and emergent codes used to assign single-word labels or short phrases to data segments to characterize the basic topic of each segment (Saldaña, 2016). In vivo coding, an approach to coding that uses a word or short phrase taken from that segment of data, was particularly appropriate during this cycle, as it captured participants’ literal and verbatim descriptions. In their own words, reporting study participants’ characterizations of their NOLS experience was an important and quite intentional aspect of this study, and critical for capturing the taxonomy of the NOLS program and the perceptions of the senior executives who participated in the leadership expeditions. In fact, as is common with *descriptive* and *in vivo* coding, many of the words and phrases were captured as codes (just as they appear) in the right-hand column (*Potential Codes / Themes*) of Table 5. Moreover, these *descriptive* codes were used later in the construction of the survey instrument as a word or short phrase taken directly from the language in the data record as “terms used by [participants] themselves” (Strauss, 1987, p. 33).

Third-Cycle (Concept) Coding

The final cycle of coding labeled data segments within the center column (*Selected Responses*) of Table 5 using the previously developed conceptual framework for experiential leader development and at least one of the four types of identified experiences (*intrapersonal, interpersonal, managerial, and environmental*). Consistent with the idea of *concept* coding, the

four types of experiences in the conceptual framework provided a single-word code “that symbolically represents a suggested meaning broader than a single item or action—a ‘bigger picture’ beyond the tangible or apparent” (Saldaña, 2016, p. 119). These *concept* codes were labeled at the end of each data segment in the center column (Selected Responses) of Table 5. When appropriate, more than one *concept* code from this framework was used at times, if appropriate, to code each data segment or response passage. These *concept* codes were labeled within the MAXQDA software as well, allowing for frequency analysis and other more advanced qualitative data analysis techniques. Although MAXQDA was used for some coding processes, coding in MAXQDA continued in close synchronization with the manual response table process described above, aligned with and guided by the conceptual framework for experiential leader development.

From Codes to Survey Constructs

During the multicycle coding process described above, interview transcripts for each participant were kept separate from each other, creating 12 corresponding response tables, one for each interview, such as the one presented in Table 5 (see Appendix D). However, within MAXQDA, a single “code book” or coding framework was created that began the process of merging and integrating the data (and the codes) across all 12 interview transcripts. Figure 11 depicts the “code book” after consolidation. A total of 67 “subcodes” (or *descriptive* codes) were identified and collapsed into eight responses categories (or *concept* codes), and then aligned within one of the three primary research questions (or *structural* pre-codes).

Figure 11*Coding Framework or Code Book*

Pre-Codes (3) - Primary Research Questions	Codes (8) - Response Categories	Sub-Codes (67) Survey Constructs				
Benefits	Intrapersonal	Anxiety Discomfort Excitement Exhilaration Fear Frustration Stress Inspiration Joy Uncertainty Vulnerability	Compassion Confidence Connection Empathy Executive Presence Humility Patience Perseverance Perspective Reflection Self-Awareness Trust	Shared Hardship Shared Accomplishment Shared Vulnerability Emotional Bond or Connectedness Mutual Trust Mutual Respect	Communications Judgement and Decision Making Observing and Noticing Organizing and Planning Problem Solving Risk Management Teamwork and Collaboration Time Management Task Management Stress Management	Unfamiliar Environment Physically Challenging Feeling Incompetent Dependence on Others Intensity of the Outdoors Uncertainty of Outcomes Facing Adversity Compressed Timeframe
	Interpersonal					
	Managerial					
	Environmental					
Methods	Planned Activities	Designated Leader Planning and Pre-Brief Debrief and Feedback Personal Storytelling		Leading Following Story Teller Story Listener		
	Additional Activities	Being a Follower Being in Nature Conversations with Peers Reflection Teamwork		Introspection Personal Growth Worldview		
Transfer	Workplace	Immediate		Near Transfer		
	Life	Lasting		Far Transfer		

Post-Coding Transition

As codes and themes emerged, operational model diagramming was possible as well. As Day (1993) noted, “When we are dealing with complex and voluminous data, diagrams can help us disentangle the threads of our analysis and present results in a coherent and intelligible form” (as cited in Saldaña, 2016, p. 226). Operational models were created for all 12 interviews allowing post-coding to transition to more of a “think display” mindset, adding appropriate codes/categories/themes to the model diagrams themselves, essentially “coding the codes” (Miles, 2014). This consolidation or “lumping” of codes into categories and then into themes “visually,” as depicted in Figure 12, eventually allowed one operational model diagram to be

created representing all data sets combined, including data from all 12 interview participants (Saldaña, 2016).

Figure 12

Codes, Categories, Themes, and Development of Survey Constructs

At this stage of qualitative analysis, alignment of codes with the primary research questions and grouping of codes within response categories began the formation of potential survey constructs. For example, aligned with the primary research question regarding *benefits*, the response category of *intrapersonal* experiences resulted in two survey constructs, one with 11 emotionally impactful experiences of *anxiety*, *discomfort*, *excitement*, *exhilaration*, *fear*, *frustration*, *stress*, *inspiration*, *joy*, *uncertainty*, and *vulnerability*. Likewise, the survey construct developed for *intrapersonal* experiences focused on 12 individual experiences of *compassion*, *confidence*, *connection*, *empathy*, *executive presence*, *humility*, *patience*, *perseverance*, *perspective*, *reflection*, *self-awareness*, and *trust*.

Primary Survey Constructs

As previously described, the primary purpose of the qualitative phase of this study was to facilitate development of a customized survey instrument to support follow-on quantitative data collection and analysis. As depicted in the operational model diagram (see Figure 12), the primary survey constructs emerged from qualitative analysis, moving from left to right in the model, from codes to categories on the left-hand side, into themes and survey constructs on the right-hand side of the model. The primary survey constructs resulting from this analysis aligned well with the conceptual framework for experiential leader development and enabled creation of a survey instrument to measure the extent of leader development benefit as perceived by the larger population of NOLS executive alumni who responded to the survey. All four types of experiences and the associated primary survey constructs are presented and summarized in Figure 13.

Figure 13

Primary Survey Constructs

Intra-Personal Experiences	Inter-Personal Experiences	Managerial Experiences	Environmental Experiences
Compassion	Shared Hardship	Communications	Unfamiliar Environment
Confidence	Shared Accomplishment	Judgement and Decision Making	Physically Challenging
Connection	Shared Vulnerability	Observing and Noticing	Feeling Incompetent
Empathy	Emotional Bond or Connectedness	Organizing and Planning	Dependence on Others
Executive Presence	Mutual Trust	Problem Solving	Intensity of the Outdoors
Humility	Mutual Respect	Risk Management	Uncertainty of Outcomes
Patience		Teamwork and Collaboration	Facing Adversity
Perseverance		Time Management	Compressed Timeframe
Perspective		Task Management	
Reflection		Stress Management	
Self-Awareness			
Trust			

Intrapersonal Experiences. Refers to those experiences that involve looking inward to discover and examine oneself, often through reflection, introspection, and individual action, and may involve an emotional encounter with 12 primary dimensions including *compassion, confidence, connection, empathy, executive presence, humility, patience, perseverance, perspective, reflection, self-awareness, and trust.*

Interpersonal Experiences. Refers to those experiences that involve interaction with others, often through teamwork, group experiences, and collective action, with six primary dimensions including: *shared hardship, shared accomplishment, shared vulnerability, emotional bond or connectedness, mutual trust, and mutual respect.*

Managerial Experiences. Refers to those experiences that involve skills commonly used to manage processes, either alone or through interaction with others, with 10 primary dimensions including *communications, judgment and decision making, noticing and observing, organizing and planning, problem solving, risk management, teamwork and collaboration, time management, task management, and stress management.*

Environmental Experiences. Refers to those experiences that involve the situational setting and immediate surroundings with eight primary dimensions including: *unfamiliar environment, physically challenging, feeling incompetent, dependence on others, intensity of the outdoors, uncertainty of outcomes, facing adversity, and compressed timeframe.*

Identification of Key Variables

Survey constructs, developed in the qualitative data analysis process described above, facilitated initial identification of potential variables to be operationalized during survey development in the follow-on interim phase of this study. For the potential independent variables, *demographic* data such as the amount (measured in *time*) and scope of leadership

experience, learning *methods* such as planned and unplanned activities, and experiences such as *intrapersonal* (often emotional) and *interpersonal* (involving interactions with fellow participants) experiences could be examined more closely by employing the survey instrument. For the potential dependent variables, leader development *benefits* (immediate and near-term) and learning *transfer* (lasting and far-term), either during or after completion of the NOLS expedition experience, were beginning to take shape as well during this early phase of the study. Figure 14 shows the direct relationship between the two primary identified variables of *experiences* and *benefits* to consider during transition to the interim phase of this study.

Figure 14

Initial Identification of Variables

Interim (Survey Development) Phase

The primary purpose of the interim phase of this study was to design, develop, pilot test, and evaluate a data collection instrument based largely on the results of the previous qualitative phase interviews. Likewise, analysis of the interviews was used to formulate new, more precise subsidiary questions for use in the survey instrument as well. To that end, the interim phase included refinement of the three primary research questions beyond the structural level to develop a more quantitative focus for the follow-on phase that allowed broader engagement with

the entire population of NOLS executive alumni through a comprehensive survey. It also allowed development of a few selective open-ended questions to dig deeper into areas not fully excavated in the qualitative interviews, such as the most challenging primary research question regarding learning *transfer*.

Summary of Survey Instrument

The survey for this study consisted of 28 questions developed first in Microsoft Word and then converted into the Qualtrics on-line survey software for delivery, execution, and data collection. A combination of 4- and 5-point Likert scale questions were employed to measure the four types of experiences within the conceptual framework, in addition to simpler closed-ended category lists and a few open-ended questions to allow for occasional qualitative responses for additional depth of understanding. Table 6 provides an overview of the structure, measurements, questions included in the survey instrument used (see Appendices E and F). The final survey instrument included five segments corresponding generally to the three primary research questions, plus a *demographics* segment near the beginning and a segment of open-ended questions toward the end of the survey.

Mechanics of Survey Development

Key to the interim phase was the development of primary constructs for the customized survey instrument, based partly on codes, categories, and themes discovered and revealed during the interviews, along with survey constructs that aligned with the primary research questions of this study. Survey constructs included: (a) selective participant *demographics*, (b) identified leader development *benefits*, (c) highlighted experiential activities (or learning *methods*), and (d) learning *transfer* (immediate and lasting, workplace and life) as described by the interview participants themselves. Because this information is largely categorical, a series of closed-ended

survey questions was developed that forced respondents to choose between several response options to support further analysis. A few open-ended questions were developed also, especially in areas that needed deeper exploration in the larger population of executive participants, such as learning *transfer*.

Table 6

Primary Survey Constructs

Segment	Characteristics Measured	Type of Questions	Number of Questions
1. Demographics	Years of Executive Experience Position / Role / Function Sector, Industry Number of People Managed	Multiple choice, Check boxes, Drop-down menu	8
2. Benefits	Intrapersonal / Interpersonal / Managerial Leadership Benefits	4-point Likert Scale (Least Beneficial - Most Beneficial) Select Top 3 from list	6
3. Methods	Experiential / Environmental Individual / Team Benefits	5-point Likert Scale (Not at All - A Great Deal) Select Top 3 from list	11
4. Transfer	Workplace / Life Growth and Development Immediate or Lasting Impact	5-point Likert Scale (Not at All - A Great Deal) Select Top 3 from list	3
5. Open Ended (Qualitative)	Intrapersonal / Interpersonal Growth and Development Long-term / Far Transfer	Open (within each Segment and at End of Survey)	5

From a demographic perspective, data were collected in the survey with the intent to understand the seniority and experience level of each participant. For that reason, data collected for potential variables related to *time* was prioritized in this introductory segment of the survey. For example, time-related data were incorporated into several survey questions to identify different components of time, such as: (a) *time* related to years of experience as an executive leader (self-assessed), (b) *time* related to years in the most senior position for each executive

(self-described), and (c) *time* elapsed since completion of the most recent NOLS executive leadership expedition (calculated after selecting a specific year of completion). As with all questions in this survey instrument, the executive participants were self-evaluating and self-assessing, without precise definitions of concepts, such as “How long have you been an executive leader?” It was up to the executive participant to self-assess how (and for how long) they perceived (or judged) themselves as an “executive leader” and how long they were in such a position or level of leadership.

From an employment perspective, data collected in the survey included: (a) the position description for the most senior position they held, such as president or CEO, to provide some sense of positional level and authority; (b) the number of people supervised for a sense of scope of leadership or management responsibility; (c) the primary sector of employment, such as public, private, nonprofit, or government; and (d) the primary industry of employment, such as banking, finance, real estate, consulting, etc.

Regarding survey constructs central to the primary research questions, deeper understanding of the leader development *benefits* of the NOLS experience was sought by combining multiple survey constructs into a single question with closed-ended responses drawing from multiple survey constructs. For example, Figure 15 depicts how the benefits of *intrapersonal*, *interpersonal*, and *managerial* experiences were explored together in a single survey question (as in Question 10 on the survey).

Figure 15*Combining Multiple Survey Constructs Into Single Question Regarding Benefits*

Q10 - Which of the following best describes how you benefited (if at all) from your NOLS experience? (select up to three)

Which of the following best describes how you benefited (if at all) from your NOLS experience? (select up to three)

- ☐ Learned new leadership framework(s)
- ☐ Increased my self-awareness
- ☐ Gained leadership experiences (or examples) to use or reflect upon
- ☐ Increased my self-confidence
- ☐ Expanded my network
- ☐ Allowed me to practice leadership away from my normal work environment
- ☐ Pushed me outside my comfort zone
- ☐ Reminded me of the importance of being a good follower
- ☐ Gained valuable experience leading peers
- ☐ Made me a better teammate
- ☐ Increased my ability to get along with different types of people
- ☐ Changed my perspective (or worldview)
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

From a learning *methods* perspective, planned and unplanned (or unstructured) activities were the intentional focus of several survey questions, with specific attention to the different roles played by the executives in each activity. Where feasible, combining constructs of both *benefits* and *methods* into a single survey question was possible. For example, as in Figure 16, both planned and unplanned activity constructs were combined (as in Question 16 of the survey instrument) into one 4-point Likert scale question to measure the degree of perceived *benefit* for each activity (from *Least Beneficial* to *Most Beneficial*), with some ability to directly compare planned and unplanned activities in a single survey question during follow-on data analysis.

Figure 16*Survey Constructs to Measure Benefits of Specific Learning Activities*

Planned Activities

Being the Designated Leader ("Leader of the Day")

Planning and Pre-Briefing (at the beginning of each day)

De-Briefing and Feedback (at the end of each day)

Personal Storytelling ("Who am I?" or "Leadership Journey")

Additional Activities

Being a Follower

Being in Nature (Outdoors)

Conversations with my Fellow Participants (while hiking or kayaking)

Conversations with my Tent/Kitchen Mates

Time for Personal Reflection

Working Together as a Team

Q16 - How beneficial was each of the following activities to your leadership development during your NOLS expedition?

How beneficial was each of the following activities to your leadership development during your NOLS expedition?

	Least Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Very Beneficial	Most Beneficial	Not Applicable
Being the Designated Leader ("Leader of the Day")	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Planning and Pre-Briefing (at the beginning of each day)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
De-Briefing and Feedback (at the end of each day)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personal Storytelling ("Who am I?" or "Leadership Journey")	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being a Follower	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being in Nature (Outdoors)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conversations with Fellow Participants (while backpacking or kayaking)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conversations with Tent/Kitchen Mates	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Time for Personal Reflection	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working Together as a Team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Pilot Testing the New Survey Instrument

A pilot test of the survey instrument with full use and functionality of the Qualtrics on-line survey software was conducted over a 2-week period in October of 2020 and included a convenience sample of 14 participants in three distinct stages: (a) the *crawl* stage – four colleagues or fellow students without NOLS experience, but with strong editing and survey construction experience; (b) the *walk* stage – five leadership development content experts (three faculty instructors who designed and led NOLS executive expeditions, one member of the NOLS research committee, and one former CCL senior faculty instructor); and (c) the *run* stage – five NOLS leadership executive expedition alumni who were previously interviewed either in preliminary phase or as primary interview participants in the qualitative interview phase of this dissertation study.

The *crawl* stage served to ensure all of the mechanical functions and flow of the Qualtrics on-line survey were working properly and in the expected way for data collection, providing a degree of face validity for the survey instrument. The *walk* stage included NOLS and CCL expert faculty instructors and focused more on the content of the survey instrument as it applied to program curriculum and the rationale behind key questions from an expected outcomes perspective. The *walk* stage, using experts intimately familiar with the NOLS executive expeditions, provided both face and content validity for the survey instrument. Finally, the *run* stage relied on NOLS executive leadership expedition alumni providing a small field test with participant responses to survey questions as designed, customized, and intended for senior executives. Although survey responses and data were collected from these five former executive participants, they each participated also in the primary survey along with the larger population of NOLS executive participants following the pilot test.

Incorporating Feedback

Based on the collective feedback and data analysis from all 14 pilot test participants, no questions were eliminated from the survey instrument, but the wording of a few questions was changed to improve clarity, while the grouping and flow of the questions was further refined. Two questions were added to the end of the survey instrument as requested by NOLS administration, one to consider expanding their activities with executive alumni after completion of the expedition, and the other to assess if participants would recommend the NOLS leadership expedition to other executives. Other substantive changes to the survey instrument based on pilot test feedback involved adjustments recommended by NOLS field instructors to ensure the wording translated well for executive participants across all program types (backpacking or sea kayaking) and to account for content or curriculum adjustments over the past 10 years as the

executive expeditions have evolved since inception. For example, personal storytelling has been known by participants as both the “Leadership Journey” and “Who am I?” stories, and those wording nuances were changed within the context of related survey questions and response options.

Research Methodology Adjustment

Beyond the closed-ended questions in the survey instrument that relied heavily on constructs derived from qualitative phase analysis, to better address the learning *transfer* perspective, a few open-ended questions were crafted to gain deeper understanding of how the leader development benefits of the NOLS experience transferred, if at all, back into the work-life of these senior executives. Two questions (Questions 25 and 26 of the survey instrument) in particular were added toward the end of the survey to improve on, if possible, the qualitative data already collected during executive participant interviews regarding learning *transfer*. They included (as in Question 25), “How have you been able to apply (if at all) what you learned at NOLS as an executive leader after completing your expedition?” and (as in Question 26) “How have the benefits from your NOLS experience evolved or expanded over time (if at all) since completing your expedition? Why do you think that is?”

The addition of these two open-ended questions was the most significant adjustment to the research methodology based on a preliminary assessment of the data collected during executive participant interviews. These two open-ended questions, along with three other open-ended questions woven into the survey (one added to the end of the survey at the request of NOLS) added a significant *qualitative* component to this *quantitative* survey instrument, to be discussed further in the following quantitative phase of this study.

Quantitative (Survey Employment) Phase

The primary purpose of the quantitative phase of this study was to employ a custom-designed survey instrument partly to assess the extent to which the qualitative findings of the in-depth interviews generalize to a large population (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Survey development and instrument testing for use in the follow-on quantitative phase was the main outcome of the interim phase. Specific variables selected for quantitative data collection and analysis were initially identified in the qualitative phase, derived partly from themes that emerged during the interviews and survey constructs developed in the interim phase. For example, on the basis of the qualitative research and the results of the survey pilot test, both *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* experiences were identified for quantitative data collection, among other potential variables. The quantitative phase involved surveying the entire population ($N = 130$) of senior executives who have participated in a NOLS executive leadership expedition using the Qualtrics on-line survey software. It also allowed deeper exploration of the concept of learning *transfer* using newly developed and further refined open-ended questions.

Mechanics of Survey Employment

From the outset, the survey instrument was designed intentionally for eventual approval of the NOLS Research Committee, partly at their request for a survey of executive alumni, and partly because a survey instrument provides potential for insights suitable for more quantitative-oriented audiences. Moreover, as previously acknowledged, surveying a much larger population of NOLS executive participants in the follow-on quantitative phase allowed for breadth of understanding to assess the extent to which the qualitative findings of the interviews generalize to a larger population (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). Accordingly, this quantitative phase also

attempted to identify and consider potential variables (counts, constructs, scales) to support both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis if possible.

Sampling Strategy

Sampling for survey employment was “done from a more or less complete list of individuals in the population to be studied” (Fowler, 2014, p. 18). The entire NOLS executive expedition alumni population ($N = 130$) was made available by the NOLS administration for the quantitative survey phase, drawing from the total population of NOLS executive program alumni. The desire of this study was to reach as many NOLS executive expedition alumni as possible with a probabilistic sampling strategy consistent with the intent to select a large segment ($> 50\%$) of the entire population of NOLS executive alumni.

Participant Access

Following approval from the NOLS Research Committee including both the Education Director and Director of Custom Education at NOLS, access to the population of executive leadership expedition participants was coordinated through a senior field instructor with NOLS who leads most executive leadership expeditions. As the primary account executive for these programs, she knows most executive alumni personally from the shared backpacking and sea kayaking expedition experiences and through maintained alumni relationships.

Survey Dissemination

Access to the entire population of alumni of NOLS executive leadership expeditions was obtained through close coordination first with the director of research at NOLS and then with the senior field instructor. Distribution of the survey was by email from NOLS (not from me) directly to the executive participants with a hyperlink provided to the online Qualtrics version of the survey instrument allowing all data collection to be contained within the University of San

Diego's Qualtrics system. For data collection in the quantitative phase, I did not require direct contact with survey participants, such as email addresses for the larger population of NOLS alumni participating in the survey, with survey disseminated by NOLS and responses provided back to NOLS for data collection and analysis by me. In this manner, survey participants and their responses remained anonymous throughout.

Communications Plan

The survey was employed over a 2-week period from November 10–24, 2020, with a single research study announcement and recruiting email sent to all executive alumni in the NOLS email database and distribution list on November 10. A reminder email was sent about one week later, again from the NOLS senior field instructor that most executive participants are personally familiar with and accustomed to getting emails from. A second reminder email was sent within 48 hours of the close of the survey period, and then a “Thank You” final email was sent once the survey period had closed at the end of 2 weeks.

Quantitative Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

Employment of the survey instrument was the primary data collection method for the quantitative phase of this study. Developing measures of leader development benefit (e.g., degree or extent of benefit) related to specific experiential methods was closely considered during data analysis. Further, as anticipated, the quantitative phase attempted to measure the extent to which participants in the NOLS executive program perceive they benefited from specific activities, if at all, either in their professional or personal development, and either during the program or afterwards when they returned to their professional positions.

Survey Responses

Following survey employment, 68 total responses were received, of which 65 respondents completed the survey and were usable for analysis, and thus the response rate was 50% (65 out of 130). Survey data were collected in Qualtrics, and I could display them almost immediately in various forms including data tables and useful bar graph displays. For example, Figure 17 below depicts the response data automatically generated by Qualtrics for the first four demographic questions (Q1 to Q4) in the survey instrument. Initial data displays like this one, in bar-graph format, were created by Qualtrics for all closed-ended survey questions and can be viewed in their entirety in Appendix G.

Figure 17

Sample Demographic Data From Survey Responses

Having described the methodology for this study, a more full analysis of findings and integration of both qualitative and quantitative data is now possible during the follow-on data analysis phase in Chapter 4. Likewise, other more advanced statistical techniques are employed to help explain why some executives could have benefited more than others, or more importantly, why some activities or learning *methods* may have been more beneficial or have more lasting benefits (over time) than others. Additionally, during more advanced analysis and incremental discovery of key findings that follow, the perceived leader development benefits (and the degree or magnitude of benefit) may vary in relation to the number of years since completion of the program, or possibly even in relation to the years of leadership experience of the individual executive participant.

CHAPTER FOUR: DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter presents analysis of data collected during both the qualitative and quantitative phases of this study. It includes results from those two primary phases of the study, beginning with more advanced qualitative analysis and findings from the in-depth interviews of 12 former NOLS executive expedition participants before moving on to the perspectives of the entire population of NOLS executive alumni captured through use of a customized survey instrument. The study, in short, employed a multiphase exploratory sequential research design using mixed methods of data collection and analysis procedures. Data collection and analysis were guided analytically by a conceptual framework focused on experiential leader development. A summary of mixed methods findings is presented at the end of this chapter to aid in answering the primary research questions and provide a deeper understanding of the benefits associated with using experiential methods in executive development programs.

Qualitative Data Analysis

The purpose of the qualitative phase of this study was to identify and closely examine the leader development benefits of using experiential learning methods in executive development programs as perceived by former participants in the NOLS executive leadership expeditions. Most important during qualitative data analysis, findings from the interview data facilitated development of a customized survey instrument for use in the follow-on quantitative phase of this study. Qualitative data analysis also allowed deeper exploration of the concept of learning *transfer* by developing and employing new open-ended questions included within the survey instrument, an important adjustment to the original research methodology.

Frequency Analysis

By using MAXQDA, more sophisticated and revealing analysis could be performed with the qualitative interview data. For example, relying on the categories (or *concept* codes) of *intrapersonal*, *interpersonal*, *managerial*, and *environmental* experiences, frequency analysis of the data revealed that over half (over 50%) of all interview responses, regardless of question or focus area, involved primarily an *intrapersonal* response (with an *intrapersonal concept* code assigned). In other words, most often, despite whether the question was centered on *benefits*, *methods*, or *transfer*, the participant provided a response that reflected an *intrapersonal* experience and/or related *benefit* (such as, “I learned more about myself”). In contrast, accounting for all other responses in the interview data, *interpersonal* experiences or *benefits* (such as, “I learned to get along with difficult people”) were described in about 30% of all responses, again regardless of question. In the same interview data, *environmental* experiences and related *benefits* were found in 12% of all responses (such as, “I enjoyed being in the outdoors”), while references to *managerial* experiences and their perceived *benefits*, such as improved risk or time management skills, were found in only 7% of all responses from these senior executives.

There are several potential explanations for the frequency of responses weighted toward *intrapersonal* experiences. One possible explanation is the intended orientation and design of NOLS executive expeditions toward individual leader development, over and above the team-building aspects (although the team-building and *interpersonal* aspects are important, too). For the most part, participants in NOLS executive expeditions choose this alternative leader development experience for their own personal growth and development, likely prioritized above the team-building or the potential organizational benefits with their fellow participants. Although

teamwork and collaboration are important activities in all NOLS expeditions, most executive participants have not met each other prior to their expedition together, they are not usually from the same company or organization (or most are not), and they have little or no intentions of working together as a team when they return to their normal places of work. They often must learn to trust and depend on each other during the expedition, of course, and their personal growth and development is enhanced or even enabled by the *interpersonal* activity and group dynamics, for sure. But upon reflection within the interviews for this study, several years removed from their NOLS executive expedition, participants most frequently recalled the *intrapersonal* aspects of their experience, over and above the *interpersonal* experiences according to the data.

Furthermore, by design, the *intrapersonal* experiences and related-benefits are biased toward individual *benefits*, not the team or organizational benefits. After completion of their one-week NOLS expedition, and then upon reflection (i.e., the interviews for this study), the team-building aspects (e.g., group dynamics or *interpersonal* benefits) likely have dampened over time, as the group may not have any interaction or work together as a team after their expedition. In contrast, the *intrapersonal* experiences and benefits (e.g., *introspection* and improved *self-awareness*) may have increased or even intensified over time since completion of the expedition, and those memories are more easily recalled and readily available upon reflection and, therefore, show-up more frequently in the interview response data (Kahneman, 2011).

This potential bias toward *intrapersonal* responses may have led to the balance of survey questions (and related survey constructs) weighted toward *intrapersonal* experiences and their *benefits*, as well, over the *interpersonal*, *managerial*, and *environmental* experiences of the conceptual framework for experiential leader development. Further, the other types of

experiences in the framework likely are supporting or enabling the individual leader development that occurs at the *intrapersonal* level. Regardless, each element of the conceptual framework was represented in the survey instrument to assist with more in-depth examination of this balance and further identification of key variables to explore their relationships, if any.

Further Development of Key Variables

Survey constructs, developed during qualitative data analysis, facilitated initial identification of other potential variables operationalized within the survey instrument. For potential independent variables, *demographic* data such as the amount of leadership experience (measured in *time*) and scope of leadership responsibility, learning *methods* such as planned and unplanned activities, and experiences such as *intrapersonal* (often emotional) and *interpersonal* (involving interactions with fellow participants) experiences could be examined more closely. For potential dependent variables, leader development *benefits* (immediate and near-term) and learning *transfer* (lasting and far-term), either during or after completion of the NOLS expedition experience, took shape during qualitative phase analysis. Figure 18 shows the potential direct relationship between the two primary variables of *experiences* and *benefits* to be considered further during quantitative analysis.

Beyond the primary dependent and independent variables identified through qualitative data analysis, both mediating and moderator variables may exist as well, such as the potential influences of the unique or novel outdoor *environment* (possibly as a mediating variable) of NOLS executive expeditions and the influence of the *environment* on the overall leader development experience. Likewise, the passage of *time* since completion of the NOLS expedition for each executive participant or the amount of time as a “senior executive” (such as 10 years or more) could play a role as a possible moderator (or separate independent variable), among other

time-related variables. With the outdoor adventure *environment* as a possible mediating variable, the direct relationship between the experiential *methods* and the perceived leader development *benefits* could be further examined in the quantitative phase of this study, as well as the indirect relationship between the two variables of *experiences* and *benefits* (through *environment*) as shown in Figure 18.

Figure 18

Potential Variables Identified From Qualitative Data Analysis

Additional Qualitative Data Analysis

To better address the primary research question regarding learning *transfer*, four specific open-ended questions were included in the survey instrument to gain deeper understanding, if possible, of how the leader development benefits of the NOLS experience transferred, if at all, back into the work-life of these senior executives. Although the response data were collected in the *quantitative* or survey phase of this study, the questions were developed from *qualitative* data analysis specifically for use in the survey instrument. The collective responses to these four open-ended questions were examined much like the interview transcripts during the qualitative

phase, using a very similar manual response-table format and MAXQDA coding to make sense of these additional qualitative data segments.

Analysis of Open-Ended Survey Responses

Evidence of learning *transfer* was discoverable in the responses to open-ended survey questions that focused on both the *benefits* from and the *methods* used in NOLS executive expeditions (as in Questions 17 and 22 from the survey instrument, see Appendix E). In Figure 19, selected quotes from those two open-ended questions are highlighted to demonstrate potential workplace *transfer* as perceived and described by survey respondents when asked about specific learning *methods* and the associated leader development *benefits*. Figure 19 uses a left-to-right display technique to demonstrate the idea of the learning transfer process, from the experiential learning environment of NOLS on the left-hand side, to the normal work environment to which these executives return after their NOLS experience on the right-hand side.

Figure 19

Sample Responses to Questions (Q17 and Q22) Regarding Learning Transfer

Two other questions created to collect evidence of learning *transfer* (Questions 25 and 26 within the survey instrument) were added to the survey to improve upon, if possible, the data collected during qualitative phase interviews. They included (Question 25), “How have you been able to apply (if at all) what you learned at NOLS as an executive leader after completing your expedition?” and (Question 26), “How have the benefits from your NOLS experience evolved or expanded over time (if at all) since completing your expedition? Why do you think that is?” The addition of these two open-ended questions was the most significant adjustment to the research methodology while moving from the qualitative (or interview) phase to the quantitative (or survey) phase of this study. These two open-ended questions, along with others woven into the survey added a significant *qualitative* component to this *quantitative* survey instrument.

Extending the analysis of learning *transfer*, selected responses from all survey participants to open-ended Question 25 could be examined further within Table 7. Similar to Figure 19, this qualitative analysis employed a left-to-right display technique to again demonstrate and examine learning *transfer*, from the experiential learning environment of the NOLS expedition in the left-hand column of Table 7, to the normal work environment for these senior executives after they returned from their NOLS experience in the right-hand column. Notice in the table that Question 25 stimulated specific examples from respondents, as intended, with some referencing a specific skill or procedure they learned during their NOLS experience with direct application in the workplace after completing the NOLS expedition. In the educational literature regarding learning *transfer*, this more direct (even immediate) learning application is associated more commonly with the concept of “near transfer,” as the application remains relatively close in content (what is transferred) and context (when and where the transfer

occurs), and occurs more immediately following the learning experience (Barnett & Ceci, 2002; Sibthorp et al., 2008, 2011).

Table 7

Sample Responses to Open-Ended Question (Q25) Learning Transfer After Program Completion

QUESTION 25: How have you been able to <u>apply</u> (if at all) what you learned at NOLS as an executive leader <u>after</u> completing your expedition? Please provide an <u>example</u> if possible.	
NOLS Experience	Transfer to Workplace
"Backpacking is...	"...an excellent metaphor for life and I draw on it to think through challenges and solve problems."
"Learning to listen..."	"... in today's workforce is paramount to understanding the problems and delivering solutions."
"I lost some of my rigidity in this experience and that was a good thing..."	"...from a business perspective, clinging to a goal that no longer makes sense can be dangerous. And not having your team on board with the direction you're headed and the way you intend to get there can be also."
"I used some techniques I learned at NOLS, to include..."	"...rolling up sleeves and working alongside them, avoided delivering the answers I had, elicited their concerns and listened, and restored their confidence in themselves. We finished what became a winning Proposal on time, and under budget. Thanks a million (literally) NOLS!"
"In my executive role, I've applied the following lessons I learned during my NOLS trip..."	"...(1) increased vulnerability and self-acceptance; (2) increased inner confidence leading more senior members/leaders; (3) more nuanced and discerning awareness of risk management: planning, identification, mitigation, and strategy; (4) greater empathy and sensitivity supporting and meeting teammates at where they are vs. where I want them to be."
"The lessons I've learned during NOLS..."	"...helped me build trust, enhance communication. and foster team building."
"Sharing personal stories..."	"...at work to show vulnerability and improve the time it takes to build trust. I've also been a lot more mindful of when a new employee comes on board and has to learn all of our systems and procedures. It's helped me be more patient and empathize with them more."
"I've incorporated the idea of debriefing..."	"...into my clinic team (i.e. discussing what we've learned during pandemic and how to restructure our clinic habits to continue to accommodate the changing world we live in). In addition, I train new procedures and have also incorporated a longer debriefing at the end of the day to discuss skills gained in the procedure and make goals for next training session."
"The skills I developed..."	"...I use every day as a businesswoman, mother, wife, and community leader. The experience was truly life-changing and left me thirsty for so much more in life."

Coding Open-Ended Survey Data. Further analyzing the open-ended survey responses (as in Question 26 of the survey instrument), in the center column of Table 8 are selected responses from all survey participants, presented as an example to describe the coding process used for each open-ended survey question. Similar to the process used to analyze in-depth interview transcripts in the qualitative phase of this study, this manual response-table format identified potential codes or themes question by question. In this case, the left-hand column was used to identify (and code) the type of learning method or activity described in that segment of response data, and the right-hand column attempted to capture the application or learning *transfer* of that potential benefit within the same response segment.

Table 8

Sample Responses to Open-Ended Question (Q26) Regarding Learning Transfer – Over Time

METHOD	QUESTION 26	BENEFIT or TRANSFER
Activity	Q26: How have the <u>benefits</u> from your NOLS experience evolved or expanded <u>over time</u> (if at all) since completing your expedition? <u>Why</u> do you think that is?	Transfer
Reflection Introspection	“The expansion of benefit over time is due to the personal work that NOLS inspired me to do. It has impacted all areas of my life and inspired me to keep up the work and do more of it. Also, seeing the benefits of my altered perspectives in my work environment has inspired me to keep up the new behaviors and keep looking for more ways to improve.”	Life Transfer Perspective Workplace Transfer Humility and Growth
Reflection Introspection	“My ability to reach to and relate to diverse members of aligned staff as well as employees in other sectors, especially the younger, less experienced teammates - has much improved, over time. I believe that behavioral strategies, built on moral truths, deliver better and better results if applied long term.”	Workplace Transfer (Far) Humility and Growth
Reflection Introspection	“Time for reflection since NOLS has allowed me to appreciate more fully how that week helped shift my perspective, my worldview. Mostly in the area of self-awareness, how I see myself and where I fit in the world (or an organization). And then how others might see me, and how I show up each day, in the world that surrounds me. Do your best, ask others, “How can I support you?”	Perspective Worldview Self-Awareness Workplace Transfer (Far) Humility Growth

	Lead when that's needed, follow when that's best. That's Expedition Behavior. It's always a work in progress."	
Reflection Introspection	"However, as time has gone on, I've realized that the confidence and insights from my trip have stayed very central in my day to day and knowing that I have been ok to remind myself that life is a journey so I don't have to place such strict deadlines and specifics in career/professional changes and just focus on growing in my values. I will still move forward and do new things with this mindset but it keeps more doors open."	Workplace and Life Transfer Self-Confidence Perspective Self-Awareness Humility and Growth
Reflection	"I see greater value in perspectives from people whose experience is vastly different than my own. I have come to better understand and empathize with people who deal with stress differently than I do. I think the exposure to a variety of perspectives/experience from other team members during the course helped my understanding."	Perspective Empathy Stress Life Transfer
Reflection	"The evolution of my total NOLS experience has continued unabated over time measured in decades. This course was part of that evolution. What a grand and wonderful evolution."	Perspective Humility and Growth Life Transfer
Reflection Environment	"The benefits I learned were priceless. You can't learn what you gained out in the wilderness in a textbook or classroom. The skills I developed I use every day as a businesswoman, mother, wife, and community leader. The experience was truly life-changing and left me thirsty for so much more in life."	Outdoors Life Transfer (Changed Life) Workplace Transfer Growth
Reflection Introspection	"I'm getting better at sharing emotionally, which has been a personally difficult thing for me. I've also taken a leadership position in my son's Boy Scout Troop, and NOLS definitely prepared me to be an active, dynamic leader."	Self-Awareness Life Transfer Growth
Reflection Introspection	"I still don't sweat the small stuff! The perspective gained from NOLS is embedded in my brain."	Perspective Life Transfer
Reflection Introspection	"I just think back to having the courage to change, and to trust my own abilities and to be able to prepare myself to have the courage and intellect to do new things. I was less secure in that way prior to NOLS, and faced crushing disappointment at the end of my prior career. NOLS helped me push past that and beyond it."	Courage and Trust Life Transfer Self-Confidence Growth and Humility
Reflection Feedback Problem Solving Reflection	"I continue to seek out ways to problem solve. I seek others input. I realize when I'm asking for more feedback and input, there is a greater ability to achieve success as it reflects more of those I serve."	Workplace Transfer Growth
Reflection	"I use the experience as a reminder that sometimes you need to be out of your comfort zone to grow in many aspects of one's life."	Discomfort Life Transfer Growth
Reflection Introspection	"Small nuggets or insights take root, and I continue to self-reflect, and to understand how my leadership style, communication etc plays out in multiple scenarios as I gain more experience."	Self-Awareness Communication Growth

Specific responses to Question 26, “How have the benefits from your NOLS experience evolved or expanded over time (if at all) since completing your expedition?” revealed additional evidence of workplace and life *transfer*, and were coded as such in the right-hand column of Table 8. Of note, frequently codes such as *humility*, *growth*, and *worldview* or *life-change* were used to best describe the perceived benefits by these senior executives from their NOLS experience when considering, upon reflection, the evolving or expanding benefits, over time. Moreover, learning *transfer* related themes also included the characterization “far transfer,” meaning the content (what is transferred) and the context (when and where the transfer occurs) are separated far greater time and distance from the content and context of application, often many years after the learning experience (Barnett & Ceci, 2002; Sibthorp et al., 2008, 2011).

Results of Qualitative Data Analysis

The primary purpose of the qualitative phase of this study was to facilitate development of a customized survey instrument to support follow-on quantitative data collection and analysis. Among other *benefits*, qualitative data analysis further refined the conceptual framework for experiential leader development and enabled creation of illuminating survey constructs to measure the extent of leader development benefit as perceived by the larger population of NOLS executive alumni who responded to the survey. Moreover, thorough qualitative analysis resulted in an executive-level survey instrument viewed as both credible and meaningful by the larger population of NOLS senior executive alumni. While responding to the survey, at least some of these very experienced executive leaders journeyed back to the time of their NOLS expedition by reflecting deeply on their experiences, evoking additional introspection for some in the process.

Although the primary survey constructs and the final survey instrument (see Appendices E and F) was the primary result of this phase of the study, qualitative data analysis produced

additional open-ended survey questions, a significant adjustment to the research methodology to gain deeper understanding of the leader development *benefits* that may *transfer* well after completion of the NOLS executive expedition. Response tables created during qualitative analysis of interview transcripts were frequently referenced during follow-on survey development and quantitative phase analysis. For example, qualitative analysis helped interpret and explain survey responses and frame the mixed methods findings at the end of this chapter. Moreover, these results were critical to assess the extent to which the initial qualitative findings generalize to a larger population, to answer the primary research questions of this study, and to understand the *benefits*, more broadly, of using experiential learning methods in executive leader development.

Quantitative Data Analysis

The primary purpose of the quantitative phase of this study was to employ a custom-designed survey instrument partly to assess the extent to which the qualitative findings of the in-depth interviews generalize to a larger population. During the quantitative phase, the entire population of senior executives who have completed a NOLS executive leadership expedition since inception ($N = 130$) was surveyed using a customized instrument created within the Qualtrics online survey software (see Appendix F).

Descriptive Statistics

Survey Responses

Following employment of the survey instrument using the Qualtrics online software, a total of 68 responses were received, of which 65 completed some portion of the survey, for a response rate of 50% ($n = 65$). Of those 65 responses, 62 filled out the survey completely, offering the best data for quantitative analysis. Survey response data were collected in Qualtrics

and displayed almost immediately in various forms including data tables and other useful displays. Data tables and bar graph displays were created for all closed-ended survey questions and can be viewed in their entirety in Appendix G.

Demographics

Regarding demographics of the survey respondents, it is noteworthy that the NOLS alumni that completed the survey described themselves as having significant executive leadership experience, with over half (51%) indicating “More than 10 years” of experience as an “executive leader.” A similar portion (more than 50%) currently or previously held a senior position described as “Senior Executive / Vice President,” “President / CEO,” or “Owner / Founder”—a very senior and experienced group of executive leaders indeed. Moreover, many were not new to these senior roles and responsibilities, as more than half of survey respondents indicated they held those senior positions for “More than 5 years.” In those senior positions, more than one fourth (28%) reported they had professional responsibility for more than 100 people (some over 1,000 people), partly indicating the scope of responsibility of this group of executive leaders, as well.

Further, although all sectors were well represented in the sample of survey respondents, including at least 15% from both nonprofit and government sectors, respectively, over half (54%) identified as being from the “Private” sector. Separate from primary sector identification, nearly all industries were represented within the survey respondents, with “Government / Military” the most common (over 15%) followed closely by the “Healthcare / Pharmaceutical” industry with nearly 14% of all respondents.

Potential Time Variables

Regarding *time* as a potential independent variable and the associated *time*-related survey questions that captured or measured some aspect of *time* (as in Questions 1, 3, and 7 of the survey instrument), the survey requested the specific year in which each respondent completed their NOLS expedition to allow further calculation of how long ago (in years) the executive expedition was completed by each participant. In this sample from the entire population, respondents completed their NOLS expedition throughout the past 10 years (from 2011 to 2020), with nearly two thirds completing their NOLS executive expedition within the past 5 years, since 2015. Further, regarding *time* as a potential variable, respondents were asked how long (in years) they had been an “executive leader” and how long (in years) they were in their “most senior position.” These additional *time* measurements were collected as potentially important variables for use with more advanced quantitative analysis techniques.

Perceived Leadership Benefits

From the earliest stages of quantitative data analysis, Qualtrics software allowed the display of survey response data central to the primary research questions of this study (as in Question 9 of the survey instrument). For example, in Figure 20, nearly two thirds (over 65%) of survey respondents indicated the NOLS executive leadership expedition benefited their leadership either “Considerably” or “To a great extent.” By contrast, very few (less than 5%) indicated the NOLS experience benefited their leadership development “Very little.” None responded to this question with “Not at all” when asked if the NOLS experience benefited their leadership. Deeper analysis and possibly more advanced quantitative techniques could help understand these initial assessments, but results and potential understandings like this were possible even at this early stage of descriptive analysis.

More specifically, as to how participants perceived they benefited from their NOLS experience, “Increased my self-awareness” was the most commonly selected response by close to half (43%) of all participants, followed closely by “Pushed me outside of my comfort zone” described as a *benefit* by nearly 40% of all respondents. Both “Increased my self-confidence” and “Reminded me of the importance of being a good follower” were among the top 3 chosen by nearly 30% of all respondents.

Figure 20

Survey Response Data for Leadership Benefits From NOLS Experience

Learning Methods

Using mostly descriptive techniques, it was possible to discover the extent to which NOLS executive expedition participants perceived their leadership development benefited from experiential methods (planned and unplanned activities), with their degree of perceived *benefit* measured, ranked, and compared. Focus on the specific experiential activities or learning *methods* used during the NOLS executive expedition was possible (as in Question 11 of the survey instrument), including the varying levels of benefit for each activity as perceived by each participant (see Figure 21).

Figure 21

Sample Data Measuring Benefits of Specific Activities

Examining Planned Learning Activities. Looking deeper at the specific learning *methods* employed during NOLS executive expeditions, of the planned activities, “Personal Storytelling” was chosen most often (by 36% of survey respondents) as the planned activity most beneficial to their leadership development, followed closely by “Debriefing and feedback (at the end of each day)” chosen by nearly 30%. Interestingly, “Being the Designated Leader (Leader of the Day)” was not chosen (or possibly not perceived) as the most beneficial by these experienced senior executives, most of whom have significant leadership experience (and practice) already. More specifically, and maybe even more significant, regarding the planned activity of “Being the Designated Leader,” more (58%) chose “Being in the Role of Follower” as more beneficial to their leadership development than “Being the Designated Leader” (42%). Similarly, during the planned activity of “Personal Storytelling,” even more (over 80%) chose the role of “Listening to the Stories of Others” as more beneficial to their leadership development than “Telling my Personal Story.” Here again, the benefits of being a follower, listener, or observer stand out, and maybe outweigh the benefits from actually being the leader or being designated as such.

Recalling a specific discovery from the in-depth interviews during the qualitative phase of this study, executive participants indicated they highly value time for reflection and other unstructured activities during their NOLS experience. Most respondents (over 85%) said the number of planned activities during their NOLS executive expedition was “about the right amount,” even though there were very few planned activities during the entire weeklong NOLS expedition, as only the same four planned activities were repeated each day. This quantitative finding supports the qualitative discovery I described as “less is more” when it comes to planning experiential activities for executive development programs. It also relates potentially in some manner to the preliminary findings regarding *time*, where senior executives highly value

free (or unstructured) *time*, or what some executives might call “whitespace.” That is, *time* for reflection, *time* for conversations with their peers, and maybe just *time* to think, about themselves, others, and the world around them.

Examining Additional Learning Activities. Regarding which additional (unstructured) activities were perceived by NOLS executive participants as the most beneficial to their leadership development (as in Question 15 of the survey instrument), “Conversations with My Fellow Participants” was most commonly chosen by over two thirds (nearly 70%) of all respondents. When combined with a similar response option of “Conversation with my Tent/Kitchen Mates” within the same question, all respondents chose one of those two options in their top three most beneficial additional activities. Also, over half of the respondents (52%) chose “Being in Nature (Outdoors)” as beneficial to their leadership development. A similar amount, over half (51%), chose “Working Together as a Team” as one of the most beneficial additional activities.

Examining All Learning Activities Together. When both planned and unstructured activities were considered together, as in Figure 22 (Question 16 of the survey instrument), most of the additional activities (5 of 6) were perceived by executive participants as either “Very Beneficial” or “Most Beneficial.” These activities, such as “Conversations with Fellow Participants” or “Conversations with Tent/Kitchen Mates,” or simply “Time for Personal Reflection,” were less structured than the planned activities, and yet, they were perceived as very or most beneficial by these senior executives. More precisely, 3 of the 4 planned activities were perceived as “Very Beneficial” to leadership development, whereas 5 of the 6 unplanned activities were perceived at the higher “Most Beneficial” level, by comparison. Again, the less structured activities, like simply having *time* for conversations with peers or just being outdoors

in nature, were perceived as more beneficial to leader development than the actual planned leader development activities (or learning *methods*), like the “Designated Leader (Leader of the Day)” activity, for example.

Overall, from a descriptive view of the survey response data (as with Question 16 of the survey instrument), the most beneficial *activity* chosen by respondents appears to be “Being in Nature (Outdoors),” with over 60% describing it as “Most Beneficial.” Other noteworthy activities frequently described as “Most Beneficial” by nearly half or more of the survey respondents included “Conversations with Fellow Participants” and “Working Together as a Team.” Also noteworthy, the planned activity most frequently described as “Very Beneficial” by nearly 60% of respondents was “Being a Follower.” Once again, “Being the Designated Leader” was not a standout as a planned activity in the survey response data, interesting for a leadership development program for senior executives.

These quantitative results regarding specific learning activities (planned or unstructured) were reinforced by qualitative findings from a related open-ended survey question (as with Question 17 in the survey instrument), where “Conversations with my peers” was frequently described by participants as the activity that had “the most lasting impact” on their leadership development, followed by descriptions of *teamwork*, *feedback*, *personal storytelling*, *listening*, and “being in the role of follower” mentioned frequently by respondents as well. For example, when respondents were asked in the survey, “Overall, which activity during your NOLS expedition had the most lasting impact on your leadership? How so?” a sample of the qualitative responses are provided here:

- “All of the conversations with a group of people that are committed to becoming better people and better leaders.”
- “Both being a follower (getting to experience the leadership of others and see what worked and what didn’t) and getting feedback on my own leadership.”

- “Honestly, the unplanned activity of losing a person for a short period of time. The coordinated and collaborative response and debrief of that response.”
- “The Personal Storytelling and the feedback from my peers were invaluable. I was at a crossroads with my career and the opportunity to share my experience and solicit feedback changed my career and my life.”

Figure 22

Sample Data Measuring Benefits of Specific Activities or Learning Methods

Environmental Experiences

As to how participants perceived the conditions of the outdoor adventure or related *environmental* experiences may have contributed to their leadership development (as in Question 19 of the survey instrument), three responses stand out, including descriptions of “Dependence on Others,” “Unfamiliar Environment,” and “Uncertainty of Outcomes.” All of the respondents

chose one of these three conditions or factors related to the outdoor adventure and *environmental* experience as contributing the most to their leadership development, with “Dependence on Others” most frequently chosen from all response options in this survey question. Further, it makes sense that the combination of the unfamiliar environment along with the inherent uncertainty of outcomes in the outdoors likely requires high dependence on fellow expedition participants (the other senior executives). These three responses seem to dominate as contributors to the perceived leader development benefits from the *environmental* experiences and the outdoor adventure perspective of NOLS executive expedition participants.

Managerial Experiences

When *managerial* experiences and related activities were considered together (as in Question 18 of the survey instrument), such as risk management or time management, most respondents perceived their skills had improved either “Some” or “Much” in this area from their NOLS experience. The three *managerial* experiences or activities described as “Much” improved were “Communications,” “Teamwork and Collaboration,” and “Observing and Noticing.” In the response category of “A Great Deal” of improvement, “Risk Management” stands out by comparison to the others, as does “Observing and Noticing.” Overall, the improvements (or benefits) from the *managerial* experiences favored “Risk Management” (which might have included “Judgment and Decisions Making” for some respondents) along with “Communications” (which might have included “Teamwork and Collaboration” for some also).

Interpersonal Experiences

When focused on *interpersonal* or group-oriented experiences specifically during the NOLS executive expedition (as in Question 20 of the survey instrument), “Mutual Respect” and “Mutual Trust” stand out as beneficial experiences as perceived by NOLS executive expedition

participants. “Mutual Respect,” in particular, was experienced either as “Much” or “A Great Deal” by nearly 90% of all respondents. Likewise, “Mutual Trust” was experienced as either “Much” or “A Great Deal” by nearly 80%. During the *interpersonal* or group-oriented activities, “Shared sense of accomplishment,” “Shared vulnerability,” and “Emotional bond or connectedness” appear to play an important role as well, possibly enabling the experience of “Mutual Trust” and “Mutual Respect,” as might be expected.

Intrapersonal Experiences

Regarding the *intrapersonal* and often emotionally impactful moments during the NOLS executive expedition experience, “Joy,” “Excitement,” and “Inspiration” were positive emotions frequently chosen by respondents as contributors to their leadership development (as in Question 21 of the survey instrument). In fact, somewhat surprisingly (and maybe contrary to the qualitative interview data), the contributions of positive emotions appear to far outweigh the potential contributions of negative emotions when both types of emotions (positive and negative) were considered together as contributors to leadership development. This difference could be explained by some respondents having more fond memories of their NOLS experience upon reflection, and thus the positive emotions stand out more than the negative after expedition completion. By contrast, upon reflection on the negative emotional experiences, while possible contributors to leadership development, they were not perceived as nearly as beneficial as the positive emotional experiences in the responses to Question 21.

Specific to the negative emotional *experiences* (again in Question 21 of the survey instrument) and their perceived contribution to leadership development, “Vulnerability” and “Uncertainty” standout, followed by “Discomfort” and “Stress.” These more negative emotions were described as potentially beneficial contributors to leader development during the in-depth

interviews in the qualitative phase of this study. Further, consistent with that same interview data, the negative emotions were frequently described as beneficial contributors in open-ended Question 22, when respondents were asked, “How did the emotionally impactful moments you experienced at NOLS benefit your leadership development (either during or after your expedition)? Why do you think that is?” A sample of responses to this open-ended question are provided here:

- “I think the challenge of the discomfort and anxiety that came with the experience perhaps made me a more compassionate leader...”
- “Shared vulnerabilities create trust and open lines of communication. This leads to authenticity/getting to know the real you, increasing trust and strengthening communication.”
- “You were forced to depend on others in an environment I had never experienced before. So, you were completely vulnerable (I had never kayaked for more than an hour or two and had never slept in a tent) and dependent on others to share, teach, and pull their own weight.”
- “I improved on using my emotion of uncertainty, after NOLS, as an engine for better observing, better listening, better elicitation, which combined for better decision making.”
- “I had just retired from the military--a career that brought excitement, exhilaration, inspiration, and joy--and was heading into a second career that likely wouldn't include those emotionally impactful moments. My expedition reminded me how much I needed these. So I adjusted course. It was an absolute game changer.”
- “I was very uncomfortable with many aspects of the expedition. I was very inspired to accomplish something outside of my comfort zone. I felt brave, exhilarated, and ready for so much more.”

Finally, and maybe most important, regarding the *intrapersonal* or inwardly focused experiences during the NOLS executive expedition (as in Question 23 of the survey instrument), “Self-Awareness,” “Perspective,” and “Reflection” were the three areas respondents described most frequently as critical to their leadership development. “Self-Awareness” was chosen by nearly 40% of all respondents as most critical during the NOLS experience (see Figure 23). Further, this key *intrapersonal* data may be one of the most significant findings from this survey

regarding the leader development *benefits* for senior executives and possibly related to learning *transfer* from experiential learning.

All Experiences in the Conceptual Framework

Not surprising, *self-awareness* stands out when participants were asked to select statements that best describe their NOLS experience (as in Question 24 of the survey instrument). When combining all types of experiences represented in the conceptual framework for experiential leader development into one survey question (see Figure 24), aside from responses related to the *environmental* experience of being in the outdoors, executive participants frequently agreed with statements such as “I learned more about myself” and “I was reminded of what it’s like to be a follower,” as *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* experiences, respectively. Specifically, regarding *self-awareness*, over 90% of respondents said they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I learned more about myself.” Likewise, over 80% said they agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “I was reminded of what it’s like to be a follower.” Further, and possibly related to being “a follower,” was strong agreement with the statement, “I was reminded what it was like to be a beginner.”

Overall (from Question 24 on the survey), the statement “It made me a better leader” received a strong response from many executive participants, with over three fourths (76%) of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. Likewise, nearly two thirds (at least 65%) agreed or strongly agreed with the statement “It changed my life” and “I see the world differently” upon reflection on their NOLS experience. Not to be overlooked in this combined comparison of outcome statements about the NOLS experience, as in Figure 20, responses that strongly agreed also with two statements that are noteworthy, “It increased my desire to be in the outdoors” (over 50%) and “I have greater appreciation for the outdoors”

(42%), speaking to the perceived leader development *benefits* of the outdoor adventure environment for some of these senior executives.

Figure 23

Critical to Leader Development From NOLS Experience

Figure 24*Outcome Statements About the NOLS Experience* **Advanced Quantitative Analysis Techniques**

After all survey response data had been collected within Qualtrics, they were transferred and prepared for more advanced quantitative analysis using SPSS statistical software. Although the three primary research questions for this study provided analytical guidance, advanced techniques refocused on the first research question, to understand the perceived *benefits* of using experiential methods in executive development programs. Here again, the conceptual framework for experiential leader development proved useful to examine survey response data associated with each of the four types of experiences (*intrapersonal*, *interpersonal*, *managerial*, or *environmental*) in the framework. As depicted in Figure 25, the relationships, if any, between

experiences and the perceived *benefits* could be examined as individual bivariate relationships, between an independent variable (*experiences*) and a potential dependent variable (*benefits*), or as collective multivariate relationships. This section of data analysis will examine these relationships through inferential techniques including correlation and regression analysis.

Descriptive Statistics

As an example of the quantitative data collected in Qualtrics and loaded into SPSS for analysis, Table 9 provides a description for several responses selected from across the survey instrument. In this table, responses are described quantitatively from each question (or survey construct) designed to measure a degree or extent of *benefit* (or agreement) on either a 4- or 5-point Likert scale. For example, notice data in the first row of Table 9 represents 62 valid responses to the question, “Overall, to what extent did your leadership *benefit* from your NOLS experience?” (Question 9 on the survey). For this question, responses were recorded on a 5-point scale ranging from “Not at all” to “To a great extent,” with a mean value of 3.90 on a scale of 1 to 5, roughly equivalent to “Considerably” as the average for all responses.

Similarly, in the second row of Table 9, for the question “How beneficial was each of the following activities to your leadership development during your NOLS expedition?” (Question 16 on the survey) a 4-point scale considered the *benefits* of each activity or specific learning *method*. All other questions presented in the table used a 5-point scale, including in the last row, “To what extent, if at all, do you *agree* with the following statement about your NOLS experience? – I didn’t really learn anything new” (Question 24 on the survey). For this response, notice the maximum recorded value is 4 (or “Agree” on the Likert scale) indicating no respondent selected the value 5 (or “Strongly Agree”) for this particular statement and the mean value for all respondents was 1.47 (somewhere between “Strongly Disagree” and “Disagree”).

Figure 25

Using the Conceptual Framework to Examine the Relationship Among Variables

Creating Index Variables

To support further data analysis, index variables were created for several potential independent variables including one for each of the four types of *experiences*, one index variable for all activities or learning *methods* used during a NOLS expedition (planned and unstructured), and one for the potential dependent variable, leader development *benefits*. These four index variables averaged all responses to a specific question corresponding to a related survey construct developed during the qualitative phase of this study. As such, all scale-value independent variables could be represented as indexes created by averaging the responses within key survey question constructs.

Table 9*Sample Descriptive Statistics for Potential Variables*

	<i>N</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Overall, to what extent did your leadership benefit from your NOLS experience?	62	2	5	3.90	.88
How beneficial was each of the following activities to your leadership development during your NOLS expedition? – Personal Storytelling (“Who am I?” or “Leadership Journey”)	62	1	4	3.06	.83
To what extent (if at all) did you improve in the following areas because of your NOLS experience? – Communications	62	1	5	3.32	.97
To what extent (if at all) did you experience the following during your NOLS expedition? – Shared sense of accomplishment	62	2	5	4.10	.82
To what extent (if at all) did experiencing the following emotions during your NOLS expedition contribute to your leadership development? – Exhilaration	62	1	5	3.76	1.13
In the table below, complete the sentence, “The NOLS experience was critical to my development of...” – Perspective	62	1	5	3.95	.95
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? – I didn’t really learn anything new	62	1	4	1.47	.76
Valid <i>N</i> (listwise)	62				

Specifically, to support regression analysis, index variables were calculated from survey questions with scale-value response data (instead of categorical data), such as the potential independent variables representing all four types of *experiences*. For example, the index variable Managerial Experiences averaged the responses to all parts of Question 18 in the survey, and the index variable Interpersonal Experiences averaged the responses to all parts of Question 20 in the survey instrument. More complex, Questions 21 and 23 in the survey instrument associated with *emotional* and *intrapersonal* experiences were collapsed into a single index variable Intrapersonal (w/Emotions) Experiences. Similarly, the index variable Environmental Experiences relied on two scale-value responses within Question 24 related to the “outdoors” that measured the extent of agreement with two statements, “I have greater appreciation for the outdoors” and “It increased my desire to be in the outdoors.” These high-level index variables

provided useful independent variables for bivariate and multivariate regression modeling during more advanced data analysis.

In a similar manner, an index variable was created for all activities or learning *methods* used during a NOLS expedition, collapsing both the planned and unstructured activities into a single index variable, drawing from Question 16 of the survey instrument. This index variable labeled Activities (Learning Methods) within SPSS, supported additional quantitative analysis related to the second primary research question of this study regarding what *activities* (or experiential learning methods) used during the NOLS expedition benefited their leadership the most, by averaging the responses to Question 16, ranging on a 4-point Likert scale from “Least Beneficial” to “Most Beneficial.”

Identifying the Primary Dependent Variable

Determining the primary dependent variable for the advanced quantitative analysis was an important first step for regression analysis. Two options for the dependent variables were considered. The first was to rely on Question 9 from the survey instrument, which requested, “Overall, to what extent did your leadership benefit for the NOLS experience?” This question, early in the survey instrument, employed a 5-point Likert scale ranging from “To a great extent” to “Not at all.” Although a useful measure for NOLS executive expedition program efficacy, the use of this question as the source of the dependent variable data provided only a single scale measure more reflective of overall program assessment rather than capturing the leader development *benefits* from the perceptions and perceptions of the NOLS executive leaders themselves. For that reason, among others, a second option for the dependent variable was considered.

By combining (or collapsing) eight positive outcome statements from Question 24 in the survey instrument, specifically those presented in Table 10 that measure the extent of participant agreement, “To what extent, if at all, do you agree with the following statement about your NOLS experience?” a single index variable was created that averaged the responses to all eight statements, in the actual words of the former NOLS executive expedition participants. Keeping with a central focus of this study, these eight statements were derived from the literal and verbatim descriptions provided by former NOLS executive expedition participants and captured in the interview transcripts during the qualitative phase of this study. As intended, they reveal the voices and perceptions of the executive participants.

Table 10

Participant Responses for Potential Dependent Variables

	<i>N</i>	Min	Max	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? – I learned more about myself	62	1	5	4.18	.76
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? – I was reminded of what it's like to be a beginner	62	1	5	4.02	1.00
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? – I was reminded of what it's like to be a follower	62	1	5	3.98	.78
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? – It made me a better leader	62	2	5	4.05	.82
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? – It changed my life	62	2	5	3.84	1.06
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? – I see the world differently now	62	2	5	3.79	.91
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? – It made me more interested in studying leadership	62	2	5	3.81	.90
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? – The impact of NOLS on my leadership development has increased as time has passed	62	1	5	3.74	1.09
Valid <i>N</i> (listwise)	62				

The extent of agreement by survey respondents to these eight scale-value statements better reflected the program outcomes or leader development *benefits* from a NOLS executive expedition and, coming toward the end of the survey instrument, provided one of the best available index variables when collapsed into a single dependent variable, Leader Development Benefits. Furthermore, internal consistency of this potential dependent variable (see Appendix H) was demonstrated with a Cronbach's alpha level of .86 calculated by combining all eight items (or Likert-scale values) in Table 10, reflecting high scale reliability and inter-item correlation when values were averaged to create this index variable.

Degree of Relationship Among Variables

Important to this quantitative data analysis is understanding the degree of relationship among key variables, beginning with bivariate correlations of index variables followed by multivariate regression analysis. Here again, the focus was on techniques that produced inferentially meaningful insights to the leader development *benefits* and the experiential learning *methods* used during NOLS executive expeditions.

Bivariate Correlation Analysis. Using SPSS and the index variables created for each type of *experience* in the conceptual framework, bivariate correlations were examined for the independent variables and their relationships with the dependent variable "Leader Development Benefits." In Table 11, notice the correlations show positive relationships with all positive correlation coefficients (all greater than zero on scale from -1 to +1) as a measure of linear association between variables. Specifically, an increase in any of the independent variables is associated with an increase in the dependent variable, leader development *benefits*.

Table 11*Bivariate Correlations for Independent and Dependent (Index) Variables*

		Intrapersonal (w/Emotions) Experiences	Interpersonal Experiences	Managerial Experiences	Environmental Experiences	Leader Development Benefits
Intrapersonal (w/Emotions) Experiences	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) <i>N</i>					.
Interpersonal Experiences	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) <i>N</i>	.63** .00 62				
Managerial Experiences	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) <i>N</i>	.78** .00 62	.54** .00 62			
Environmental Experiences	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) <i>N</i>	.46** .00 62	.26* .04 62	.41** .00 62		
Leader Development Benefits	Pearson Correlation Sig. (2-tailed) <i>N</i>	.76** .00 62	.68** .00 62	.72** .00 62	.48** .00 62	

Further, nearly all relationships between variables in Table 11 are highly significant at the $p < .01$ level, with the exception of lower correlation coefficients for the independent variable Environmental Experiences, although the relatively weaker relationship with Interpersonal Experiences is still significant at the $p < .05$ level. Even so, looking at the far-right column of the table, all independent variables have strong positive relationships with the dependent variable, Leader Development Benefits, and all are highly significant at the $p < .01$ level, which bodes well for further regression analysis.

For visual understanding of these relationships, Figure 26 provides scatterplots of all four types of *experiences* as independent variables in relation to the dependent variable, leader development *benefits*. Notice the “steeper” slope of the graph (in the top left of Figure 26) representing a stronger linear relationship between the independent variable *interpersonal experiences* and the dependent variable, leader development *benefits*, as well as the highest

Pearson correlation coefficient of the four independent variables at .76. Likewise, notice the “flatter” slope of the graph (in the bottom right) representing a weaker linear relationship and the lowest Pearson correlation coefficient of the four at .42. All of these graphs are reflective of the index variables created for this analysis and the linear relationships between the dependent variable (*benefits*) and the four independent variables (*experiences*). Although useful, relying on the interpretation of the scatterplots is too subjective. More precise quantitative data analysis was needed to further examine and measure the strength of these important relationships.

Figure 26

Relationship Between Independent Variables and Leader Development Benefits

Preliminary Linear Regression Models

To further examine the degree of relationship among these same independent and dependent variables, preliminary multivariate regression models were created. Although risking both specification error and selectivity bias, results of a regression model using the four types of *experiences* as independent variables is shown for example in Table 12. In this preliminary model, all four independent variables were entered into the model to produce a moderate R^2 of .68. However, notice also that the p for Environmental Experiences exceeds the .05 level of significance at .355, and therefore is not a good fit in this preliminary regression model. Also noteworthy in this model, all other independent variables, *intrapersonal*, *interpersonal*, and *managerial* experiences are identified as strong contributors or predictors of the dependent variable leader development *benefits* (with $p < .05$).

Table 12

Regression Model for Leader Development Benefits Using All Index Variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
		B	SE	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.80	.36		2.22	.03
	Intrapersonal (w/Emotions) Experiences	.29	.12	.32	2.36	.02
	Interpersonal Experiences	.31	.10	.32	3.25	.00
	Managerial Experiences	.20	.09	.26	2.12	.04
	Environmental Experiences	.07	.07	.08	.93	.36

a. Dependent Variable: Leader Development Benefits

Stepwise Method. With data analysis thus far inconclusive as to the importance of all four independent variables, to be more systematic while possibly minimizing specification error, the stepwise method in SPSS was used to create a new regression model. In this second preliminary model, independent variables were systematically removed until the best-fit model was identified with the highest possible R^2 and the lowest significance values (all p values $< .05$)

for all the independent variables that remain in the model. For this stepwise analysis, the regression model results are shown in Table 13, with the best-fit model now containing just three independent variables: *intrapersonal*, *interpersonal*, and *managerial*, with *environmental* experiences now removed. This new model has a similarly moderate R^2 of .67, predicting nearly 70% of the variation in the dependent variable leader development *benefits*, with all three remaining independent variables now contributing significantly at the $p < .05$ level. The best-fit regression model using these three independent (index) variables and their coefficients is shown in Table 13.

Table 13

Best-Fit Regression Model for Leader Development Benefits With Remaining Independent Variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.99	.30		3.31	.000
	Intrapersonal (w/Emotions) Experiences	.32	.12	.35	2.68	.010
	Interpersonal Experiences	.30	.10	.31	3.20	.00
	Managerial Experiences	.21	.09	.27	2.23	.03

a. Dependent Variable: Leader Development Benefits

Relationships With Multivariate Regression Models

To examine the relationship more closely between all four types of *experiences* in the conceptual framework and the dependent variable Leader Development Benefits, separate multivariate regression models were created using the individual variables (from individual questions) from within the index variables. For example, to examine *interpersonal* experiences more closely, a regression was model was created with each variable (or survey question response) that was previously collapsed into the index variable Interpersonal Experiences,

including *shared hardship*, *shared sense of accomplishment*, *shared vulnerability*, *emotional bond or connectedness*, *mutual trust*, and *mutual respect*. When these separate regressions models were created, again using the stepwise method, only the most significant individual variables remained in the models, as summarized below.

Intrapersonal (Emotions) Experiences. For this model, three *intrapersonal* or emotional experiences were significant contributors or predictors of the dependent variable Leader Development Benefits, including perceived critical development of *self-awareness* (coefficient = .27 and $p = .00$) and *compassion* (coefficient = .25 and $p = .00$) and the contribution from experiencing the emotion of *uncertainty* (coefficient = .15 and $p = .01$). The R^2 for this model was .60 with three independent variables remaining in the regression equation after using the stepwise method as shown in Table 14.

Table 14

Regression Model for Leader Development Benefits With Three Intrapersonal Variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.58	.26		6.03	.00
	In the table below, complete the sentence, “The NOLS experience was critical to my development of...” – Self-Awareness	.27	.06	.44	4.67	.00
	In the table below, complete the sentence, “The NOLS experience was critical to my development of...” – Compassion	.25	.06	.35	4.13	.00
	To what extent (if at all) did experiencing the following emotions during your NOLS expedition contribute to your leadership development? – Uncertainty	.15	.05	.26	2.82	.01

a. Dependent Variable: Leader Development Benefits

Interpersonal Experiences. For this model, two *interpersonal* experiences were significant contributors or predictors of the dependent variable, Leader Development Benefits, including the perceived benefits from *shared sense of accomplishment* (coefficient = .52 and $p =$

.00) and *shared vulnerability* (coefficient = .17 and $p = .01$). The R^2 for this model was .63 with just two independent variables remaining in the regression equation after using the stepwise method as shown in Table 15.

Table 15

Regression Model for Leader Development Benefits With Two Interpersonal Variables

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.14	.29		3.99	.00
	To what extent (if at all) did you experience the following during your NOLS expedition? – Shared sense of accomplishment	.52	.07	.65	7.29	.00
	To what extent (if at all) did you experience the following during your NOLS expedition? – Shared vulnerability	.18	.06	.25	2.80	.01

a. Dependent Variable: Leader Development Benefits

Managerial Experiences. For this model, two *managerial* experiences were significant contributors or predictors of the dependent variable, Leader Development Benefits, including the perceived improvements in both *judgment and decision making* (coefficient = .29 and $p = .00$) and *communications* (coefficient = .22 and $p = .01$). The R^2 for this model was .56 with two independent variables remaining in the regression equation after using the stepwise method as shown in Table 16.

Table 16*Regression Model for Leader Development Benefits With Two Managerial Variables*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.21	.21		10.47	.00
	To what extent (if at all) did you improve in the following areas because of your NOLS experience? – Judgment and Decision Making	.29	.07	.48	4.16	.00
	To what extent (if at all) did you improve in the following areas because of your NOLS experience? – Communications	.22	.08	.33	2.83	.01

a. Dependent Variable: Leader Development Benefits

Environmental Experiences. For this model, three *environmental* experiences were significant contributors or predictors of the dependent variable, Leader Development Benefits, including agreement with the statement, “I have greater appreciation for the outdoors” (coefficient = .37 and $p = .00$) along with the conditions of *compressed time* (coefficient = .56 and $p = .01$) and facing *adversity* (coefficient = .35 and $p = .02$) experienced during the outdoor expedition. The R^2 for this model was .38 with three independent variables remaining in the regression equation after using the stepwise method as shown in Table 17.

Table 17*Regression Model for Leader Development Benefits With Three Environmental Variables*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.16	.39		5.55	.00
	To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? – I have greater appreciation for the outdoors	.37	.09	.44	4.13	.00
	Environment Compressed Time	.56	.21	.29	2.74	.01
	Environment Adversity	.35	.15	.25	2.40	.02

a. Dependent Variable: Leader Development Benefits

Separate Relationship With All Activities (Learning Methods)

Similarly, to examine the relationship more closely between activities or learning *methods* used during NOLS executive expeditions and the dependent variable, Leader Development Benefits, additional multivariate regression models were created with the individual independent variables both planned and unstructured activities. For example, to examine planned activities more closely, a regression model was created with each planned activity previously collapsed into the index variable, All Activities (Learning Methods). When separate regressions were created for planned and unstructured activities or learning *methods*, again using the stepwise method, only the most significant individual variables or activities remained in the models, as summarized below.

Planned Activities. For this model, two planned *activities* or learning methods were significant contributors or predictors of the dependent variable, Leader Development Benefits, including Being the Designated Leader (Leader of the Day), coefficient = .40 and $p = .00$, and Personal Storytelling (Who Am I?), coefficient = .19 and $p = .03$. The R^2 for this model was .36 with two independent variables remaining in the regression equation after using the stepwise method as shown in Table 18.

Table 18*Regression Model for Leader Development Benefits With Planned Activities Variables*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.16	.34		6.37	.00
	How beneficial was each of the following activities to your leadership development during your NOLS expedition? – Being the Designated Leader (“Leader of the Day”)	.40	.08	.52	4.82	.00
	How beneficial was each of the following activities to your leadership development during your NOLS expedition? – Personal Storytelling (“Who am I?” or “Leadership Journey”)	.19	.08	.25	2.29	.03

a. Dependent Variable: Leader Development Benefits

Unstructured Activities. For this model, only one unstructured activity or learning *method* was identified as a significant contributor or predictor of the dependent variable, Leader Development Benefits, that is Working Together as a Team (coefficient = .49 and $p = .00$). The R^2 for this model was .26 with one independent variable remaining in the regression equation after using the stepwise method as shown in Table 19.

Table 19*Regression Model for Leader Development Benefits With One Unstructured Activity Variable*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.30	.37		6.24	.00
	How beneficial was each of the following activities to your leadership development during your NOLS expedition? – Working Together as a Team	.48	.11	.50	4.49	.00

a. Dependent Variable: Leader Development Benefits

Best-Fit Multivariate Regression Model

To assess the contributions of all independent variables representing NOLS executive expedition *experiences* more systematically with the strongest association to the dependent variable, leader development *benefits*, as well as the most impactful activities or learning *methods*, a large multivariate linear regression model was created. This complex model used all individual variables that were collapsed within each index (*intrapersonal*, *interpersonal*, *managerial*, and *environmental* experiences), the individual variables with all the activities or learning *methods* (planned and unstructured), and other independent variables associated potentially with leader development *benefits*, such as *time* as an “executive leader” and *time* passed since completing a NOLS executive expedition. For this more complex regression model with over 60 independent variables, the stepwise method in SPSS was again used to produce the following results in Table 20 with only six independent variables remaining in the model.

In this regression model, independent variables were systematically removed until the best-fit model was identified with the highest possible R^2 and lowest significance values (all < .05) for the six independent variables remaining in the model. For this best-fit model, notice the independent variables with the strongest and most significant contributions (or predictors) of leader development *benefits*: one *intrapersonal* experience variable for *self-awareness*; two *interpersonal* experiences variables for *shared sense of accomplishment* and *shared vulnerability*; one planned *activity* or learning *method* variable, Being the Designated Leader (Leader of the Day); and one *environmental*-related experience variable, “I have a great appreciation for the outdoors.” One *time*-related variable was significant at $p < .05$ level, the independent variable for “More than 10 years” when former NOLS executive participants were asked (as in Question 1 of the survey), “How long have you been an executive leader?”

Table 20

Best-Fit Multivariate Regression Model for Leader Development Benefits Using Stepwise Method

Model	Variables Entered/Removed		Method
	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	
1	To what extent (if at all) did you experience the following during your NOLS expedition? – Shared sense of accomplishment		Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter $\leq .050$, Probability-of-F-to-remove $\geq .100$).
2	To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? – I have greater appreciation for the outdoors		Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter $\leq .050$, Probability-of-F-to-remove $\geq .100$).
3	To what extent (if at all) did you experience the following during your NOLS expedition? – Shared vulnerability		Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter $\leq .050$, Probability-of-F-to-remove $\geq .100$).
4	How beneficial was each of the following activities to your leadership development during your NOLS expedition? – Being the Designated Leader (“Leader of the Day”)		Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter $\leq .050$, Probability-of-F-to-remove $\geq .100$).
5	In the table below, complete the sentence, “The NOLS experience was critical to my development of...” – Self-Awareness		Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter $\leq .050$, Probability-of-F-to-remove $\geq .100$).
6	How long executive? More than 10 years		Stepwise (Criteria: Probability-of-F-to-enter $\leq .050$, Probability-of-F-to-remove $\geq .100$).

a. Dependent Variable: Leader Development Benefits

Further, this more complex multivariate regression model produced the highest overall R^2 of .81, predicting over 80% of the variation in the dependent variable leader development *benefits* from the NOLS executive expedition experience, with contributions from six associated independent variables (see coefficients in Table 21) remaining in the regression equation after using the stepwise method.

Table 21*Coefficients for Multivariate Regression Model for Leader Development Benefits*

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
		<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	Beta		
6	(Constant)	.02	.30		.08	.94
	To what extent (if at all) did you experience the following during your NOLS expedition? – Shared sense of accomplishment	.34	.07	.42	4.87	.00
	To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? – I have greater appreciation for the outdoors	.19	.06	.23	3.44	.00
	To what extent (if at all) did you experience the following during your NOLS expedition? – Shared vulnerability	.15	.05	.22	3.11	.00
	How beneficial was each of the following activities to your leadership development during your NOLS expedition? – Being the Designated Leader (“Leader of the Day”)	.18	.06	.23	3.23	.00
	In the table below, complete the sentence, “The NOLS experience was critical to my development of...” – Self-Awareness	.12	.05	.20	2.64	.01
	How long executive? More than 10 years	.18	.09	.13	2.05	.05

Note. $p < .05$.

a. Dependent Variable: Leader Development Benefits

Results of Quantitative Data Analysis

The primary purpose of the quantitative phase of this study was to employ a custom-designed survey instrument partly to assess the extent to which the qualitative findings of the in-depth interviews generalize to a larger population. During the quantitative phase, the entire population of senior executives who completed a NOLS executive expedition ($N = 130$) was surveyed using Qualtrics. The response rate was 50%, as 65 former NOLS executive expedition participants responded to the survey. Of those, 62 completed the survey completely, comprising the final data for the quantitative analysis. Further, descriptive analysis was performed using both Qualtrics and SPSS software. Qualtrics provided useful bar-graphs and table displays for descriptive analysis, and SPSS was used for more advanced inferential techniques including bivariate correlation analysis and multivariate regression models.

Among other results, quantitative analysis successfully employed the conceptual framework for experiential leader development. Along with the three primary research questions for this study, the conceptual framework proved useful to examine survey response data associated with each of the four types of *experiences* (*intrapersonal*, *interpersonal*, *managerial*, and *environmental*) within the framework. Advanced analytical techniques focused on the first research question, to understand the perceived *benefits* of using experiential methods in executive development programs, but also on the second research question regarding the learning methods or *activities* with the most significant impact or contribution to leader development *benefits*.

Not surprising for an executive development program (but also confirming) was the clear identification of *self-awareness* as the most beneficial aspect of all the *intrapersonal* experiences during the NOLS expedition. This finding is consistent with both the descriptive statistics and the findings from the regression analysis. In fact, “Self-Awareness” was chosen by nearly 40% of all respondents as critical to their development during the NOLS experience, the most critical among all *intrapersonal* experiences.

Regarding *interpersonal* experiences, the regression analysis identified *shared vulnerability* and *shared sense of accomplishment* as the most significant contributors to leader development when considering group-oriented experiences. Although both variables were identified as significant using descriptive statistics, they were more likely enablers to *mutual respect* and *mutual trust*. *Mutual respect*, in particular, was selected by nearly 90% of all respondents as contributing either “Much” or “A Great Deal” to their NOLS *intrapersonal* experience.

The specific results of the quantitative analysis for other types of *experiences* during NOLS executive expeditions were more mixed. For *managerial* experiences, not too surprising, both *communications* and *judgment and decision making* were identified with regression analysis as contributing significantly to executive leader development. This result is somewhat consistent with the descriptive analysis, as *communications* was 1 of 3 *managerial* experiences identified as “Much Improved” by participants following NOLS. However, frequently chosen *managerial* experiences such as “Teamwork and Collaboration” or “Observing and Noticing” were not identified as significant using regression analysis.

Similarly, as to how *environmental* experiences may have contributed to their leader development, all respondents chose 1 of 3 conditions: Dependence on Others, Unfamiliar Environment, and Uncertainty of Outcomes. Although these variables were not identified with regression analysis, other *environmental* experiences were significant contributors in multivariate regression models including strong association with the statement, “I have greater appreciation for the outdoors” and the related conditions of *compressed time* and *adversity* experienced during outdoor expeditions.

Regarding learning methods or *activities* used during NOLS executive expeditions, quantitative results were mixed as well. Both descriptive statistics and regression analysis identified the planned activity Personal Storytelling as most beneficial to leader development. However, Being the Designated Leader (Leader of the Day) was not chosen as most beneficial by these experienced senior executives, as more chose Being in the Role of Follower more beneficial to their leader development. Here the *benefits* of being a follower, listener, or even an observer may outweigh the perceived *benefits* from being in the role of leader for these very

experienced senior executives, most having significant experience (and practice) as a leader already.

Finally, regarding *time* as an independent variable and its impact on leader development, it is noteworthy that one *time*-related variable was identified as a significant contributor (or predictor) of leader development *benefits* in the final multivariate regression model, suggesting former NOLS expedition participants who have been executive leaders for more than 10 years have a perception of leader development worthy of closer examination. Further research focused more narrowly on learning *transfer* over time (“far transfer”) with only the most senior and experienced executive leaders could be revealing.

Summary of Mixed Methods Findings

As summarized below, the key findings of this study consider both the qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis presented in this chapter. Although the exploratory nature of this study relied heavily on the in-depth interviews conducted in the qualitative phase to develop the customized survey instrument employed in the quantitative phase, the qualitative analysis of interview data shaped the key findings of this study from an early stage, influencing the quantitative survey constructs, and adding qualitative open-ended questions to the survey. Accordingly, this summary of key findings draws on both methods of data collection and analysis to form the mixed methods finding summarized below. Each of these key findings will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 5.

Key Finding 1 – Encountering Self (Intrapersonal)

In the outdoors, senior leaders encounter themselves, their own anxieties and tolerance for uncertainty, and the power of vulnerability shared with others. Experiential activities and learning *methods* that stimulate personal reflection, introspection, and provide feedback, are the

main source of leader development *benefits* in executive programs. During these largely *intrapersonal* experiences, executive leaders encounter their own thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and reactions, which for some, can expand their self-awareness and promote both immediate and long-term leader development *benefits*.

Key Finding 2 – Relearning to Follow (Interpersonal)

Learning to lead by “relearning to follow” may be the single most significant finding from this study, an idea or concept emblematic of the learning that comes from experiencing or revisiting an unfamiliar role, especially for experienced leaders who are accustomed to “being in charge” and “being the expert” in most situations. Specifically, experiential activities that place senior executives in unfamiliar roles with their peers, both as a leader or follower, can cause them to feel like a beginner again, requiring that they revisit and experience often uncomfortable moments and “see” themselves show-up in ways that could have significant leader development *benefits*.

Key Finding 3 – Thriving (or Surviving) Together in the Outdoors (Environmental)

Experiential activities while immersed in an outdoor adventure environment can stimulate consciousness, awareness, emotional intelligence, and the observation senses of many executive leaders in ways that may have significant and varied leader development *benefits*. Beyond the natural *benefits* of the outdoors (fresh air, environmental beauty, physical and mental separation from work and home), *environmental* experiences in a novel outdoor setting with unfamiliar activities and uncertain outcomes requires increased attention, raised consciousness, and improved observing, noticing, and listening by program participants, all of which can enhance participants’ experiences and interactions during the program (enabling Key Findings 1 and 2) and *benefit* their leader development journey afterward.

Key Finding 4 – Time Matters . . . Sometimes

Time plays an important and integral role in executive leader development, both during and after the executive program is completed. Experiential activities, especially those learning *methods* focused on *intrapersonal* and inwardly focused experiences, require time for reflection, introspection, perspective taking, and actual practice, both within the course of the program and after completion, for the most impactful growth and long-term leader development *benefits* to occur. This finding was reinforced by regression analysis that suggests those who have been executive leaders for more than 10 years have a perception and possibly a unique perspective on leader development *benefits* worthy of further close examination. Further research focused more narrowly on learning *transfer* over time (“far transfer”) with only the most senior and experienced executive leaders could be *beneficial*.

Chapter Summary

This chapter presented analysis of data collected during both the qualitative and quantitative phases of this study. It included the analytical results from the perspectives of the larger population of NOLS executive alumni captured in a customized survey instrument to form the key findings from this research. Employing a multiphase exploratory sequential research design using mixed methods of data collection and analysis, and guided analytically by the conceptual framework for experiential leader development, a summary of key findings was presented. The next chapter will begin with a more thorough discussion of findings to aide in answering the primary research questions more directly and provide deeper understanding of the *benefits* of using experiential methods in executive development programs.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

Overview of the Chapter

This chapter begins with a discussion of the key findings from this study to aide in answering the primary research questions and provide deeper understanding of the *benefits* of using experiential *methods* in executive development programs. In this chapter, each research question is addressed in turn along with a discussion of how the findings contribute to the existing research and literature in the field of executive leader development. More broadly, the implications for further research and practice are considered, given the limitations (and delimitations) of this study, especially the potential to focus more research on the outdoor environment for the benefit of multiple fields, and in particular, to transfer those insights, if possible, into executive education and executive leader development.

Review of Purpose and Methods

The purpose of this study was to understand the *benefits* of using experiential learning *methods* (such as outdoor activities) for executive leadership development from the perspective of senior corporate, government, and nonprofit leaders who attend executive programs. A mixed methods research design was used to systematically explore the experiential activities and learning methods executives perceive are most beneficial to their leadership development. This study employed a multiphase exploratory sequential design with both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection and analysis while guided analytically by a conceptual framework for experiential leader development. The conceptual framework was developed during a preliminary phase and refined throughout all subsequent phases of this study, from data collection with in-depth interviews, to customized survey development and employment, through advanced qualitative and quantitative phases of analysis.

Discussion of Key Findings

As summarized at the end of the previous chapter, the key findings of this study consider all four types of experiences identified within the conceptual framework for experiential leader development. Most apparent is the relationship between the two primary types of experiences, specifically, the *intrapersonal* and *interpersonal* experiences so important to executive development programs. Although these are two very distinct types of experiences, they rarely if ever occur separately in practice as learning methods in executive programs. In fact, while the benefits of *intrapersonal* experiences were recalled frequently by senior executives in this study, both in the qualitative and quantitative phases, the *intrapersonal* experiences were often described (and even amplified) by the complementary *interpersonal* experiences with fellow participants during the NOLS executive leadership expeditions.

Key Finding 1 – Encountering Self (Intrapersonal)

In executive development programs such as the NOLS executive leadership expeditions, senior executives mostly encounter themselves. Particularly so in the outdoors, they encounter their own frustrations, anxieties, and insecurities, they revisit their personal strengths and weaknesses, their tolerance for uncertainty, and they experience (maybe for the first time) the power of shared vulnerability and even shared sense of accomplishment with their peers. Regardless of the environment, experiential activities and learning *methods* that stimulate personal reflection, introspection, and provide feedback, are often the main source of leader development *benefits* in an executive program. During these largely *intrapersonal* experiences, executives must confront their own thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and reactions, which for some, can expand their self-awareness and promote immediate or even long-term leader development *benefits*.

In the existing leader development literature, increased self-awareness is strongly tied to executive effectiveness and recognized accordingly as a critical component for executive development programs. Improving or expanding self-awareness to understand one's strengths and weaknesses is commonly included in executive programs that focus on top-level leaders. Further, the critical importance of self-awareness has been frequently identified by a wide array of modern leadership experts (Bennis, 1989; Drucker 1999; Goleman, 1998; Kaplan, 2007). In their work with executive coaches and leadership consultants, senior executives often single out the value of time taken for self-reflection in the swirl of busy schedules and organizational activities. Indeed, in nearly all executive programs, self-awareness and self-reflective activities are highly valued.

While Merriam-Webster has defined self-awareness as the “awareness of one’s personality or individuality,” researchers have used varying definitions of closely related concepts of self-observation, self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-understanding, and even self-confrontation (Axelrod, 2012). More recently, Eurich’s (2018) research gave deeper meaning to self-awareness that is useful in the context of executive development, using two broad categories. The first is “internal self-awareness” or how clearly one sees themselves (*intrapersonal*), their own values, thoughts, feelings, behaviors, and especially strengths and weaknesses, and can include impact on others (*interpersonal*). The second category, “external self-awareness,” means understanding how other people view you, especially in terms of those same factors used to view oneself. For example, Eurich’s (2018) research showed “people who know how others see them are more skilled at showing empathy and taking others’ perspective” (p. 2). Further, “Self-awareness isn’t one truth. It’s a delicate balance of two distinct, even competing, viewpoints” (Eurich, 2018, p. 3).

Key Finding 2 – Relearning to Follow (Interpersonal)

Learning to lead by “relearning to follow” is a significant finding of this study and emblematic of the learning that comes from senior executives experiencing or revisiting unfamiliar roles, from being in the role of follower or observer of their peer leaders for significant portions of a one-week executive program like the NOLS experience. This shift in roles can be especially challenging and particularly enlightening for experienced leaders who are accustomed to “being in charge” and “being the expert” frequently in their professional endeavors. Specifically, experiential activities that place senior executives in unfamiliar roles with their peers, can cause them to feel like a beginner again, even feeling incompetent and often requires that they revisit and experience uncomfortable moments and “see” themselves in ways that could have significant leader development *benefits*, both during the actual experience and upon reflection well after program completion. For some, these uncomfortable roles and experiences can cause a degree of cognitive dissonance that has lasting impact well after program completion.

In addition to the novel setting and psychological intensity created in an unfamiliar environment, experiential learning activities during NOLS executive expeditions frequently include role-shifting (such as rotating the designated leader of the day), peer feedback sessions (daily debriefs or after action reviews), reflective dialogue (personal storytelling with peers), and team-building exercises that rely mostly on unplanned, emergent outdoor challenges (like the changing weather and terrain), among others. Among other potential benefits, these shifting roles allow NOLS executive participants to experience being a follower and then reflect and reexamine how they show-up in that possibly unfamiliar role. Although expanded self-awareness is certainly a part of the benefit, in this case, it is the exploration of different role orientations that

may bring the greatest leader development *benefits*. As the study of followers and followership continues to expand in current research literature (e.g., Kellerman, 2008; Riggio et al., 2008), Howell and Mendez (2008) offered three useful perspectives, or role orientations, on followership worth further consideration in the context of this study: followership as an interactive role, followership as an independent role, and followership as a shifting role. The latter, possibly most similar to the NOLS expedition experience, involves alternating leader and follower roles by executive program participants.

Recalling the specific learning *methods* used during NOLS executive expeditions, of the planned activities, Being the Designated Leader (Leader of the Day) was not chosen (or possibly not perceived) as the most beneficial by these experienced senior executives, most of whom have significant leadership experience (and practice) already. The planned activity most frequently described as “Very Beneficial” by nearly 60% of respondents was Being a Follower. More interesting (and maybe even more significant), specific to the planned activity of Being the Designated Leader, most participants (58%) chose Being in the Role of Follower as more beneficial to their leadership development than actually being in the role of designated leader. From the findings of this study, the leader development benefits of being in often less familiar roles of follower, listener, or observer may far outweigh the benefits from the practice of actually leading. Separately, when asked to describe how they benefited overall from their NOLS experience, “Reminded me of the importance of being a good follower,” was among the top three chosen by nearly 30% of all respondents.

Key Finding 3 – Thriving (or Surviving) Together in the Outdoors (Environmental)

Experiential activities while immersed in an outdoor adventure environment can stimulate consciousness, awareness, emotional intelligence, and the observation skills or senses

of many executive leaders in ways that may have significant leader development *benefits*. Beyond the natural beauty and the attendant *benefits* of the outdoors (fresh air, beautiful scenery, physical and mental separation from work and home), *environmental* experiences in a novel outdoor setting with often unfamiliar activities and uncertain outcomes requires increased attention, raised consciousness, and improved observing, noticing, and listening by program participants. All of these elements of raised consciousness can enhance the individual or *intrapersonal* experiences and *interpersonal* interactions during the executive program (further enabling Key Findings 1 and 2) and *benefit* the leader's development journey after program completion.

In the unfamiliar outdoor environment experienced during a NOLS executive leadership expedition, participants are often very dependent on others (the other senior executives) for their basic needs, such as food, water, orientation, even survival. As this study revealed, executive participants frequently described Dependence on Others, the Unfamiliar Environment, and the Uncertainty of Outcomes as significant contributors to their leadership development during a NOLS expedition. The combination of the unfamiliar environment along with the inherent uncertainty of outcomes in the outdoors requires high dependence on fellow expedition participants, a significant contributor to the leader development *benefits* of the NOLS executive expeditions.

As further revealed in the existing research literature regarding experiential learning, and especially so for outdoor adventure education (OAE), the intensity of the outdoors offers unique *environmental* elements with potential to stimulate growth and development. In particular, Ewert and Sibthorp (2014) emphasized the combined effect of the outdoor setting, adventurous activities, and the time available for processing and personal interpretation. As they pointed out,

“participants are often forced to step outside of their comfort zones and do something rather than simply watch something happen . . . thus learning within the milieu of OAE becomes more action centered, participant based, and holistic than traditional classrooms” (Ewert & Sibthorp, 2014, p. 40). Although limited research evidence thus far suggests outdoor *environmental* experiences are ideal for executive development, research at the Center for Creative Leadership (CCL) has shown experiential learning is most profound for executives when it stretches their boundaries and takes them outside of their comfort zones (McCauley et al., 1998).

More recent research at CCL referred to some potentially impactful experiential activities as controlled “heat experiences” that create opportunities for executive leaders to improve how they respond to uncertainty and complexity. During these carefully designed experiences, “I just need to survive this and feel safe again” is a phrase commonly reported from leaders reaching their “boiling point” in often stressful situations. Interestingly, CCL recommends experiential activities that provide “safe heat” ranging from games and simulations to what they call “expeditions” as the most challenging and complex activities, which have included problems presented while sailing together or when executives work on a pit crew together with minimal training (Watz, 2019). Research also has suggested these “heat experiences” often in a challenging outdoor environment can stimulate and even accelerate vertical development, increasing a leader’s ability to think in more complex, strategic, and interdependent ways (Petrie, 2014).

Further, regarding the leader development *benefits* derived from *environmental* experiences during NOLS expeditions is the idea of creating a safe “holding environment” for potential developmental movement for these executive participants. For example, as this study revealed in both qualitative and quantitative findings, beyond expanded self-awareness as an

intrapersonal experience is the significant contributions of shared vulnerability and shared sense of accomplishment as beneficial *interpersonal* experiences. As suggested in these findings, pushing participants outside of their comfort zones in the outdoor environment during the NOLS executive expedition (sometimes way outside) proved to be a supportive experience toward benefiting their personal leader development. Vulnerability is openness to experiences, people, and uncertainty, and that is what the NOLS experience is all about. According to Edmondson and Chamorro-Premuzic, 2020, “In short, vulnerable leadership in a world of extreme uncertainty and interdependence is vital to making progress when answers are not clear cut and anyone in the organization may be able to contribute vital knowledge or ideas” (p. xx).

Finally, important to this key finding is the realization that constructing experiences and the associated holding environment to provide simultaneous challenge and support, such as psychological safety, is most effective for long-term growth and development. According to Liepold et al. (2013), “When participants have established a safe zone in which to learn, they are more willing to voluntarily move outside of their comfort zone and support others who are willing to do the same” (p. 84). Although the need for more research on the ideal holding environment to stimulate developmental movement is acknowledged (McCauley et al., 2006), the findings of this study provide a glimpse into possibilities offered by the outdoor adventure environment and potentially open a window, however briefly, for senior executives to make sense of their leader development experiences.

Key Finding 4 – Time Matters . . . Sometimes

As indicated from the findings of this study, time plays an important and integral role in executive leader development, both during the program (compressed time frame, time management, anxiety related to time pressures) and sometimes well after the executive program

is completed. Further, some experiential activities, especially those learning *methods* focused on *intrapersonal* and inwardly focused experiences, require time for reflection, introspection, perspective taking, and actual practice, both during the program and after completion, for the most impactful growth and long-term leader development *benefits* to occur. This finding is reinforced within this study by regression analysis suggesting those participants who have been executive leaders for more than 10 years have valuable perceptions and unique perspectives on leader development *benefits* worthy of closer examination. As this finding suggests, further research focused more narrowly on learning *transfer* over time (“far transfer”) with only the most senior and experienced executive leaders could be *beneficial*.

Although some research in outdoor adventure education has investigated what learning *transfers* over time, one of the main challenges has been determining the lasting value of the outdoor experiences after the program ends and participants return to life and work at home (Leberman & Martin, 2004; Wolfe & Samdahl, 2005). Similar to this study’s findings, while former participants report life-changing and transformative experiences in post-program assessments, few studies have examined the impacts months or years after program completion as this study attempted. One such previous study that focused on the mechanisms of learning *transfer* (termed “far transfer”) examined the potential impacts of participation in a NOLS course 1–10 years after completion. Although not focused on senior executives specifically, this previous “transfer study,” when combined with the key findings of this study may offer insight into the transferable lessons (over time) applicable to executives from using multiple learning methods and experiential practices employed simultaneously in an outdoor environment (Sibthorp et al., 2011).

Research Question 1: In What Ways, if Any, Do Participants Indicate Their Leadership Benefited From the Executive Leadership Program, Either During or After the Program Was Completed?

As described in Key Findings 1 and 2, senior executives that participate in executive development programs frequently indicate their leadership *benefited* from expanded self-awareness, both in how they see themselves and how aware they become of how others see them. During executive development programs, and during the NOLS executive leadership expedition in particular, senior leaders often encounter their true selves, their own fears and frustrations, anxieties and tolerance for uncertainty, along with the power of shared vulnerability and shared accomplishment with their peers. According to senior executives who participated in the NOLS executive expeditions, experiential activities and learning *methods* used to stimulate personal reflection, introspection, and provide feedback, were a primary source of leader development *benefits*. During these largely *intrapersonal* experiences, executive leaders encountered their own thoughts, emotions, behaviors, and reactions, which at least for some, expanded their self-awareness and promoted immediate and even long-term leader development *benefits*.

In this study, to better understand how senior executives benefit from experiential methods in executive programs is to understand also the leader development benefits of improved or expanded self-awareness. As with Key Finding 1, beyond identifying one's own strengths and weaknesses, engaging in activities that require encountering yourself, knowing yourself and how others see you has important implications for executive development. According to Eurich (2018), "Leaders who focus on building both internal and external self-awareness [*intrapersonal* and *interpersonal*], who seek honest feedback from loving critics, and

who ask what instead of why can learn to see themselves more clearly — and reap the many rewards that increased self-knowledge delivers” (p. 12).

Research Question 2: According to Participants, What Activities (or Learning Methods) Used During the Executive Program Benefited Their Leadership the Most?

During executive development programs that use experiential learning *methods* like the NOLS executive leadership expedition, senior leaders engage in activities where they experience unfamiliar roles in which they sometimes have limited or even no practical expertise, which can be especially uncomfortable for experienced leaders who are accustomed to “being in charge” and “being the expert” in most situations. Specifically, experiential activities and learning methods that place senior executives in unfamiliar roles, especially with their peers as either a leader or follower, can cause them to feel like a beginner again, requiring they revisit and experience often uncomfortable moments and “see” themselves in ways that could have significant leader development *benefits*.

In this study, to better understand which methods benefited executive leaders the most is to also understand the value of role shifting in executive leader development. A core part of the NOLS leadership curriculum is four leadership roles: (a) self leadership – taking responsibility for your impact on the group and doing your share; (b) peer leadership – working toward the group’s goals outside of a hierarchical of formal leadership structure; (c) active followership – supporting a designated leader and the group’s goals by giving input, respecting the plan, and staying engaged; and (d) designated leadership – taking responsibility for the group’s goals and how they’re achieved while in an official or formal role (Gookin & Leach, 2009). Although these four roles are common at all levels of NOLS courses, they can have a particularly profound impact on NOLS executive expedition participants. Shifting among these roles allows executive

participants to experience being a follower, a beginner, and for some, even experiencing incompetence, and then reflecting and reexamining how they show-up in that unfamiliar role. Shifting role orientations throughout an executive development program may bring the greatest leader development *benefit* experienced in the NOLS executive leadership expedition.

Research Question 3: To What Extent, if at All, Do Participants Indicate the Leadership Benefits of the Executive Program Transferred Back Into Their Work Environments After the Program Was Completed?

In this study, evidence of learning *transfer* can be found in the qualitative and quantitative data collected in both the interviews and the survey. Although less observable during the in-depth interviews during this study, evidence of transfer is clear from the responses to select open-ended questions added to the survey instrument. Those responses included improved listening, enhanced communications, and team-building skills. More deeply, responses included the long-term and even lasting leader development *benefits* of the power of shared vulnerability to help build trust, expanded self-awareness and greater empathy for teammates in the work environment, as reported by former NOLS executive expedition participants.

Some respondents went further and described their NOLS experience as worldview or “life changing.” Others recognize that the leadership benefits have expanded over time “due to the personal work NOLS inspired me to do.” As one senior executive described, “Seeing the benefits of my altered perspectives in my work environment has inspired me to keep up the new behaviors and keep looking for more ways to improve.” In summary, “The benefits I learned were priceless. You can’t learn what you gained out in the wilderness in a textbook or classroom. The skills I developed I use every day as a businesswoman, mother, wife, and community leader. The experience was truly life changing and left me thirsty for so much more in life.”

Consistent with research by Rooke and Torbert (2005), many who attend executive development programs report experiences with the transformative power of a life-changing event. Drawing from executive development literature, the *benefits* described by some former NOLS expedition participants that transferred back into their work environments after program completion could be evidence of “vertical development,” a developmental process that occurs over time. To understand how and why some benefits transfer for some executive participants is to understand how a week-long executive program could support longer-term developmental processes. Palus and Drath (1995) distinguished between leadership and management training programs, which focus on imparting new skills, and development programs, which focus on questioning and stretching ways of making sense of oneself and one’s work. They argued well-designed development programs provide some individuals with significant experiential lessons that disrupt their meaning making systems. As they deal with confusing, frustrating, and often anxiety-filled disruptions, they encounter new ways of making sense of their experiences and the potential for personal growth and development after (sometimes long after) the executive program is completed (McCauley et al., 2006).

Although this study attempted to measure the extent to which participants indicated the leadership *benefits* of the NOLS executive expedition transferred back into their work environments after program completion, evidence was collected primarily through qualitative methods. Quantitative findings were mostly inconclusive, with the exception of inferences from regression analysis that require further examination and analysis. For example, in the regression analysis, findings associated with *time* as an independent variable, specifically those former NOLS executive participants who indicated they had been an “executive leader” for more than

10 years might provide additional insight into the developmental benefits that emerge over time, especially well after program completion.

Finally, in possibly one of the more enlightening portions of this study, when former NOLS executive expedition participants were asked, “How have the benefits from your NOLS experience evolved or expanded over time (if at all) since completing your expedition?” responses revealed strong evidence of workplace and life *transfer*. During the qualitative analysis, codes such as *humility*, *growth*, and *worldview* or *life-change* were used to best describe the perceived benefits by these senior executives when considering, upon reflection, the evolving or expanding benefits, over time. Moreover, learning *transfer* related themes included evidence of “far transfer,” meaning the content (what is transferred) and the context (when and where the transfer occurs) are separated by far greater time and distance from the content and context of application, often many years after the learning experience (Barnett & Ceci, 2002; Sibthorp et al., 2008, 2011). As an example, one senior executive provided the below response to this open-ended question to summarize the NOLS experience:

Time for reflection since NOLS has allowed me to appreciate more fully how that week helped shift my perspective, my worldview. Mostly in the area of self-awareness, how I see myself and where I fit in the world (or an organization). And then how others might see me, and how I show up each day, in the world that surrounds me. Do your best, ask others, “How can I help you?” Lead when that’s needed, follow when that’s best. That’s Expedition Behavior. For me, it’s always a work in progress.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations

This study has several limitations. In the qualitative phase, limitations included my interview techniques and related positionality concerns as a former participant in two previous NOLS executive leadership expeditions prior to this study. Positionality concerns were mitigated somewhat by the purposeful selection of interview participants, ensuring no more than four of

the 12 interview participants completed their NOLS executive expedition at the same time I did, selecting four others who attended a NOLS expedition without me (but acquainted with me prior to the interview), and four others who attended their NOLS expedition without me and were not acquainted with me previously.

Moreover, as a former NOLS executive expedition participant, I could have influenced participants' responses during qualitative interviews and other data gathering. These potential limitations were somewhat alleviated in a traditional manner by use of a semistructured interview guide during the in-depth interviews as well as the anonymity provided by the survey instrument disseminated by NOLS administration during the quantitative phase of this study to the larger population of all NOLS executive program alumni. Further, my experience as senior executive eased access to these senior executive leaders for the interviews, as did my familiarity with the NOLS organization, specifically the NOLS executive leadership expedition's instructor staff.

More beneficial to the conduct of this research, my experience as a former NOLS executive program participant permitted a deeper understanding of respondents' answers during both the qualitative and quantitative phases of this study and the potential interrelatedness of relevant variables from an insider's perspective. The quality of the research was dependent on my skills, which had been practiced and improved through the previous completion of two qualitative mini-studies during the preliminary phase of this study and one mixed-method study focused on research design and survey development. Additionally, my experience from several research methods courses including basic and advanced qualitative methods, basic and advanced quantitative methods, mixed-methods research design, and survey methods aided in mitigating personal biases and other potential idiosyncrasies.

Limitations during the quantitative phase were no less concerning. Developing the survey instrument using the results from the qualitative interviews presented some concerns that survey constructs may not represent all types of experiences that senior executives perceive as beneficial to their leader development. Although the conceptual framework for experiential leader development provided useful analytical guidance throughout, like all conceptual frameworks, it may have illuminated as well as obscured at times, during both data collection and analysis of findings. Further, the 14 individuals who agreed to pilot test the survey were not randomly selected, but strengthened both construct and internal validity of the survey instrument. Comparing the qualitative results from 12 interview participants with the quantitative results from 65 survey respondents were relatively small samples, but the data comparisons provided greater congruence on the results than differences.

Delimitations

The delimitations, although more in my control, also affected the research findings. The proposed research questions were clearly meant to identify more positive outcomes or benefits from the NOLS expedition experience, as well as the positively impactful methods, and potential evidence of learning transfer associated with executive leader development programs. The questions and their associated variables were the most significant constricting aspects of the study, but were based on research literature, previous studies, preliminary phase research, and the exploratory intentions of this study. There could be other factors, theoretical constructs, or other populations to study, of course. Yet, I selected former participants of the NOLS executive leadership expeditions because of the program's unique 7-day (6-night) format in the wilderness, but also because NOLS program routinely hosts participants with extensive senior leadership experience from all sectors including a wide range of commercial industries, federal and local

governments, military services, and nonprofits. Further, the NOLS executive expeditions are inherently experiential by design and setting. In addition to the novel setting and psychological intensity created in an unfamiliar environment, experiential learning activities during NOLS expeditions include role-playing or shifting, peer feedback sessions, reflective dialogue, and team-building exercises that rely mostly on unplanned, emergent outdoor challenges (like the changing weather and terrain), among others. Partially, access to the entire NOLS executive alumni population helped offset the identified delimitations in each phase of the study.

Further Implications for Research and Practice

Generalizability

This exploratory study examined only one executive leadership development program that employs experiential activities as the primary learning method for the executive participants. Thus, this study's findings are in no way generalizable in the traditional scientific sense. The generalizability problem is aggravated further by the fact that the NOLS executive program is conducted in a unique outdoor environment where participants, many unfamiliar with the outdoors, are challenged both physically and psychologically during the course of the program, many far outside their comfort zones. But that's the point. The conditions of the rugged outdoor adventure environment along with the sometimes individually stressful experiences of an expedition (e.g., kayaking, hiking, backpacks, tents, outdoor living, pack animals) makes NOLS, in nearly all respects, an outlier for executive leadership development programs.

Benefits of Outliers

Of course, even extreme outliers like the NOLS expedition experience can exhibit considerable inferential discoveries making this study's key findings potentially important for executive leadership development. As Donmoyer (1990) argued, studies of outliers have the

potential to produce a different, more psychological type of generalization and may help us develop new hypotheses for other broader studies in any field. Studying outliers can help us see traditional executive development programs differently, while also helping us see altogether different things when studying programs that are more traditional in the future. For example, this study may help us better understand the psychological advantages that cognitive dissonance creates in the outdoor adventure environment through a combination of factors or conditions that may emerge from participants in both traditional and nontraditional executive development programs, even if one is an outlier. From the key findings of this study, we may be able to examine more traditional executive development programs differently and reveal benefits that could be considered for implementation in more mainstream leadership programs.

Transferability

Although generalizability of this study is limited, other qualitative researchers such as Lincoln and Guba (1985) pointed out the *transferability* of some findings. This study may discover its greatest value and further significance in future research where the knowledge transfer to those very different cases, the more traditional executive leadership development programs, allows us to see the learning methods of those programs through a different lens, possibly using a new working hypothesis or conceptual framework to study those programs discovered only in the research findings of this unique study. For example, a study focused solely on learning transfer for participants with the most leadership experience or the most time since completion of the NOLS executive expedition could provide additional understanding of longer term learning *transfer* and overall *transferability* of this study's key findings.

Future Research

Furthermore, the key findings of this exploratory study could represent an important step in developing a deeper understanding of the potential leadership development benefits of experiential learning methods for participants in executive development programs, under certain conditions. The key findings merit future research to, among other things, identify and refine key leadership development variables (*intrapersonal, interpersonal, managerial, and environmental*) that can possibly be measured more precisely, examined for further potential inter-relationships, especially in the context of the conceptual framework for experiential leader development offered in this study. This might be accomplished using a similar more focused survey instrument with other executive development programs that use outdoor activities to allow quantitative comparison of the perceived *benefits* and types of learning *methods* or experiences, to further validate the conceptual framework and its key variables. Moreover, a follow-on explanatory study could be used to qualitatively explore the long-term benefits of experiential practices in the outdoor adventure environment more deeply to measure more precisely those identified “far transfer” *benefits* for senior executives.

Conceptual Framework

Finally, although not offered as a key finding of this study, the conceptual framework for experiential leader development was developed during the preliminary phase of this study and refined throughout all subsequent phases of this study, from data collection with in-depth interviews, to customized survey development and employment, through advanced qualitative and quantitative phases of analysis. The framework expands on core concepts from outdoor adventure education that focus on development of interpersonal and intrapersonal relationships while participating in outdoor activities that include attributes of risk and challenge (Wagstaff &

Attarian, 2009, p. 15) and complements management development frameworks that include competencies of leadership and business skills as well (Hogan & Warrenfeltz, 2003). Beyond the usefulness of the framework for this study and future research, a central contribution of the conceptual framework for experiential leader development is the potential clarity it provides for practitioners of executive leader development by integrating and extending theoretical concepts and empirical findings that have not traditionally been combined.

Closing

Increasingly, traditional executive education and executive leadership development programs are embracing the concept of “learning by doing” by incorporating experiential activities or learning methods that include the outdoor environment in their program offerings. However, research thus far has not been sufficient to understand the meaningful leader development benefits of these popular experiential activities. The results of this study attempt to fill a gap in the research literature regarding what, if anything, makes experiential methods beneficial for senior executive learning, growth, and leadership development. This study also sought to understand how the perceived benefits transfer, if at all, back into the workplace for these executives after program completion.

Although most executive leadership programs are influenced by theories and concepts from adult development and developmental psychology (such as stage theory), this study integrated multiple perspectives from the fields of adult, transformative, and experiential learning combined with common practices in outdoor adventure education into a new conceptual framework for experiential leader development. Research participants included very experienced senior executives who completed an executive leadership expedition with the NOLS in the past 10 years. This study revealed strong evidence that experiential activities, especially those shared

with executive peers, can provide valuable opportunities for executive leadership growth and development. Key findings from this study help us better understand the leader development benefits that experiential activities can create through a combination of learning methods and environmental conditions that emerge from the perceptions (and reflections) of these senior executives, over time. From the findings, we can better examine the learning methods used in more traditional executive programs through a different lens, potentially revealing benefits to the leadership development field more broadly.

Although research into experiential learning methods remains mostly in formal educational settings, there is potential to bring those concepts more fully into the executive leadership development field. Although the broader benefits of outdoor adventure education are well established, there are additional untapped benefits from more fully integrating the experiential learning perspective into traditional executive development programs. Likewise, there is potential to focus more research on the outdoor adventure environment for the benefit of multiple fields, and in particular, to transfer those benefits more broadly into the fields of executive education and executive leader development. Given the influential positions held by these senior leaders, the increasingly complex processes they oversee, and the potential impact they have on the work-lives of so many others, understanding how to improve executive leader development with more effective learning methods could have significant implications for these executives and the complex organizations they lead.

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APPENDIX A

Executive Summary of Research Study

Title: *Understanding the Benefits of Experiential Learning for Executive Leader Development*

Purpose

This study seeks to understand the benefits of using experiential learning methods (such as outdoor activities) in executive development programs from the perspective of senior corporate, government, and non-profit leaders who attend these programs. It will explore the activities or learning methods that executives perceive were most beneficial to their personal leadership development, with particular interest in those that have the most lasting impact. Most important, it seeks to understand to what extent the leadership development benefits of experiential methods transfer back into the work environment after the program is completed.

Study participants will include alumni from the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS) who completed an executive leadership expedition in the past 10+ years. Findings will help us better understand the leader development benefits that experiential methods create through a combination of factors or conditions that emerge from the perceptions (and reflections) of senior executives, over time. From those findings, we can better examine the learning methods used in more traditional executive programs through a different lens, potentially revealing benefits to the leadership development field more broadly.

Background

Executive development programs are designed to prepare current and future leaders in corporate, government, and non-profit organizations for positions of greater scope and responsibility. They use various methods such as 360-degree assessments, one-on-one coaching, and experiential activities to emphasize the importance of introspection and self-awareness. While practices vary, what executive programs have in common are activities designed to have lasting impact on the leader's personal reflection, understanding of themselves and others, critical communications skills, and engagement with the larger world.

Well-designed programs use methods that open windows for executives into new ways of making sense of their leadership abilities and create potential for development sometimes well after the program is completed. Given the influential positions held by these senior executives and the impact they have on the work-lives of so many others, understanding how to improve executive development with the most effective learning methods could have significant implications for these senior leaders and the organizations they lead.

Research Questions

1. *Benefits:* In what ways did your leadership benefit from the NOLS executive leadership expedition, either during or after it was completed?
2. *Methods:* What activities (or learning methods) used during the NOLS program benefited your leadership the most? *How* did those activities help you become a better (or more effective) leader, if at all, and *why*?
3. *Transfer:* To what extent did the leadership benefits of the NOLS program transfer back into your work environment after the program was completed?

APPENDIX B

Research Consent Form

University of San Diego Institutional Review Board

For the research study entitled:

Understanding the Benefits of Experiential Learning for Executive Leader Development

I. Purpose of the research study

Bruce Loveless is a PhD student in the School of Leadership and Education Sciences at the University of San Diego. You are invited to participate in a research study he is conducting. The purpose of this study is to understand the benefits of using experiential learning methods (such as outdoor activities) in executive leadership development programs from the perspective of senior corporate, government, and nonprofit executives who attend these programs (like yourself), with particular interest in activities that have the most lasting impact on your leadership either during or after the executive program was completed.

II. What you will be asked to do

If you decide to be in this study, you will be asked to: (1) participate in a private 60-minute audio-recorded interview regarding your experience as a participant in an executive leadership program; and (2) be willing, if asked, to participate in a brief follow-up session (less than 30-minutes) to confirm the accuracy of the information collected during the interview.

Your participation in this study will take no more than 90 minutes.

III. Foreseeable risks or discomforts

This study involves no more risk than the risks you encounter in daily life.

IV. Benefits

While there may be no direct benefit to you from participating in this study, the indirect benefit of participating will be knowing that you helped researchers better understand how to improve executive leadership development for senior executives and the organizations they lead.

V. Confidentiality

Any information provided and/or identifying records will remain confidential and secure. All data collected from you (including the audio-recorded interview and transcript) will be coded with a number or pseudonym (fake name). Your real name will not be used. The results of this research project may be made public and information quoted in professional journals and meetings, but information from this study will only be reported as a group, and not individually.

VI. Compensation

You will receive no compensation for your participation in the study.

VII. Voluntary Nature of this Research

Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. You do not have to do this, and you can refuse to answer any question or quit at any time. Deciding not to participate or not answering any of the questions will have no effect on any benefits you're entitled to. **You can withdraw from this study at any time without penalty.**

VIII. Contact Information

If you have any questions about this research, you may contact either:

1) Bruce Loveless (student / investigator)

Email: xxxxx@sandiego.edu

Phone: (XXX) XXX-XXXX (c)

2) Dr. Fred Galloway (faculty advisor)

Email: galloway@sandiego.edu

Phone: 619-260-7435 (o)

I have read and understand this form, and consent to the research it describes to me. I have received a copy of this consent form for my records.

Name of Participant (**Printed**)

Signature of Investigator

Date

APPENDIX C

Interview Guide

Modified Research Questions:

1. *Benefits*: In what ways did your leadership benefit from the NOLS executive leadership expedition, either during or after it was completed?
2. *Methods*: What activities (or learning methods) used during the NOLS program benefited your leadership the most? *How* did those activities help you become a better (or more effective) leader, if at all, and *why*?
3. *Transfer*: To what extent did the leadership benefits of the NOLS program transfer back into your work environment after the program was completed?

Demographics:

- Age, Gender, Ethnicity
- Sector, Industry
- Position / Role / Function
- Years of Experience
- Number of people managed

Potential Grand Tour Questions:

- (1) *So, tell me what you remember most about your executive program?*

Possible probes:

- If a specific benefit is mentioned, then ask: *Why* do you think that is?
- If a specific method or activity is mentioned, then ask: *How* did that activity work? And *Why* did it work for you?

- (2) *Did the executive program help make you a better leader? How so?*

Possible probes:

- *What* part of the learning, or curriculum, or leadership development process do you remember most? *Why* do you think that is?
- *What* part do you use (or maybe reflect upon) most in your professional life? *Why* do you think that is?

Developmental Focus (Benefits):

- How would you describe leadership development at the executive level? Is it education or adult development or what, in your view?
- From your perspective: What are the perceived benefits? How so? How do you know?
- Can you describe the range or types of benefits you experienced?
- What skills or traits seem most relevant?
- Is the program more focused on intrapersonal (“inner work”) or interpersonal (small-group) work?
- Are there some specific benefits you think are most important for executive leaders? Why?

Primary Practices (Methods):

- Experiential learning practices? (team-building, etc.)
- Personal practices? (reflection, etc.)
- From your perspective: What practices or methods are most effective? How did they work? Why?

- Can you describe how these practices helped make you a better leader?
- How do you know (or perceive) that you are a better or more effective leader?

Evaluation / Assessment (Transfer):

- How did the benefits of the program transfer back into your work environment? Can you give me examples?
 - How do you identify (or measure) impact, value, benefit? Transference?
1. In what ways did your leadership benefit from the program, either during or after it was completed?
 - a. Positives:
 - b. Negatives:
 - c. None:
 2. Can you give me an example of an activity during your program may have contributed to your personal leadership development?
 - a. From the executive perspective:
 - b. None:
 3. What specific aspects of the program were most effective for you?
 - a. Effective aspect(s):
 - b. Other aspect(s):
 - c. None:
 4. In your view, was there a “consciousness-raising” aspect of the activities?
 - a. From the executive perspective:
 - b. No or not sure:
 5. If so, how do you think your personal leadership development may have benefited from the “consciousness-raising” aspects, if at all, either during the NOLS program or afterwards?
 - a. Benefit(s):
 - b. No benefit:
 6. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about your experience during (or after) the executive program?

NOTE: 1-2 additional questions may be developed for each participant based on information derived from the document analysis, etc.

APPENDIX D

Interview Response Tables

Name: "Communications"

Response Category	Selected Responses	Potential Codes / Themes
(Benefits)	<p>"Yeah. I think, you know, when I went off to NOLS, I, I thought I was a pretty leadership-savvy kind-of-guy, you know, 20 shit, 27 years in the Navy...Well, so I think, so the way I, I thought about this for a couple of days because you know, NOLS especially at the senior level is not gonna, is not gonna make a bad leader a good leader. I don't think...But I'm, I'm a believer in continually thinking about leadership. And what NOLS did was it, it was a completely different take on leadership in a completely different environment. Everything was different. And so, when I left, you know, eight days or so, I had a lot to think about it and I, you know, not only the experiences, but also the whole notion of an expeditionary mindset and notion of not jumping right in and trying to solve a problem." (Intrapersonal)</p> <p>"One of the things that I think is different is, the ability to show vulnerability that NOLS not necessarily explicitly talked about, maybe explicitly in some ways, but, you know, in the Navy you are given responsibility early on and you're mentored by a, you know, a rough and tumble, a chief petty officer and the mid-grade officers that are above you or you know, they never show vulnerability. Maybe it's different nowadays, but back then, you know, that's just, you know, you're tough and you're confident in and all that is, I'm just part of the Navy culture. Whereas, when you're on a mountain side, where, you know, the "Leader of the Day" or whatever, if they made it okay to show vulnerability and to be vulnerable, right. I think that makes you actually, a more attractive leader, uh, in a way." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p> <p>"And I think you see that (vulnerability) now translate in the culture. Brene Brown for example, made this whole business out of that. But I think, it makes you more attractive as a leader and, and the people that you're, you're surrounding yourself with people that are drawn to that I think. But it also, um, I think it, you know, in, so that's the outward. The inward is, you know, what I think it makes one more, sort of introspective about, about what, your own abilities are in that particular situation. And if you, if you're really in tune with yourself, you can sense that vulnerability and that allows you to either, you know, sort of talk yourself through it or more importantly, reach out to others and, and say, Hey, you know, I think, you know, I don't want to talk about this or we should. In other words, just to reach out a little bit, I'm not saying I'm not articulating it very well, but it's something that I thought about at the time. And then when you're, when I was reading your questions, that kind of brought it all back." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p> <p>"And so the team building aspects of the course are important because that's why you're there and you're going to go back and be a better, more functioning team when you go back and..." (Interpersonal)</p>	<p>Thinking About Leadership</p> <p>Completely Different Take on Leadership</p> <p>Completely Different Environment</p> <p>To Show Vulnerability</p> <p>Team Building</p> <p>Vulnerability Translates to Culture</p> <p>Introspective Leadership</p> <p>Makes You a More Attractive Leader</p> <p>Makes You More Introspective About Your Own Abilities</p> <p>More in Tune with Yourself</p> <p>Reflecting on Being Vulnerable</p>

(Methods)	<p>“And they gave you these problems (activities) as, you know, yeah. Whether it's trying to figure out how to cross a river or whether it's trying to figure out how to get to the next meeting point or later in the day, you know, sometimes it's type a personalities are gonna want to get in there to solve the problem rather than being sort of generous and letting somebody else figure it out and just being there to help them or advise them or, or just, you know, not so, um, and all that is put in stark relief when you're on a mountain top and it's freaking cold branding. And, and, uh, so I think those are the kinds of things that I took away.” (Interpersonal and Managerial)</p>	Problem Solving
		Helping Others
		No Rule Book
		Subtle Approaches
		Introspection
	<p>“And you're right, there's no, there's no rule book that says here are the five steps to being a good leader, but I think it's how you internalize those experiences and those very sort of subtle NOLS approaches. The morning introspection where somebody gets up and maybe reads a poem and talks a little bit about being in the wilderness. That's not really something you'd find in a leadership course, but I sure took away a lot from that. Just, you know, being introspective with a group and pausing for a few minutes before going off and doing something fun and challenging, you know?” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p>	Introspective with a Group
		Helping Others, Even Instructors
		Shared Hardship
		Humbling
		Physically Challenging
	<p>“So this, I'm going to be a little bit revealing about Bob Schultz because he ended up having a bad day...And he was, he had a woman on his, in his group who was, she was just a real handful. And so we, we sort of linked up and you know, “Hey, how you guys doing it” and all that stuff. And, and I could tell he was just a little distraught. So ya know I went off to the side and this woman came up and said, “Hey, you know, I should be included in this conversation.” I said, “no, it's just between me and Bob” and, not that I had any sort of magic power or anything, but you know, you know, I just were able to take a pause and calm down a little bit and, and okay. In a, in a very sort of nice way. I think I was. Yeah, cause he's, he's the guy who's always giving and always helping and always leading and guiding. But I, I was able to sort of, you know, turn it around and help him a little bit and a little back on perspective and, and isolate the problem there a little bit. And then we got on our way and we are good. Obviously we made it to our rendezvous point. We did it as two groups going together. And, it just, it was sort of a nice turnaround of what was looking like a really bad situation.” (Interpersonal)</p>	You Feel the Pain
		Your Feel the Anxiety
		You Have to Experience It
	<p>“So that, you know, a day or two later, um, we were, we went up a big ridge 8,000 feet I think, and we're going back down and I had one of the llamas with me and that, that I was leading it going down the hill. You took a tumble and I took a tumble and we both ended up a little bit beaten up. I, I think I had a, a bit of a sprained ankle. Which, you know, at the end of the day, we got it all wrapped up and everything was fine. But, I was kind of lame there when this llama was looking at me like a, and this one of the, the, the NOLS instructors, a guy named Chris Brown eyes, he's, he's just one of the most amazing instructors and athletes that I've ever met. But he came down basically and grabbed a bunch of stuff, grabbed the Lama. And then redirected us back up and then down the side of the ridge, you know, through this tough terrain. And I was just like, amazed. That was the only kind of beat up and here's this, this young kid comes, comes over and, you know, so he turned around and made what felt like a kind of a tough situation for me. Okay. And we got through it. It was, you know, ended up not being afraid. Big deal.” (Intrapersonal and Environmental)</p>	

"I, I absolutely right there. There's **no way to recreate in a classroom**. Those kinds of experiences cause it's, you know, **you feel the pain, you feel the anxiety**. There's, you know, the weather, the closing in, you know, the sun's going down, and the urgency of having to get a camp set up and you know, all that stuff, you can talk about it, but you're just not going to experience it other than experiencing." (Intrapersonal and Environmental)

"Well, I mean, I, I guess, that, you know, the day were I took the tumble with a Llama, at the end of that, you know, between having a swollen ankle and, and, some by then, you know, your boots were either good or, or you had some, some hotspots and I had a few hotspots. So I felt, you know, by the end of that day I sort of felt like, uh, **I was getting bandaged, bandaged up**, you know, in a variety of places around, mostly around my, my feet." (Intrapersonal and Environmental)

"So it was like in a, I guess I kind of had to say, "Dude, you, you know, we've got a few more days of this, just get over this and uh, and press on, cause you know, for a time you sort of feel sorry for yourself and go, yeah, dammit, why now and why me? But yeah, **"just pull yourself together, man."** Come on. Yeah, **I think I had a little talk with myself that evening and the next day.**" (Intrapersonal)

(Transfer) "One of the things we haven't really talked about is **communicating, communications**. How, there's, those are really good about that I think, and not in not, uh, in a very subtle way, you know, **communicating before you leave in the morning, throughout the day**. And, yeah, and part of it's **planning**, part of it's just, you know, how are things going throughout the, you know, the, the day's route. But I, I didn't really, I don't think I understood this for the first half of my **Navy career** and maybe I got sort of a little bit better at it for the end and, and **business world**. And, you know, I continue to learn that the, almost the bane of **every problem comes down to communication** indication and NOLS in a very sort of elegant way, I think. You know, made that one, the learning points was that order **for your little group to succeed in order for you to achieve your, you know, whatever the day's goal is, you gotta communicate or otherwise you're not gonna make them.** (Interpersonal and Managerial)

The, and then I guess as a leadership lesson, yeah. We talked about this a little bit already, **not jumping in...to try to solve a problem or achieve a goal**. Yeah. Because that's not necessarily the main thing. The main thing is not necessarily achieving that goal. It is, I guess **it's the path that you take and how you take that to get there. That's the important thing**. And that's sort of a metaphor for life, right? I mean it's, in the end, it's not going to be, well I love life, but it's how you did it. And, part of that is the sharing of okay. Everything that goes into that allowing people to, to, especially if they don't know how to do something well, I'm to try, cause you know, we're real senior guys, we've done a lot of things and we could probably just go fix the problem or achieve the goal really easily. And in everyday life that's kind of how things are done. You know, whoever can do it fastest and best do it. **NOLS, taught me, that's not necessarily the, the main thing, the main thing.** Everybody, that's, you're surrounding yourself with, you're the teacher, you're the mentor, you're the help for helper. You're allowing them to **experience life and try to solve problems in ways that, I think it's kind of rare actually in the world.**" (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal and Managerial)

Importance of Communications

Not Jumping in to Solve a Problem (or Achieve a Goal)

You're the Teacher, the Mentor, the Helper

Worldview Change

Humankind and the World

Leave No Trace

Being More Intentional

Drawing in the Strengths of Others

Lifelong Learning

Reflective About Life

“The whole, we haven't talked about this, but the whole **leave no trace mindset**, which is again, very sort of elegantly discussed philosophy has **made me think more about humankind and the world** and, but you know, and more in terms of whether that is, you know, something that I could help contribute to and whatever. Career number three is Communications, this is about, this is my year off where I'm sort of thinking about all that and the whole GIS and mapping and layering data and things like that. A lot of that has applications and things like, forestry land use, city planning, and the whole notion of leaving no trace, well it doesn't directly apply. The whole notion has some applicability in each of those areas. And so, so yeah, I mean it's, it's something that has stuck with me and has, um, I think, how I want to go on to the next thing.” (Environmental and Intrapersonal)

“One of the things, one of the notes that I made was **being intentional about drawing in the strengths of others**. I mean that's a **very interpersonal** one, right? It's **interacting with others, but bringing their strengths**. We were, we did a class on fly fishing and it was the instructors teaching it was the, they said, well he's a good fly fisherman. So they, you know, you got those couple of guys given a course and then they walked down to the water and yeah. No I think that's about it. I mean the, the whole team building thing, I guess I didn't, I didn't really, We didn't really talk too much about that or drawn it that much. Cause maybe that just feels more, felt more natural for the Navy. And more natural for the business stuff and, it, it all seemed to kind of really click and fit together in the NOLS environment as well.” (Interpersonal)

“The one, as I was thinking about this the last day or two, it reminded me that, if **I really do believe in lifelong learning** and that, you know, and this is Stephanie, so you're fresh. It's about time for me to do something more again, because you know, I haven't really done it, anything deliberate or intentional like that in a while. And it's a, who knows what that's going to mean this summer or this year. But, it feels, you know, there's a sort of internal family like, I gotta I gotta do some again at some point too. So, yeah, that's neat.” (Intrapersonal)

Name: "Writing"

Response Category	Selected Responses	Potential Codes / Themes
(Benefits)	<p>"And the second part of that came to me, right when you said that was a, the setting always, always a beautiful setting. I picture those high mountain lakes propose you wilderness and So I would say the people and the setting and had you kept pressing me? I would come up with some of the stories that I brought back. Well, we'll get, we'll maybe get to that in a minute. By the way, you reminded me of something. I think of Rick Rochelle's face too. So interesting. Observation, you know, a smile." (Environmental)</p>	<p>Peer Learning (incl/ Instructors)</p> <p>Hitting Pause</p> <p>Intentional Time</p> <p>Having a New Experience</p>
	<p>Bruce: Do you think going to NOLS made you a better leader?</p>	<p>Interpersonal Skills</p>
	<p>Writing: Yeah. Absolutely.</p>	<p>Emotional Intelligence</p>
	<p>Bruce: Why, why is that? Why do you think?</p>	<p>Changes Under Duress and Circumstances</p>
	<p>Writing: Right, well, and, and not any more so than my week at the center for creative leadership, but every time we sort of hit pause on the go, go, go have our corporate moneymaking life and instead spend intentional time having a new experience with the intention of learning something, you know, how can you not? (Intrapersonal)</p>	<p>Understand People</p>
(Methods)	<p>"So, it's gotta be about these interpersonal skills so that we understand the little emotional intelligence. People are wired differently. Even the way I'm wired changes under duress and circumstances. So, the more I understand E and the more I understand people, generally the better I can be at communicating and those interpersonal skills I've tapped into all that. I tell my CCL story, it reinforces that. But that's just like four bullet points and there's probably a bunch of other learning that I've, that's dissipated for me. Because I have the things I tapped into, I built my little CCL story that I like to tell. And so that's been lasting, but it's only because I reinforced it immediately thereafter with my storytelling. So, I guess I'm saying there's probably a lot more there. Like, if I could go back and watch the whole thing play out again, I'd probably see 12 things I learned in the moment and have since forgotten." (Interpersonal)</p>	<p>Communicating</p> <p>Reinforced with Storytelling</p> <p>(Transfer) Dissipated over Time</p> <p>Have Since Forgotten</p>
	<p>"Like the people, the instructors are such a, because they're remarkable. Yeah. Capable, competent and, and so skilled at leading without got you. No guiding without, I dunno just, I mean, I just love Lynn. I love Rick, Bob and, and, and all the, I've been on all these other courses and each one of the instructors is really, really interesting. And again, at the most basic, they're just highly, highly competent. Like I have no hesitancy to go into a challenging setting and find a way through it with them." (Environmental)</p>	<p>Highly Competent Instructors</p> <p>Physical (and Psychological) Safety</p> <p>Long Hiking</p>
	<p>"I'm wonder if you've thought of this, I wonder if most people thought of this, but there's something about long hiking on trails, which is a perfect context for meaningful conversations. Right? I'm once at a coach who was also a family counselor and he told me when my kids were young, he's like, my best advice, take each of your kids one at a time, go on a car trip. It's gotta be at least two hours away, no electronics. It's just with them and just drive and like don't turn on the radio. And in that silence and that nonthreatening, we're not face to face. Your kids will talk in a way. You can</p>	<p>Meaningful Conversations</p> <p>Non-threatening</p> <p>Perfect Context</p>

have conversations. That conversation will emerge that don't otherwise, and the trail is exactly the same. We're not face to face. We're just, we're both looking this way, do a beautiful setting. Time passes, eventually you start talking and that nonthreatening of not being face to face is really a perfect context for really powerful conversations to emerge.” (Intrapersonal and Environmental)

Powerful
Conversations

NOLS Leadership
Model (four
elements)

“Their leadership model creates a context for thinking. Yeah. Maybe I'm, I really, and I'm not, I don't need the whole model. Like it gets pretty complicated if you start breaking down the 48 personality traits and leadership styles. For me it's just the four, right? Right. There's directing, self-leadership, active followership, and expedition behavior. And I've found it really interesting, you know, I, I, because they mapped that out, I think about it and as I'm hiking and walking, we're going through, I sort of see those things, especially expedition behavior and I've got a whole sense of what that means and examples of it in the trips that I've taken. So yeah, to the extent that they create a vocabulary that we then notice as things unfold.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

Expedition Behavior

Hiking and Walking

New Social Circle,
New Friends

Choose How I Show-
Up

Not Contrived

“There's no outside in the context of the people who know you. There's this inertia, right? The expectation. And if you're totally new, you can just be whoever the hell you want to be and then try and follow it up by being authentic. So I wrote a whole article about people, Oh geez, did Jim Morrison. People aren't strange. And I'm making an argument that we all know that a strong, healthy social circle is a key to a long healthy life. But they never really distinguish. It's between old friends and new friends and maybe we all get content having a lot of friends. And we also should be focused on are we continually making new friends? Is that kind of, I'm not sure. We try as often. You've made a bunch of new friends recently. You've moved from the East coast to the West coast and started over and I think that's been healthy. I think about how often people aren't actively making new friends. So I'll send you the article, but that'll well came from this idea of making new friends, going out with strangers and we get to choose how we show up.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

Lean Back, So You
Can Lean In

The Methods are
Subtle

You Don't See Them
Coming

You Don't Even
Notice Them

Stuff is Going to
Happen

Practical Benefits

Humility

Leader of the Day

Leadership Journey
(Who am I?)

Vulnerability Builds
Trust in an
Accelerated Way

“Here's the way I would characterize it. And the word I tend to use is contrived in a circumstance like that, that's bribed. We change and we're less sort of vulnerable because now we're just playing the game. We know we're playing the game and there may be some learning in it, but it's contrived. And so it reminds me of how I sometimes coach our younger team members around selling and there's different ways to sell. And what I have found is the more I lean in, the more you lean back. And if, and if I'm okay, I walk into the meeting and I'm okay, I'm just saying, look, here's who I am and here's what I do. Tell me about your situation and maybe there's a fit, maybe we can help. And if it turns out there's not, that's totally okay. Right. So I wanna I want to lean back. Like the more I lean back, the more I find you're inclined to lean in. Wow. When we show up at NOLS and we're expecting something of a leadership Model or some kind of a contrived circumstance, and then they sort of lean back like, no, we don't do that. Well what do we do? We're just going on a hike. Huh? That's them leaning back. And you're like, really? So there, as they lean back, we lean in and there's nothing contrived about it and all of a sudden it's just all real. And, so we're, as you say, open in a more authentic way.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“However, if you give them a program sorta like NOLs where the, the methods sort of are subtle and nuanced and you don't even notice them and they, they get a lot out of those when they, when they, well, they can't even see them coming. You know, there's something kind of special about that, it seems to me.” (Intrapersonal)

“But I think like Paul Petzold, you know, he didn't need to understand it in that way to understand it in that way. We're just going to go out and stuff's going to happen and we're gonna work our way through it and we're going to notice how we treat one another. Yeah. That's enough. (Interpersonal)

“And again, we've talked about most of this under the benefits of the NOLs programs. I come back with stories and anecdotes to reinforce my coaching at home. I, you know, I'm going intentionally to figure out something I can come back and write an article about. I remembered what my notes mean here. Under benefits that get the practical exercise. And it was this, it was the Rob experience where I knew he was wrong, but it was my humility. I was, you know, so it's just an interesting experience for me to work through. Anyway, that's what it was, Rob, Rob and humility.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“But anyway, benefits the leadership model. We already talked about methods, leader of the day, leadership journey and this idea that the vulnerability builds trust in an accelerated way. That's a really powerful method.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

(Transfer) “Well and so here's another, so my approach is different from most probably because if you think about it, I'm very intentional, then I'm going to go there, I'm going to experience something and I'm going to come back and I'm going to write an article for our team. I have to justify my time away to say like, this is part of my leadership journey in my leadership development role for the company. I'm going to bring some learning back for the team. So I'm constantly looking for that thing. I'm bringing back. So yeah, I am, you know, and it's a great way to do it. I mean, I don't know, not everybody is wired like me, but I'm constantly looking for, Oh, that was interesting. And like, I'm going to have to write an article about this someday. How does it all tie together? But because of that, I noticed, I've noticed a bunch of things that were there, some of my bullet points on here. So my approach has maybe a little bit different and it's more than just, I, it's more expensive. I can just go hike. We're spending money, so I'm there to learn.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

Being Intentional about Learning

Bringing Learning Back Home

“How does this all tie together?”

There to Learn

It wasn't until I was back that I figured it out

“No, it's not direct. Again, it's, I've bet I've been having a lot of fun with the, the expedition behavior. I think I told you my story about Jerry Palmer and expedition behavior, and that was one where it wasn't until I was back that I figured out, you know, it was a stormy night. Jerry says, Writing, we got a problem. I jump up, put on my boots and I think I'm being a hero because I'm going down and retying those you know, hit your hiker knots and then two hours later it happens again. Writing, we've got a problem. I'm jumping up, I'm Writingny on the spot. And later I realized, no, I need to get him up. Give him the experience, teach him how to tie the. The quick release knots because the distributed knowledge actually makes the team stronger. Finally, again, knows how to time and I go down, then nobody knows how to tie them. Right. So all of that learning comes from them introducing a concept, me noticing it, and then me thinking about it for weeks to follow. That's, that's one way. Yeah, that's fine.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

Thinking About it For Weeks to Follow

Made Me Better

Credibility with My Team

Stories I Can Share

First-hand Accounts of My Learning to Share with the Team

“It's made me better. Any credibility with my team. I've got stories I can share. You know, if I just gathered the team and told them that you need to, you know, show up prepared, take care of one another, take care of yourself and distribute the knowledge and distribute that. You know, if there's pecans for getting up the rock, don't give them all to the guy. Cause if the guy goes down, you're not getting down the mountain. So distribute not only the knowledge but distribute the tools, critical tools. If I just started sharing this with the team, that's one thing. But if I come back with first-hand accounts of my learning and I tell him them authentic in a humble way, it just takes on a power.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“And as long as we keep talking about it, I think it only grows over time. I would even give you a curve. I'm an econ major. Everything's a curve, simple curve. And I would suggest that in the, in the immediate reaction, the response is going to be experiential. Yeah. And that over time it's going to shift to being introspective. So there's your curve from cause it does take time for some of these lessons to sink in or you encounter something in your work life that gives you reason to call upon the thing that you learned. And you can apply it. You don't always get that day one. So, but you might see something six months later that triggers the memory. It's like, Oh, Here's where I just need to. Yeah.” (Intrapersonal)

“And I'd be curious if your curve ever bends down and then I keep going on these trips so I keep refreshing it and rekindling it and rethinking it. Or if I wasn't and we talk about it all the time, but what it would, would that from experiential to introspective continue in perpetuity or does it begin to lose its resonance without reinforcement? (Intrapersonal)

“The transfer, again, we talked about it, the articles that I bring back in looking for the learning, I get to choose how I show up. That hiking as a on a trail over enough miles is a perfect context for good, meaningful conversations to come up. (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

Share in a Humble,
Authentic
Way...takes on Power

It Only Grows Over
Time

Shift to From Being
Experiential to
Introspective

It Does Takes Time
for Some Lessons to
Sink In

Encounter Something
in Life to Apply the
Lessons

See Something Later
that Triggers the
Memory
Reinforcement

I Get to Choose How
I Show Up

Conversations

Name: "Frustration"

Response Category	Selected Responses	Potential Codes / Themes
(Benefits)	<p><i>"Do you think outdoor activities like NOLS help make you better leader and then how?"</i></p> <p>"Oh, I'm sure. I mean, so I am have you ever done the strike binders? The Gallup polls? Right? So learner's definitely in my, you know, sort of the top five to top 10. Right? So for me, anything anywhere that I could learn, you know, I'm in counseling. And you know, for me I think there was probably as much learning from the group that John pulled together, which back to kind of the NOLS survey. That was the, and that was also the appeal with Knights. You know, the Joshua tree, which is, is not just going to be a random group of people who love the outdoors. It's actually sort of executives that love the outdoors, right? So you kind of know that it's going to be an even richer experience because of the people that are coming together." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p> <p>So it was you know, and I think I will say that Lynn in particular and you know, then, cause you were on our trips, really a remarkable leader and role model of just her calmness and her approach to education and right. The just the phrase of right, relaxed efficiency kind of thing. But because of the tides, you know, we did have to sort of get going by a certain time each morning in order to have the tides not be working against us. And so yeah, I mean, I just loved also being in the presence of, of the leaders who bring a really unique leadership style that's breathtakingly different from what most of us have probably been exposed to. So I think there has to be other gift of the experience is, you" know, it really just because all of us were leaders on this trip, you know, it was great to just even experience watching, you know, when the other leaders were sort of in charge of the meal or you know, we weren't as much like the, we didn't have the leader for the day thing. Right. But we did have the meals and the cooking and all those sort of things. And we tried to change up the, who was paddling with who. So we weren't, you know, ever paddled to see people. So I don't know if I answered the question or not." (Interpersonal)</p> <p>"Not that he'd ever been before in his life. So a lot of people, right, where there was something about that executive group that was an incredible magnet for that to happen." (Interpersonal)</p>	<p>Rich Experience Because of the People that Come Together</p> <p>Role Model Instructors</p> <p>Being in the Presence of Other Leaders</p> <p>Experience Watching Others</p>
(Methods)	<p>"And as we all talked about on the trip, right, there's a self-selection of people that are being that like to camp right, are good with being in the woods, whatever it is. Right. Sort of the unknown. And so you know, I think in terms of, I don't have anything specific that but it is interesting because I had, there was one financing (?) that I had with John. And I don't know if he shared it with you, but we were was one of the days I was in charge of breakfast and my mate and I were making I think it was pancakes and you had to divvy them up a certain way. And I had was pretty clear on sort of who had gotten wet and I had a plan in my head of how I needed to sort of divvy up the food." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal and Managerial)</p> <p>"And John made a suggestion and just snapped at him. Because I had a very, I was very clear how I was trying to make it equitable with who got what. And so we kind of laughed about it. We chatted about it. And, and he, you</p>	<p>Self-Selection</p> <p>Events Like Preparing Breakfast</p> <p>I Just Snapped</p> <p>Don't Like People Telling Me What to Do</p> <p>Peer Learning and Peer Leading</p>

know, acknowledged that if he had just, you know, sat by that, you know, how I would've handled the equity bit of, would've just unfolded naturally. But it was, you know, and, and I definitely and my kids are like this as well. Right? **I don't really like other people telling me what to do.** (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“Where we were all sort of trying to figure out where was the best path to take to go scrambling and you know, Knights sort of intentionally, you know, allowing us to just sort of go off and figure out you had the best path and then you know, ultimately making the suggestion of, Hey, should there be sort of someone is leading and we're like, Oh that would be a good idea. Right? So I thought that was also an interesting you know, cause **sometimes when you are with a peer group of other CEOs on some level, you're sort of actually all more deferential, right.** And **you're not necessarily trying to be in the lead dog cause you're clear that anybody could be right.** So you know, it's just sort of being, you know, **paying attention to what's sort of needed in the moment versus sort of who can do it.**” (Interpersonal)

“And so, you know, on our day one, and I'm curious if Russ will share, Russ went into the trip completely healthy, but unfortunately because of two things, the way that his how he's snapped himself into his kayak, that first day that rained, he ended up literally getting drenched on the first full day of paddling because it wasn't field. There was something that was flawed. So poor guy, right? He is wetter than wet. And potentially because of how he was paddling, maybe not the right ergonomic approach, he ended up basically really severely injuring his right wrist because of the repetitive motion of how he was paddling. So when we left the campsite that morning thank goodness, right? None of us want it. **I don't even know if they may gave us the option, but we, they gave us a couple of options of where we could stop and, and you know, camp for the night.** And we all kind of said, you know, let's just get, let's get to lunch. Why? Let's get halfway, check it out, see how we're doing. And so at lunch we're probably not clear that Russ is drenched. Right? We're clear that he's probably wet. We're not clear that he's like literally drenched. And he certainly didn't say anything about his **risks at the moment.** And so we then ultimately, we all agreed, you know what, let's push on because it allowed us to then camp in the same spot for two nights. If we stopped earlier, we would have had to move every night. And so I think everybody was like, Ooh, that sounds pretty cool. Not even knowing that the, when we turned the corner to go, we're like, **Oh my God. I mean just the, the glaciers were spectacular** such that that alone would have been the reason had we known it but we didn't. Right. Cause we're paddling along and then you take left. Woo. So it was **our longest day.** It was like, I don't know, 14 miles and it was a very long day. And at the end right is when poor Russ, right? And it's probably still raining. And he's just soaked and now **his wrist probably is throbbing.** And so it was interesting how we didn't sort of, none of us. And again, we, John is the connector. Otherwise for the most part, **we're all strangers.** We met once at the La Jolla beach and tennis club for maybe an hour a couple of weeks before. But you know, we're not like in tune with this guy. And you know, Russ as a military guy like you, right? **He's not a pansy.** He's not gonna say squat, right? **He's gonna suck** it up cause that's what you guys do in the military. And so but it was interesting then how we also weren't paying attention to how did we let like these two injured people in a boat together? And that's when Lynn was like, we're changing this. We're going to do a real time change on the water with the kayak water! **We're going to do a what?!** We're going to **come together** and change people midstream, you know, get all the kayaks together and we're all

More Deferential
Sometimes with
Peers

Not Trying to be
Lead Dog

Pay More Attention
to What's Needed in
the Moment

Being More Aware,
of Others and Self

Managing Risks at
the Moment

Emotionally
Impactful Situations

Come Together

Stick with You
Longer

like, we're, someone's going to ask, someone's going over, Nope. Right between the collective S we were able to stabilize the boats and it was the right decision, right. He needed to not be paddling and he shouldn't have been, you know, we shouldn't have let that happen kind of thing. So just, you know, back to being more aware of, you know, others around you when you're also still trying to just take care of yourself and your shit and your boat and your gear. And so it's you know, that was sort of another interesting day, which at that point, that was I think our last day. I think it was actually the last more. Yeah, it was the last day we were going to get picked up that day when it was like, how did, how did we, how did the group let the two weakest people, the injured person, the two injured people in the same boat? Like, really?" (Interpersonal and Managerial and Environmental)

"I think therein in lay the distinction, right? The ones that impact you emotionally are the ones that tend to stick with you longer. Right. (Intrapersonal)

Bruce (28:20): And for example, if, if you had, you just described a real situation, if that had been a simulation, you know, where you were playing some sort of game or,

Frustration (28:28): Right. It's not the time. No, you forget it like a week later."

(Transfer)	<p>"I think the other just kind of thinking through, I guess what the reason that the outdoor education I think is so effective is it's just mother nature's unpredictability, right? And so you don't know if you're going to have rain or wind or lightning or, you know, cause whatever you're going to have is what you're going to deal with, right? So, you know, back to the certainly business world, right? You know, nobody could have predicted COVID-19. Right? And you know, here we are all having to figure it out. So, you know, you get put into situations that are uncontrollable and you got to figure it out anyway." (Environmental and Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p>	<p>Unpredictable Outdoor Environment</p> <p>Whatever the Weather, You Have to Deal With it</p>
	<p>"Well, I could think for me what I would say and maybe it was interesting timing of the NOLS trip, right, was just the career change that I made from being the CEO or the CFO, right. With 20 plus years and then moving into a consulting capacities sort of full time. And it was interesting cause my largest client that I started really interacting with, I think I had, I think I attended one meeting before I went to, to Alaska and then by September we were officially under contract and consulting actively. And I still am for these guys. And it's a wholesale distributor to the plumbing contractor and there's basically the owner and the COO who are sort of the top dogs of the company and run it and then really like a big gap, right. Everybody else. And in early June, the CEO announced that he was going to be taking early retirement, leaving." (Intrapersonal)</p>	<p>Similar Unpredictable Business World</p> <p>Uncontrollable Situations</p> <p>Career Transitions</p> <p>Gain Clarity, Super Clear</p> <p>Following, Observing, Being More Intentional</p>
	<p>"But I think the owner, right, if you were to ask him right well forward or you know, do a check in eight months later, he's probably over the moon with how I have been just embraced by the whole executive team in a way that he would have wished for but couldn't have predicted. Right. Cause he'd seen, you know, like organ rejection, you know, you get, you bring in a new organ and then the body's like, yeah, that's not happening. And it was, and it had been going very well up until Kobe and then [inaudible] literally like just seal the deal in terms of just other stuff that I've been able to contribute over the last seven weeks. That is pretty fantastic that the whole leadership team has</p>	<p>Transitioning to Advisory Role</p> <p>Role Changes and Career Transitions</p>

now seen. And I'm not threatening him, his job. Right. I'm not here to make anyone look bad." (Interpersonal)

"This whole thing of following and observing and being more intentional with how to contribute in a way that doesn't (threaten or make look bad), right. Put people on their heels or want to have them snap back at you. Right? And that was potentially right. The distinction with, there was something about how John made a suggestion, right? That made me reject it immediately. Right? Even if his suggestion had been spot on. Right? And so in some ways, right, it may be helped me be better at transitioning into this sort of consultant advisory role that is very different from what I've been used to my entire career. And now, you know, what, eight months later I'm enjoying it. But it was definitely weird at first I was like, Oh, you know, it was like a horse that had to be held back sensing and I was like, okay, wait a minute. (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

"We're now in a different gear and this gear works differently. So you know, that's another I guess sort of angle for NOLS in terms of people that are sort of either contemplating career transitions or contemplating changing roles. And one of the guys on our trip, I don't know if John mentioned this, but Sam, the guy from Boston had been a long time employee for a really difficult owner out of Chicago. He was commuting regularly with the Chicago from Boston. And the guy just seemed like your classic jerk, right? And Sam had an offer that he had not yet accepted to be the of another real estate company in the Boston area. So no travel, first time CEO and basically by the end of the trip we're all like, Sam, what are you signing? And literally accepted the offer I think at the airport verbally on our last day." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

"But I think we all helped him also like get super clear, great, great new chapter for you. Right. And even my chapter, right. I was bouncing that off of the group. And so I think there's the other opportunity for people to, you know, cause a lot of people are going to be in potential career transitions this stage in life. And again, what a great setting to help people work through those kinds of decisions. Cause they're away from their family, they're out of their element, they're out of their norm and they're able to sort of look at things with a clear mindset because they're not in it and they're surviving. They got to stay dry, they got to get to the, you know, and so you're just changing things up and again, a concentrated period of time, which was by days" (Interpersonal)

"Or they're thinking about it, but they're scared to death.

"And then giving yourself the confidence, right, that you know, you, whatever uncertainty we all had about the trip, by the end of the trip, you're like, I got this and apply that same sort of uncertainty to your career transition and then adopt the mindset of I got this, I can do this." (Intrapersonal)

"So that was the other thing as I'm thinking about, one of my takeaways from the NOLS trip, right? That was the real time was I got this right. And I did have that mindset leaving managed to listen. Right? Cause I found out, right on a Friday, my job grew. I found on Sunday my job was ending as a on a Friday. Right? So I'd like five days notice. And you know, shit for severance and you know, pretty much the primary breadwinner. And I was like, I got this. I don't know why I just, and then the NOLS trip certainly reinforced that belief." (Intrapersonal)

Changing things up
in concentrated
period of time

Uncertainty in Career
Transitions

Confidence in
Uncertainty

Scared to Death, But
I Got This!

You're Not an Expert

Learn Observing and
Suggesting Skills
from NOLS

Outdoor Allows
Experience you
might Reject
Otherwise

“Sometimes that as opposed to directing and commanding or whatever. Right. so yeah, it's interesting how those other skills become more prominent in a NOLS trip because you know, you're not an expert necessarily in that environment anymore. And yet if you use all those observing, suggesting skills, you still get to a place where you feel confident and you got that so to speak.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“I'm having this sort of interesting analogy of really effective massage therapists when they're trying to work out a client's not right in a particular muscle. The human body's natural reaction is if someone's going to touch on this, not going to reject it for massage therapist, right? The good ones have techniques to get at the muscle in a way that the body doesn't reject it and just sort of get in there and loosen it up. That's really what the outdoor experience is doing is it is allowing people to have these experiences that have constructed in a different manner. They would just reject outright.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal and Environmental)

Name: "Influence"

Response Category	Selected Responses	Potential Codes / Themes
(Benefits)	Bruce: "Do you think outdoor activities like NOLS help make you better leader and then how?"	Internal and External Benefits
	"Yeah, I would say absolutely yes. Yeah. Yeah and I would say probably the two. I think the two primary things would be one internal and one external . The effect and the internal effect to me is self-confidence is, and I think any leader, at least. All right. Speaking personally, observing other leaders . I think periodic lapses or challenges and self-confidence are a normal part of leadership development and personal challenges for us all. And so if, you know, if you accomplish something that's really hard and you do it, it gives you, it reinforces your, your confidence in yourself and ability to meet adversity or get through challenging times. So that's the internal effect. And, and I think that's pretty proven in that a lot of the, you know, these other leadership group events or you know, our challenge, obstacle challenges and things like that where the team is get together, but it's also an individual personal accomplishment." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)	Self-Confidence Observing Other Leaders Personal Challenges Periodic Lapses Normal Part of Leadership Shared Accomplishments
	"So if you go out for an expedition and you know, in the woods off trail , that's pretty challenging. And, and you're with a group of people that have a wide variety of experience. Everybody's not an experienced backpack or, or we're outdoors by any means. So that's the internal effect, that external effect I think on, you know, my ability as a leader and what, what that experience does for one, for a leader is it does help thinking through those fears of what, what you could control, what you can influence and what you just absolutely have no influence over . You know, those three concentric circles and you know what you control, you can absolutely, you know, direct, but you still, you know, there still may be some soft skills within that, but that's pretty much, you know, technical leadership skills, getting people, you know, cause they work for you and you got to get them to do what you want to do." (Intrapersonal)	Meet Adversity and Hard Times Get Through Challenging Times Overcome Obstacles Personal and Group Accomplishments Soft Skills for Influence
	"Then there's that sphere of influence where you've got to work with a lot of other people that don't work for you, organizations that aren't under your control. But in order to get your mission done, they've got to get their mission done and you've got to work with them. So that's, you know, the sphere of influence. Yeah. And, and then I'm going to get back to the outdoors links here. And then there's that, you know, that everything outside of that that you absolutely can't control the weather, you know, a storm, the terrain, you know, the, you know, a Llama going lame . No, you, you name it, you know a trail mate, you know hiking made, falling and injuring himself. Like, I mean there are things you can do to mitigate risk for those things you can't control . And that's how you manage that sphere." (Interpersonal and Environmental)	Spheres of Control, Influence, Beyond Your Control Empathy Group Feedback Risk Management Self-Confidence
	"So that's why I think this outdoor education is so beneficial because you can apply any of those strategies of operating within those spheres of control, influence and beyond your control . Yeah. That you don't, you don't have to just give up and focus on the inner circle. Although a lot of people do that a little. Yeah. You know, if they have met their limits I think, but you know, the real leaders continue to develop those skills on building strengths in those outer areas that you just don't influence her. Good. Sure. Cool. So things, so	Self-Reflection Control Influence Soft Skills

	that, that's the two biggies I would say internally. External.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)	
	“Empathy was one of the words I'd written down.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)	
	“I just made a couple of notes. Group feedback, risk management, self reflection, self confidence. Oh yeah. Just the last thing I wrote was understanding and applying where to focus my energy on what I can control and influence using those soft skills. And I think I talked at length about that at the beginning. So, yeah,” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal and Managerial)	
(Methods)	<p>“Then there's that sphere of influence where you've got to work with a lot of other people that don't work for you, organizations that aren't under your control. But in order to get your mission done, they've got to get their mission done and you've got to work with them. So that's, you know, the sphere of influence. Yeah. And, and then I'm going to get back to the outdoors links here. And then there's that, you know, that everything outside of that that you absolutely can't control the weather, you know, a storm, the terrain, you know, the, you know, a Lama going lame. No, you, you name it, you know a trail mate, you know hiking made, falling and injuring himself. Like, I mean there are things you can do to mitigate risk for those things you can't control. And that's how you manage that sphere.” (Interpersonal and Environmental)</p> <p>“So that's the biophilia, right? That's the, yup. Yeah, that's a huge one. And see, for me, that's a given just because that's my, you know, that's my ethos and it has been ever since I was a kid, but for other people to discover that, and, and I think the best, the best visualization I've seen of that is, is, is graphic of our galaxy, you know, so our planets and earth is this teeny little planet. We're one really teeny speck in that planet. And it, you know, and it's a big arrow. It says you are here and it's like, it does put things in perspective. It's okay. Yeah. You know, it does give you personal and, and it does. And connecting with nature allows you to do that. I, I do think that's a really important one.” (Environmental)</p> <p>“And this is what you do at nature too is your, but it, it does teach you that skill. You know, what are five things I'm hearing five colors. I see. I always work in numbers of five and it's a self-calming meditative for me. Yeah. And I do that outdoors all the time. Normally I'm not stressed outdoors, I'm just trying to observe. But it is a, it is a, an experience that helps you do that anywhere you are. And you can help direct a group sort of, and they won't, they don't know it's happening, but it's just where you break, you know, you break something bad, you break a trend or you, you know, you disrupt to get back on track. (Intrapersonal)</p> <p>“So there was, so there was leader of the day, there was the map brief at the beginning of the day. Right. So, and then you had to do the planning. So the team that was going to do the map brief, right, was doing the planning prior to that. You know, there was the description, the leader of the day had to brief out what to bill to lay out the expectation of what the day was going to be, what the terrain was, what the objective was. Right. And then there was the the end of day debrief, which I thought was really helpful because it, it's, it's really like a peer review for us, for my group. It turned out, it wasn't that everybody was evaluating the leader of the day, although that's sort of how it starts out. Everybody's evaluating each other, they'll say, well, I appreciated</p>	<p>Can't Control the Outdoors</p> <p>Connecting with Nature</p> <p>Biophilia</p> <p>Put Things into Perspective</p> <p>Self-Calming Meditative</p> <p>Mini Lessons</p> <p>Cooking</p> <p>Personal Hygiene</p> <p>Selecting Campsite</p> <p>Leader of the Day</p> <p>End of Day Debrief</p> <p>Map Brief</p> <p>Peer Reviews</p> <p>Evaluating Each Other</p> <p>“Who am I?”</p> <p>Being Vulnerable</p> <p>Shared Vulnerability</p> <p>Group I Can Trust</p> <p>Really Speak and Be Vulnerable</p>

the way so and so, you know, Landon, you know, I mean, like when the Llama fell on me, I haven't done, I done, I just so appreciate him, like just being in such awe that I wasn't dead right. And I'm saying, okay, I'm okay and I haven't done size. (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal and Managerial)

“So, and there's, it's, it's a simple formula, but then there were even sort of the little mini lessons, like, you know how to take a crap. Yeah. Yeah. Right. With no, you know, the little mini lessons for leave no trace, right. In everything you do, cooking, you know, personal hygiene, right. Selecting a campsite, et cetera. So those were little micro micro lessons. Yeah. That are part of the program and, Mmm. So I think those are pretty important because, and then you re, you know, they're reinforced, but I, you know, I'm, how to cook the, what was it, our first cooking one, how to start the stoves up.” (Managerial)

“Yeah. “Who am I?” You know, that tends to really bring out I, and I think even individuals who are doing that, who are speaking. Yeah. As you're delivering the, who am I, you started saying things that you had not planned on saying would you agree with that? Yeah. And I, and you could see it with every, they sort of come to this realization is okay, this is a group I trust and I can, I can really speak and be vulnerable and just to a T, everybody did it in our group. (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“I understand how people operate their leader of the day as well. The most difficult people to get along with ever mean. He's a wonderful man, but he, he is just, he's all over the map. He's intense. He's, he's passionate. He's hard to control. He's impulsive, right? And no talking about whelming Naulty yeah. Who, you know, it was my boss for awhile. Yeah. I mean I love William, he's a dear friend. But when you hear those personal stories unfold, it does help you understand and interact with them a little bit more effectively. Right. And so I think it's just an example of how it's important to get to know people.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“You know, and those, those daily debriefs at the end of the day were very nonthreatening, but pretty specific and very, you know, they weren't all just patting on the back and that, but very nonthreatening. You know, I didn't see anybody react to constructive criticism. You know, it's again, you build that trust in the group, you're going to trust when somebody has given you constructive criticism. Yeah, yeah. And you take it in a more positive way. Don't take it as personally whatever. Yeah.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“I, you know, personally for me, I don't like demonstrating anything that I'll feel or speaking to anything I don't feel I'm an expert in. I'm a general note at all by nature. But I don't really like to talk. I don't like to be a know it all about things. I don't know anything about. So. So again, I think Mmm. In the NOLS courses you are encouraged to share your vulnerabilities or your weakness so that the group as a whole is stronger in, you know, somebody is gonna cover and weakness might be the wrong word, but the lack of experience or the, you know, just not as skilled in this area as somebody else. Like, you know, I've never been really good at compass. I mean, as much as I have tried, you know, orienteering and whatnot, I'm just, you know, and I really struggled with it. Yeah. And you know, knew that. (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal and Managerial)

“So when I was later in the day, you know, I got a lot of help, but it's hard for me to expose that vulnerability. And I think by just being military in nature,

Personal Stories,
Important to Get to
Know People

Daily Debriefs

Constructive
Criticism

Nonthreatening

Trust - Trust - Trust

Not the Expert

Share Your
Vulnerabilities

Reveal Your
Weaknesses

I Really Struggled

You Have to Really
Expose Yourself

Cognitive Diversity
at NOLS (unlike
military)

Connectedness

Pioneers

Outer Space

Fear

Emotion

it's hard for me personally. Yeah. That's military or not. And then you put your military training on top of it, whereas a leader, one of the things they teach you is don't ever expose a vulnerability. Don't ever expose a weakness because somebody will be on you like a Cobra. Don't expose a weakness or your limits. And don't expose a weakness to your, it's a carrier. Your superiors all over your ass. Your, your subordinates will take advantage of you and your peers will just try to climb over your back. And I mean, this is the military. It's, yeah. Even the least. Okay. I did. Yeah. And I say at least competitive in mindset, not, not in true, no progression, but the people that even really don't care about or not don't care, but it's, you know, don't place getting promoted over off everything else still have that, you know, you're very, you're reserved about that. And, and on a NOLS course, you really have to completely expose yourself, you know, so that the group can achieve the objective.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“You know, one of the things we talked about cognitive diversity early on, but is the makeup of the group is, is much random is not the word, but it's much more diverse because, because of it's an experiential right course leadership course, right? You go to a classroom course, it's on the menu, you know, for the military, for the corporate world, it's, you know, it's one of these things you're kind of on a checklist is yeah. And your leadership development, you need to go do ABC and D and you need to go do this classroom training. So you're going to still be in a classroom with likeminded people. But, so my NOLS group, and I know you and I talked about this at length my group, so I had Ivan Dunn now I knew him from yours, but you know, certainly brings a lot of, and you know himself Ernie gun line, knowing I can't spell his last name, it's a German last name, but you know, lives in, he's a CEO of a Mmm international corporation that focuses on cultural, like they, they teach corporations around the world on multinationals on how to work with cultural diversity and issues, you know, so a lot of his works in Japan and Asia.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“Oh, I tell you the one, the one really cool thing was...We went out, the space shuttle was going to fly over and then the captain of the space shuttle was a NOLs alum and had written a letter. Oh yeah. And given two. So, and we all went out and we had the time, the space shuttle was going to come over up crop in a drizzle, you know, watching the sky and the space shuttle goes over and Rick Rochelle reads us the letter from the ship on the shuttle CEO. And to me it was really powerful because you're, you're out there in the outdoors or it's about midway through the week. And it just, you know, it how insignificant we are, how far away a colleague can be, who has shared a similar experience. Yeah. I mean, I think the feeling of connectedness was pretty powerful for me. It was connectedness, you know, to the earth to nature two, this, you know, community of, of, you know, future stuff. I mean, this community of people that were just doing this pioneer stuff. Yeah. And and you know, the fact that we could be sitting there listening to a letter that this guy wrote and watching him fly over. That's a way. Yeah. Cool.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“Having the Lama fall on me and that was, I was pretty surprised. Powerful. And you know, it's not only the, the aspects of the Lama, but it's what, you know, it's the fear and all the emotion that goes with that. I thought I was gonna fall off the side of the mountain and the Lama ended up in it, you know, stuck in a, in a Bush on the side of the mountain. And I was like doing an inventory of have I broken any bones?” (Intrapersonal and Environmental)

(Transfer) “You work for, people you work with and people who work for you. You really need to figure out how, how to connect with them without being invasive. Right. Because it has to be on their terms. But there are, there are leadership tools that you can use to engage people so that you can deal with them, you know, as all human being, not just, you know, the aid that's in and out of your office running your calendar or, or you know, the person bringing the briefing books. Right. Because there's no, I guess here and this, I think, and I know you're well aware of this as a leader, but one of the leadership fails is failing to acknowledge the importance of everybody's job regardless of where they are in the hierarchy and that the ship doesn't sail. You know, unless that sailor's swabbing the deck or you know, turning the wheel or you know, or doing the, what are those three M checks, you know, I mean there's just, there's no job too small when it comes to getting the mission done and everybody matters. And if leaders don't appreciate that and extend that appreciation to the human beings they're interacting with, it's hard for them to be a good leader. Yeah. They're going to reach their pinnacle at some point early on because you've got to motivate those people to continue to give their all at their place and in the mission. I mean...” (Interpersonal)

“So the risk risk management, I was just going to say, I think also risk management, you know, doing that in the outdoors where you have to, You know, having plans for, for things that might happen, particularly those things you can, you don't control. But the risk management function in being a leader is so critical and I think that it does teach you that. And, and that, that combination of, you know, when we're out there off trail and, you know, we were split into two groups and I was in a group that got pretty lost pretty and almost, you know, William McNulty almost ran us off a cliff. The understanding the tools of risk management to mitigate the unknowns is, is really important. And you know, and I use that every day when I'm leading groups, both on the master gardener and the master naturalist side Memorial stuff and even in a classroom and now even with this coven stuff. So yeah. You know, I think that's an important skill and it's an important concept that I think in the military we get it pretty early on because you're, you know, you're doing, you know, if you're an aviator, you do pre flights, post flights, ship drivers, submariner, Intel. Right. But I think outside of the military, that risk management concept is more sort of cloudy. It's not emphasized as much or people only get it sort of at the top, whereas we get it throughout our, (Managerial)

“Yeah. So, that's where you have it. [inaudible] It's one thing to expose yourself, but how you present it is, is going to influence how people respond and react and, and you don't want to be attacked or, or wait, what do you call sidelined.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“And so I had a lot of discussions with him and I learned a lot in that area and what, you know, what corporate world is looking for in terms of needs and how companies like his are, are functioning. John Ford, you know, who founded the discovery channel and you know, very successful businessmen and in that arena he would be willing to interview John I think. I think he's, he may be busy, but I've think he'd be very happy to be recommended him. Yeah, I cause he definitely comes you know, the, the corporate world is very successful. Mmm. And, you know, just so down to earth, you know, I don't know. I know he was really thrilled with the experience and the outcome and, yeah. And then so will McNolty you know, founded team Rubicon at a young age, you know, we young Marine. (Managerial)

Leadership Lessons

Connecting with People

Acknowledging People

Everyone is Important

Human Beings

Risk Management

I Use Every Day When I'm Leading Groups

Expose Yourself

To Be Vulnerable to Influence People

Corporate Experiences

Name: "Following"

Response Category	Selected Responses	Potential Codes / Themes
(Benefits)	<p>"So, I wrote, I don't believe that the program benefited my leadership, at least not in a direct enough way that I can legitimately connect the two here." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p> <p>"What the program did do for me was give me a place and time to reflect deeply on topics such as my values, my personal life, my mission, et cetera. I also was able to spend a great deal of time observing other people. Something that always benefits my leadership in an indirect way. Right? Finally, if there was any real and tangible benefit to my leadership skills at all, it was in reminding me of how important it is to be a good follower." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p> <p>"Yeah. No, and I gave this some thought and my final statement, I think that this journey did more for reminding me of how to follow then it did, how to lead. And, and I really took that part of this seriously and reflected a lot on what did I learn about being a better follower." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p> <p>"Yeah. It you know, I, I realized that because I spend so much time in the topic of leadership, when I follow, my tendency is to evaluate and judge," (Intrapersonal)</p> <p>"And so I'm, I watched somebody take the lead and I realized that the moment they begin to lead, I don't put myself in the position I should, which is let myself be led and let them do their job." (Intrapersonal)</p> <p>"We also had the, a lot of the expedition behavior on the leave no trace. But they, they take that even a little bit further, which is leave nothing in your emotion either. So if you, if you have a learning opportunity through disagreement, leave no trace of that." (Intrapersonal)</p> <p>"And, and you know, give you an example, my first night that we were there I had a horrible night sleeping and, and it made my next day difficult. So I got some great help from a couple of people to set up a better sleep situation the next night and it went great. And so the comment by Lynn was let's leave no trace of that first night. It was a learning experience and yeah, and looking at it that way got rid of it for me. So I thought that that was a pretty cool expedition behavior as well. Yeah, it was it was really, it was really powerful. It was, it was really good. And, and I think that, again, for me, I know the difference when I'm leading and if I have people in front of me, I can sense, so can you, we, we did it immediately." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p> <p>"And you know, here's probably the, the, another key element to it. I don't think that NOLS, and I know CCL, we don't get the value of following experiences. We don't get it. And, and imagine a program where you not only touted the leadership development that we're going to give, but we're also gonna make you a better follower. And as the senior leader, we forget how important that is. I really realized as I analyze this in my head that this is an angle that we need to put more attention on at CCL. And maybe even</p>	<p>Negative Learning</p> <p>Don't Believe the Program Benefited My Leadership</p> <p>Not in a Direct Way</p> <p>Gave me Place and Time to Reflect Deeply</p> <p>Topics such as my Values, my Personal Life, my Mission</p> <p>Time Observing Other People</p> <p>Benefits in an Indirect Way</p> <p>Reminding me How Important it is to be a Good Follower</p> <p>Reflected a lot on what did I learn about being a better follower</p> <p>When I follow, my tendency is to evaluate and judge</p> <p>The Value of Following Experience (being a follower)</p> <p>We Forget How to Follow</p> <p>See How you Are Viewed by Leaders when you Follow</p> <p>NOLS Value</p> <p>Lead Myself</p>

<p>creating some program experiences that are all about letting you see how you are viewed by leaders when you follow” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p>	<p>Overcome Own Anxieties and Push On</p>
<p>“They don't know. They're, you know, they (NOLS) don't know how valuable some of the stuff is that they create for people.” (Intrapersonal)</p>	<p>Connection Between Journey Members</p>
<p>“NOLS did the best leadership work when it came to getting me to lead myself and overcome my own anxieties and push on. I like the way they facilitated the connection between the journey members as well.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p>	<p>I May Not Have Come Home a Better Leader...</p>
<p>“But at the bottom in bold, I said, NOLS does an amazing job of knowing just how far and hard they can push to keep getting positive results. I may not have come home a better leader, but I did come home a better kayaker, outdoorsmen, wilderness cook, et cetera. I can think of no organization I would feel more safe with in the outdoors than NOLS.” (Managerial and Environmental)</p>	<p>Safe in the Outdoors with NOLS</p> <p>Create an Environment Where People Can Explore Themselves and Feel Safe</p>
<p>“And, and if you asked me the question, are you a better outdoor leader at the end of that program? That question. Absolutely. I understood outdoor leadership. I didn't even know what it was when I got there and I left feeling like a leader, a steward, leader of the outdoors. So mission accomplished, except maybe they could have done a better job to prepare me for what was coming. I think that they don't realize what we're talking right now. They just do what they do. And they do it well, but they don't think bigger and realize that they are this piece of a larger puzzle.” (Intrapersonal and Environmental)</p>	<p>NOLS is taking a much more vertical development perspective. Whereas we may take a more horizontal development</p>
<p>“Well Lynn and I hit on that a lot. We talked about that on the trip and I had to be very delicate in how I did it because, you know, I constantly said, what you guys do, you do brilliantly. What I'm talking about is something you don't do. It's not that you're missing it, you just don't do it. And we both agreed to that. Where I ended up with was to basically say to Lynn, look, if I can ever get CCL to do leadership in the outdoors, we need a person like you, Lynn, to take us out, bring us back safely. And she knows a lot about leadership. She just doesn't get to tell anybody. She has to be the outdoor expert. And if you talk to the woman, she's very, very intelligent. She gets it. She knows the lessons being taught out there. She just, that's not her job and she doesn't do it.” (Environmental and Intrapersonal)</p>	<p>NOLS gets you thinking bigger perspective</p>
<p>“...the last comment I'll make, and I, I, I think that everything you've been saying has really hit on this concept that we talk about a lot at CCL, which is vertical versus horizontal development. Right? And when I think of the conversation we're having about NOLS perhaps versus a CCL, I think in that context when it comes to leadership per se, NOLS is taking a much more vertical development perspective. Whereas we may take a more horizontal development. We think of things like giving feedback and all the different aspects of leadership and the boxes we must check. Whereas NOLS kind of takes more of the Headspace gets you thinking bigger perspective. So in that context I would say they nailed it with vertical development.” (Intrapersonal)</p>	
<p>(Methods) “The people who are all in, or the people who just by the look they're giving us have this doubt. And what I realized was that by me being so analytical about leadership, I come across more often than I want to as being the doubter or being the one that they have to do extra work. And I don't want to be that person because I want leaders to succeed. And so this really drove that in me to say, you have a role to perform when you're following. It's not</p>	<p>You have a Role to perform when you're Following</p> <p>Role Playing (method)</p>

just, you don't have to lead. So do whatever the hell you please. Here's a conscious role you have to get into. Just like leading. Yeah.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“Well, you know, I, I think though it's a good theory and it's a good hypothesis and I do not believe that I would have ever had the insights that I did about followership in a classroom. I think it, it required being out there to some extent to have that experience.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal and Environmental)

“Of all the activities/methods used on the journey, I think that the most effective were the storytelling in the evening. And then in parents I said everyone telling a significant and true part of the, of their life that made them who they are today or something similar. Yeah. I liked that exercise because it reminded me of how complex everyone is. No easy solutions. I also liked the fact that NOLS puts you into positions or predicaments that create some level of healthy anxiety or stress. I learned a lot about myself as we did various things on the water.” (Intrapersonal and Environmental)

“If my organization did this program, we would have timeouts built in everywhere to drive home the different leadership learnings and points. NOLS, let's sit, sit within you and find a purpose. That's not, it's just different.” (Intrapersonal)

“Yep, either it finds a purpose or a doesn't, right? That's their, that's their thing. But I'll tell you, Bruce, this is how this is how I was. For example, you know, there was a time, this, one of the things that made me have so many compliments about how NOLS really made me a better outdoors person is that when we were out in the middle, I think I told you this, but out in the middle of one of the fjords, a mile from any shore in water cold enough to make you paralyzed. If I remember, well, we get, we were wet quite often, but what we had to do out in the middle of the Fjord in this water is we had to switch kayaks and everyone looked at them and said, you're crazy. Physically scared. People were shaking saying, I don't want to do this. And Lynn said, you are going to do this. I'm sorry. It's part of what we do. So we had the sweat and I was, me and another guy had to switch, but everyone had to help us. And it was highly stressful. All the kayaks together. But we pulled it off. We did it. And after we did it, I was sitting with in the boat now with the woman who was very instrumental and she was still shaking. She was stood, still bothered by the whole experience. And so I started to debrief with her a little bit like a coach. And I started to ask her to think about this anxiety she's feeling right now. Did it, did it come from the fact that she was put in charge or that she had no control at all to what was happening? And we started to talk about it. So my point is I, I was thinking to myself, there's no way I would have done that experience, which took about 45 minutes and not sat there for the next 15 and debriefed it. But NOLS doesn't, they move on. It's just different. But I thought that was a great example of one of those opportunities CCL would jump on. NOLS moves on.” (Intrapersonal)

“Some of them, sometimes people walked into a classroom, they look around, they take stock and they pretty much say, yeah, no one in here is as good as I am. I'm not going to learn anything. Right. But when you step into the theater of Prince William sound, the humility is overwhelming.” (Intrapersonal and Environmental)

Required Being Out
Doors to Have that
Experience (not in
the classroom)

Storytelling Most
Effective Method

Reminded of How
Complex Everyone
Is

Put in Positions
(Roles) to
Experience Anxiety
or Stress

Learned A lot About
Myself

Missed Opportunities
to Debrief, Low
Hanging Fruit
(NOLS moves on)

Humility!

	<p>“And so, you know, anybody who walks up to you and says, are you ready to learn? It's like you can barely get the words out. You've got to bring people to a place of humility, I think. And we don't do that well in a classroom. But Prince William sound gets the job done.” (Intrapersonal and Environmental)</p>	
	<p>“Well, and if you're up in Alaska, it really happens because it never got dark. Y eah. I mean it's three o'clock in the morning, you're sitting out with John having a, you know, a cup of coffee and you don't know what time it is.” (Interpersonal and Environmental)</p>	
(Transfer)	<p>“And I told them (at CCL) that I learned a lot from NOLS in, in sort of a negative way, if you will. And I'm going to share that with you shortly.” (Intrapersonal)</p>	<p>What Not to Do</p> <p>Reflection After</p>
	<p>“I kind of learned what not to do if you're going to create an OE program, but created outdoors versus creating an outdoor adventure program. And there are two different things. So this topic was magnetic to me and then all of a sudden the coronavirus hit and everything got put on hold. So I just share that with you to say, I have been giving this a lot of thought as a topic.” (Intrapersonal and Environmental)</p>	<p>Needs Deliverables</p> <p>NOLS Leadership Not Taught in a Transferable Way</p>
	<p>“And so, my group got real excited about a program that might be, you know, over a five day period. We might be in three different locations and everybody's going to get all of the normal outdoor excitement they typically get with an outdoor adventure. The difference being this is going to be a structured. Oh, we program that has more deliverables than the typical outdoor.” (Environmental and Managerial)</p>	<p>Outdoor Leadership versus Learning Leadership in the Outdoors</p> <p>Isn't What we Expected</p>
	<p>“And when I came back, I summed it up for them by saying that what NOLS teaches is outdoor leadership and outdoor leadership is not much different than when we use the term in the way of saying civic leadership. Civic leadership means doing right by your community. Civic leadership means you know, if you, if you get something out of your community, get, give something back, right. Civic leadership and NOLS leadership are very similar because what NOLS does is it teaches you how to be an ethical, moral good steward of the outdoors. And if that's the definition of outdoor leadership, they nail it, right? But it's not teaching leadership in a transferable way to bring back to your place of business and say, now what was it I learned at NOLS?” (Intrapersonal and Managerial)</p>	<p>They Didn't Go There</p> <p>That was Missing for Me</p> <p>Discipline to be a Better Follower Leave No Trace (emotions, disagreement)</p>
	<p>“And there was hope at CCL that I was going to experience something in that middle ground and I came back and said, I didn't, I very, isn't what we expected. They did not go to the middle ground. And that's what really sparked the interest in. Why don't we create that then?” (Intrapersonal)</p>	<p>Your Followership Actually Helps the Leadership</p>
	<p>“And, and to give you an example, the sailing program is great example of us taking open enrollment or the content to the outdoors. So it is a perfect example of the open enrollment program type that I wanted to teach. Sailing was not an adventure program. It was a five day I think four day, four full days of content being implemented and tried out in, in a laboratory, which was the water right. Vastly different from a NOLS outdoor adventure program. And that's, that's a great example to bring up. That's the part I was missing and I thought they had so much low hanging fruit by where they took us and the captive audience they had in us, but they didn't go there. They don't go there. It's not what they do.” (Environmental)</p>	<p>Don't believe NOLS made me a better leader that week</p> <p>It was my own assumption of what leadership is that didn't get met. That's not their fault. That's my fault.</p>

“Mentally I always am the evaluator and I have to put that aside and let myself be led. And I think that **the more time I spend in leadership, the more I have to discipline myself to do that.**” (Intrapersonal)

“And, and you know, give you an example, my first night that we were there I had a horrible night sleeping and, and it made my next day difficult. So I got some great help from a couple of people to set up a better sleep situation the next night and it went great. And so the **comment by Lynn was let's leave no trace of that first night.** It was a learning experience and yeah, and looking at it that **way got rid of it** for me. So I thought that that was a pretty cool expedition behavior as well. Yeah, it was it was really, it was really powerful. It was, it was really good. And, and I think that, again, for me, **I know the difference when I'm leading and if I have people in front of me,** I can sense, so can you, we, we did it immediately.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“Well, you know, there's a, there's a thing here that always seems to be true to me, which is the leaders I respect most when they're put into positions and they're not leading. **They are the most adept wonderful finesse at how they follow.** And I think of some of the most brilliant leaders I've worked closely with and when they get the opportunity to let someone else step up the way **they support, it's like the difference between listening and active listening.** There's small wing and there's active following.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“And it's just like active listening. You don't simply sit as a passive person, but **your followership actually helps the leadership.** Just like an active listener helps the speaker” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“So I don't, I don't at all trash NOLS, but I think NOLS is doing something they're not giving themselves credit for. And I want to find a way to create an experience and give ourselves credit.”

“...what does NOLS call leadership, **NOLS is referring to, to the leadership of owning the outdoors, creating an environment where people can explore themselves, feel safe, whatever you want to call it. Then that's leadership and they got it.** And so I really wanted to put that down there and to make this point, that's just because I keep saying I **don't believe NOLS made me a better leader that week.**” (Intrapersonal and Environmental)

“They taught me outdoor leadership and that's what they advertise is national outdoor leadership. And the distinction is outdoor leadership. And they nailed that. So that was my real point of this is what they said they would do. They absolutely did. And **it was my own assumption of what leadership is that didn't get met. That's not their fault. That's my fault.**” (Intrapersonal and Environmental)

“This is where I have a **challenge with the NOLS design.** I really did want to have more to bring back with me from the expedition. **I was hoping for some more concrete / substantive learnings and they weren't there when I returned.** I looked at the amazing photos and remembered the journey with great fondness and respect. However, **I did not have leadership lessons that I could apply.** As I looked at each picture. I may be biased here and I accept that **I was constantly seeing all of these great leadership moments and wanting to call a timeout and talk about every one of them.** NOLS doesn't do that, and that's okay. It's their show.” (Intrapersonal)

Challenge with the NOLS Design

I was hoping for some more concrete / substantive learnings and they weren't there when I returned

I did not have leadership lessons that I could apply

More Confidence

That to me was super impactful. **Vertical development that will stay with me forever** and CCL does not do it as well as we think we do.

But wouldn't it be nice if, if people could **have little flashes of vertical, which helps them after the program** actually get to a new level, right?

See Challenges as Opportunities to Get Better

“Now again though, and, and this is where I think if, if I were to sit down with the guy who founded NOLS, Mr Petzoldt, I think that what he might say is when you finish the program, were you better skilled and more capable if you found yourself in Alaska with a group of people to lead them to safety? And the answer would be, absolutely. **I have more confidence now than I ever would have had.** And I think he would have looked at me and said, that's outdoor leadership. That's what I was trying to achieve. And if that's the case, which I believe it is, then they get an A-plus because they did what they set out to do. **I'm the one that came with the wrong expectation that needed to be right-sized.** They didn't miss anything. It was me. And the more I think about it, the more I was asked the question to CCL as well, if we get into this as NOLS going to be a competitor. **And I said it shouldn't be because what we need to clarify is that we're not trying to make you a better leader in the outdoors. We're trying to make you a better leader by using the outdoors.**” (Intrapersonal)

“Well, and, and you know, it's, it's a, it's also, and I know you'll respect this if you're designing a program, especially in today's competitive market for what we do, you almost have to have your graphic up there to say, **are we addressing both horizontal and vertical?** ...And, and that to me was super impactful. **Vertical development that will stay with me forever and CCL does not do it as well as we think we do.** Yeah. We, we are more horizontal and we kind of believe that if you line up enough horizontal things, you move up anyway. So that's vertical and that's not what it is.” (Intrapersonal)

“It is, but I'll tell you, I teach it quite often, not to senior people because I tell them that **it's their job to be ensuring both the vertical and horizontal development of their people and that this doesn't have to be around leadership.** Right? If I'm a computer programmer, I have both vertical and horizontal development, so every leader has to focus on, on developing their people evenly. It's eaten up by people. This concept, they love it and, and even NOLS I think could have done a brilliant job the first night around the campfire. If I were Lynn, I would have contextualized the whole week and said, let's talk about the leadership you're going to learn this week, and **I would have put it into a context of this is going to be vertical for you, which means you won't see it happening until you're home 18 months from now having a beer with your uncle and he's going to bring up a topic and you're going to go, Holy shit. Yeah, that's vertical development.** (Intrapersonal)

“Well, I'll tell you, it's the, you know, the next time we get together, what we need to talk about that I think you will find fascinating is the program that, and a colleague in Greensboro designed in Iceland which, which is based on **the concept of antifragility.** And that's that's a real concept. Antifragility and it's all about sort of the Medusa concept, if you will. You put a head off to grow back and, and we had a client who wanted their leadership to eat [inaudible] antifragility they wanted people to **see challenges as opportunities to get better.** And we created it around Iceland because Iceland's history is a history of antifragility. It's a history of every time something got thrown at that little Island nation, they came back stronger. So we took it there and taught it there. Wow. I'm telling you all of this to say what we learned was that **if you find a way not to teach the points you want to make, but to teach between the points you want to make and let them reach the points themselves, you get vertical development.**” (Intrapersonal)

“And so when we did this, what we did was we went to the places we needed to be and told the story of where we were, but we did not teach what we

wanted people to get. We taught something tangential, however they put one plus one together and it was their own conclusion. They reached from where they were and what they were hearing. So I'm sharing it with you because in this concept of vertical versus horizontal development, what we learned was that **you can actually design for vertical development**, you can design so that the learnings they get don't come from you, the instructor, they are created to happen when you're not there by setting everything up sort of thing. And, and this is the concept that CCL I and my team want to bring to leadership in the outdoors is creating these **moments of vertical development** and **for the most part we will never have confirmation they happened. We are just setting them up knowing it's to come** (after the program).” (Intrapersonal)

Name: "Beginner"

Response Category	Selected Responses	Potential Codes / Themes
(Benefits)	<p>"So I would answer the question about what's been the lasting effect by why did I do it in the first place? Yeah. I mean, you'll understand this. I was a professor for 30 years and then basically still a professor inside a company. And so I'm a geek. And yeah, each you do research, you consult to coach. And so over time you know, you, you get you know, unless you're a total dork, you get some degree of expertise within an area, right? Yeah. And you can forget what it's like to be a beginner. And that was a motive for me was I teach stuff around virtue, culture, strategy, leadership, and it's, it, it, for me, I was worried about just forgetting what it's like to listen to this material for the first time. Yeah. I, well, I'm working for one company." (Intrapersonal)</p> <p>"So there were a couple of people that I thought, well, this'll be interesting to just get some people, you know, most you don't. Our split roughly was I think about five or six of people with military backgrounds. And then I'm kind of all over the map for the remainder was about the split. So you've got this group of people really skilled high level get the wilderness stuff and then guys like me can't find, you know, a tent at Costco." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p> <p>"I think behind it, I've confidence has gone on and behind the scenes he was telling other people who were skilled look, you can see he's an idiot. Give him a hand. So there was a positive to that. And that was to me the positive that wasn't just kind of getting support. It was being in a position where you really don't know what the hell you're doing, really cannot get through this without the support of others. Which is very different when you've got a class of people in front of you and you're the one that's running it and all that. But I meant by that, the curse of knowledge versus the, the discomfort of the beginner. So I, I think, you know, I experienced that while during that week and that struck me. So the kind of specifics wrote a book around written several books around the virtues and their application to business culture, leadership." (Intrapersonal and Managerial)</p> <p>"Can you keep up? And while the consequence be that you're holding other people back, that was a worry of mine. And Bob actually taught me off the ledge on that one where in his soft and gentle way. So look, you idiot, what are you walking through that? And he said, well, okay, we can take care of that. What's your next word? What's your next word? So I thought, okay well then, then I'm game. I'll give this a flyer. I mean, set up front that you're, you want to put yourself in the beginner stage. It's not supposed to be comfortable, suck it up. And, and you know, frankly, Bob was very helpful to me as well. I mean, when I was a complete bozo and trying to put a tent up where I could've just as easily been sleeping in the dark because I couldn't get the damn thing up." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal and Managerial)</p> <p>"Yeah, I think so too. It's, I mean, I think the power of the Kathleen thing is it was she gained the most, but when you were, when you were, I had a front row seat to it, I bet gained from her. I didn't experience it. I mean, honestly, Bruce, there was no time when ever felt any physical threat. I just did it. Right. I probably should have, but I did. But I got benefit from Kathleen by observing how she moved through it. And that's the kind of the sticky piece to it. And I, you know, I think this, perhaps this is another component to your</p>	<p>Being a Beginner (again)</p> <p>Feeling Like an Idiot</p> <p>Can't Get Through Without Help of Others</p> <p>Discomfort of the Beginner</p> <p>Complete Bozo</p> <p>Suck it Up</p> <p>Observing Others</p> <p>Reminder (if not a new experience) of What is Always Important</p> <p>You Need the Experience to Have the Forced Reflection</p> <p>The Benefit of Reflection Important</p>

	<p>your study, it, you know, you don't have to be having a brand new moment. It's a reminder of what is always important, but you need the experience to have the forced reflection. I think that's a strength of a NOLs or other similar experiences. It's Plato's argument is I'm going to spend my whole life struggling to do what I already know is right. Yeah. Yeah. And minus some discomfort minus forced reflection, then I don't have the opportunity to kind of grow from just cause I know it doesn't mean I'm, I'm insightful about it. Yeah. I think the, the benefit of reflection is important in all of that.”</p> <p>(Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p>	
(Methods)	<p>“Part of my charge is also to go out in the world and work with others. So, it's not just Parker Hannifin where I work, but also to connect either with college students or level managers or different sectors of society. And I just think you can get the curse of knowledge that you can just forget that there was a day you didn't know any of this. You're teaching it based on decades and you can get very ineffective because you've forgotten for some, for you, it's all common language for somebody just if they're just learning the basics. So that was a preeminent objective for me. And the NOLs piece I've always done a ton of physical stuff, hiking and all that. But when it comes to camping and never mind wilderness camping and man, I think I bumped into a tent, a Costco once. So, I didn't know Jack about camping wilderness. Didn't know Jack.” (Intrapersonal and Managerial and Environmental)</p> <p>“So, all that was novel. And I've gone and that was the discomfort component to this. And I, you know, I didn't I mean, I love nature. I love the Lander and the Wyoming wilderness. But my motive wasn't a suddenly become a wilderness guy. Yeah. I haven't gone camping since. And you know, I think I'll still probably opt for a Marriott that's maybe around a nature center rather than,” (Environmental)</p> <p>“So I think Bruce, in some ways it was that simple. Do something, I'm gonna make him comfortable. And you might meet some interesting people while you're at. Yeah, I don't know that I was more thoughtful about it than that. I was concerned though that you know, relative to age, as it turned out, there were two people, Bob was one of them, a little bit older than me. The reservation wasn't so much what, while I don't do the athletic stuff, the physical stuff is kind of what I've always done, but I still thought, boy, there's going to be people that are 20 years younger than me.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p> <p>“Yeah, it's especially when it not only is the they're experienced in the wilderness piece, but they're, the majority are younger than me. Yeah. Right. That's double whammy. And you know, again, I, I really kind of appreciated Bob just kind of in a, in a very kind of from a good place and in your face, just suck it up and get on with it. Which worked for me.” (Intrapersonal and Environmental)</p> <p>“Yeah, that was a re it, Kathleen was an interesting one of 'em. I don't think I'm talking out of turn on this one cause she was wonderfully open about it. So there's, you know, go back to what does it feel like to be a beginner. I'm going to give you the casting story. Please writes that piece of so ultimately it's about being vulnerable and you can't get through it on your own as opposed to you're in control. You're calling the shots and you know what's going on and others don't completely flipped it. And so that vulnerability was an interesting one. NOLS talk about all of them, but I want to come to Kathleen in particular. Yeah.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p>	<p>Novel Wilderness Environment</p> <p>Experience Discomfort</p> <p>Anxiety Related to Age</p> <p>Worry About Holding Others Back</p> <p>It's About Being Vulnerable</p> <p>Can't Get Through It on Your Own</p> <p>“Who am I?”</p> <p>Wonderfully Open</p> <p>Being Vulnerable</p> <p>Shared Vulnerability</p> <p>Completely Flipped</p> <p>Telling a Life Story</p> <p>People Shared</p> <p>Come Together as a Team</p> <p>Too Incompetent to Add Value to the Team</p> <p>Struggling for Awhile</p> <p>Just Can't Do Jack</p> <p>Want to Contribute, But Can't</p>

“One of the techniques that I suspect you already know about that was really more powerful than I anticipated is that “Who am I?” 10 minute talks. And that's where everybody got vulnerable. Bruce, that you, it didn't matter who you are, but it was interesting what people shared. So for the most part, you've got a group of strangers. I mean to realize some people knew each other before, but for the most part you've got the majority that you've not met before and you're telling a life story. Yeah. So we're back to that curse of knowledge, vulnerability CNY for beginner. Yeah. How quickly you come together as a team when you didn't really know each other before. Yeah. The other part that was intriguing about this group, I am going to come to Kathleen is for the most part you had a lot of people who literally were experts in teamwork and taught others. So that was an interesting kind of side line that I don't know that I anticipated going in. So you have people that kind of know the teamwork stuff. They may or may not know the wilderness stuff. Yeah. So it was kind of, boy, people were efficient. I mean, it was, people stepped up, there were no loafers. If anything, again, now, now I'm only speaking for myself. It was you know, when you're a beginner, you're too incompetent to add value to the team. And so you're struggling for a while. What's going to be my contribution because you suck at our cooking. I mean, you just can't do Jack.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

Amygdala (Fear
Emotion) Activated

“Who am I?”

Life Story

Hyperventilating

Connecting

Freaked Out

In the Moment

“That was an interesting experience to want to contribute, but you can't, that's so great. That's so well-described. So, you know, everybody's kind of going through that on their own way. But here's the, I, to me, one of the most powerful experiences in the week was around Kathleen. We, we're coming to a really steep mountain and Rick says we're going up and about, the last thing that would occur to me is we're going up that, our options here. So it was I, you know, at a personal level, I mean, freaked by Heights or anything, but I mean, you just knew you needed to be careful. Yeah. So we're, we're going up and Kathleen's right in front of me with Rick. And Kathleen first. Great. She's a really thoughtful person. And she freaks out. I mean, she, she hits the wall, the amygdala has been activated and it's one of those, we're halfway up, halfway down.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“It, this is it. I'd go and down is not going to be, and literally Rick kind of talks her off the ledge and in a very thoughtful kind way, just gets her geared enough that she can make it to the top. Yeah. And we go to the top and I mean, she literally was hyperventilating and all that and I gave her just top marks to push through that. And yeah, we get to the top, we have some lunch now you've got to go down. Yeah. And we're going down through snow. Yeah. and there's Lynn, Kathleen, and Tony and me and the two of them are freaked anyway and they don't ski. I used to ski a lot. So, but they're freaked and now both of them are feeding off each other. But they get down so that they cut story short. (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“Just think of this, we're now alive and if you fall, it's not cool. There's a rock guard waiting for you at the bottom. You need to be careful. And there's the Lamas and all that in the background. And then Kathleen finally starts to reflect and, and get grounded. Now fast forward a couple of days, man, her confidence levels soared. Wow. So in terms of connecting and I was so struck by that, that I actually connected with her several months later and said you know, in the moment, cause I asked her this during, at the end of our trip and about three months later, so is your question, this is why I think you want to talk to Kathleen. Did you have, do you think there was any lasting effects from your freak out moment? And she was very definitive. And again,

I think it's better for her from, for it to come from her than for me.”
(Intrapersonal and Interpersonal and Environmental)

“But it did have a powerful impact on me is I was not I, there was no point. It knows where I was freaked. I mean, I knew I was a bozo and didn't know what I was doing, but I didn't, I never felt any physical danger. I mean, I, that never happened, but when I watched Kathleen's growth in my view, she grew the most of all of us because she's the one that went up to the wall. Yeah. Yeah. And that was an interesting lesson. I learned it from another person, not from the way I personally felt. Yeah. I watched her to say, you know, boy, when you go through vulnerability and you get right to the point where you're about to crack and if you can get past it, that's where the growth is the greatest, which is the kind of crap that I teach.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal and Environmental)

“It was just fascinating to watch her from in that moment to a couple of days later. And I, you know, I even sent her an email about three months after. Yeah. You know, basically your question, was there any lasting impact? She's very definitive. The answer's yes” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

(Transfer) “And this is going to your point, I, one of the reasons I wrote the book was to create e-learning modules. And the reason for that is the company I worked for is nearly 60,000 people in 50 countries, 350 locations. So for scale and sustainability, you've got to have content. I can think through pretty carefully what can deliver it online, what could be delivered face to face. And so I was back to, that was back to the motive of, all right, if I would looking at this material for the very first time with beginner eyeballs what does that look like and how would I use it? And not just to have the experience of being the beginner, but to talk to beginners to understand what their, the no one's going to be against these virtues, but when you're just being introduced to them, you know, how do you think about them? How do you go about practicing them? So I was going into NOLs, worried about cursive knowledge wanting to experience it so that I got humbled and then hopefully, I mean, I don't know, time will tell that. Does that experience actually results and method and content that is more supportive of the beginners than would have otherwise occurred? That's what I hope. I don't know if that's, we'll see.” (Intrapersonal)

“But it did have a powerful impact on me is I was not I, there was no point. It knows where I was freaked. I mean, I knew I was a bozo and didn't know what I was doing, but I didn't, I never felt any physical danger. I mean, I, that never happened, but when I watched Kathleen's growth in my view, she grew the most of all of us because she's the one that went up to the wall. Yeah. Yeah. And that was an interesting lesson. I learned it from another person, not from the way I personally felt. Yeah. I watched her to say, you know, boy, when you go through vulnerability and you get right to the point where you're about to crack and if you can get past it, that's where the growth is the greatest, which is the kind of crap that I teach.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

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Beginner Eyeballs

The Experience of
Being the Beginner

Humbled

Lasting Impact

When you go through
Vulnerability
(physical and
emotional)

Growth is the
Greatest

How They Make
Sense of It

Comes Down to
Humility and
Reflection

Hard to Have Growth
Occur

“Humility is the right
soil for growth”

Requires both
experience and
reflection
(independent of age)

“So if you go back, I mean a lot of what you're trying to get at is the Lang lasting effect. The degree to which people despite a variety of variables **how they make sense of it**. I think were the secondary research would suggest that this is going to come down to **humility and reflection**. Yeah. So kind of independent of your age, **you can be a 60 year old person who's just not very reflective, so you don't tend to learn much**. Right. so they, they kind of counter to the questions that you're in. To me, our arrogance, arrogance kind of what do you have to teach me? I already know this stuff. Money, it's hard. Have growth occur,” (Intrapersonal)

“If on the other hand you know, humility, **humility is the right soil for growth**. And that **requires them not just to have the experience but also to be reflective about it**. Yeah. So some candidates for your consideration is looking at that humility reflective component, which I think will at least other research would show that that's kind of **independent of age**. **If you can have the arrogant 60 year old, that is a know it all right. 40 year old reflective person**. And that's what I'm sharing with you is backed up by other studies.” (Intrapersonal)

“That's a good framework. I liked your first two and I hadn't even thought about **managing your stuff**. Again, just as just my own lens. Yeah. For me that was kind of a **pain in the ass part**. Cause again, I didn't know what I was doing and I, I told Bob, I now know what it's gonna feel like when I'm 80, if it takes me a box and put them on. Yeah. So there was that, there was, for me, there was an element that, you know, **I got the benefit of all the camping and packing and all that, but it just wasn't interesting to me directly**. I got to play, you know, you have to play to, to get through the week came for that. But there's nothing that I see as a carry over to, I haven't thought about the way you put it on the nature side and I was kind of a **pro nature guy before as long as I had access to porcelain toilets**.” (Intrapersonal and Managerial and Environmental)

“But I, you know, I, I think that's true that I probably I don't know if it's different than **maybe a heightened appreciation for nature**. And I, you know, I don't know if that, you know, when I think about it, you've, you've helped me reflect on this over this last year since NOLS. I probably am **doing more things intentionally related to nature**, but that wasn't kind of this, **I think you're giving me this aha moment on that one**. That wasn't one of my goals, but it probably was a byproduct and it's, you know, it's not that I'm going to storm the best deal to the protest. But I do, you're right. There is kind of an appreciation of that. Obviously one of the most powerful parts was **looking at those damn stars**. You couldn't help but think that, boy, **I'm just a little speck on the universe here**. So there's a **humbling aspect** to that as well as an appreciation for the **power of nature** and **you're part of something much bigger than yourself**.” (Environmental and Intrapersonal)

“And you know, at least where I live, that's, it's nothing like I mean **I do have visions of what I saw that week**. It's still in my, **in brain somewhere** in that prefrontal cortex. Yeah. That I just don't, I don't see things like that when I'm living in Cleveland and I travel a lot, but that was a, I don't travel to places like Wyoming often.” (Environmental)

“You've helped me. I mean, I think I had that language stuff, but that's the value of language though. But you, for what it's worth, **you struck a chord with there was my fear**. I mean, when I, before I decided to say yes, I thought, I just don't know what the hell I'm doing here. Screw this up now.

Backed up by other studies

Not sure about carry over from “management stuff”

Pain in the Ass Part

Heightened Appreciation for Nature

Doing more things intentionally in Nature

Aha Moment

Looking at the Stars

Just a Little Speck in the Universe

Humbling Aspect

Appreciation for the Power of Nature

Part of Something Much Bigger than Yourself

Visions of what I saw that week

Humility

I can Learn from Anybody Here (independent of age or experience)

Bob sent me on the, can you walk 18 holes carrying your bag on? Tell me what your worries are. We'll figure this out. But that doesn't mean that during that week I wasn't very aware that I'm slower, I'm more inefficient. Yeah. I liked the way that you put it. It's the managing the stuff part, actually the hiking, which I was worried about that turned out to be fine. Yeah. But the part I sucked, that was the managing my stuff, preparing meals, you know, I could clean stuff up, but beyond that I was kind of hopeless." (Intrapersonal and Managerial)

"And I would argue that goes back to the humility. So independent of your age, are you still open to learn from people who are age or older who are younger? That it's not, you know, just crap on a wall. I mean, you really are trying to put yourself in a position I could learn from anybody here." (Intrapersonal)

Name: "Confidence"

Response Category	Selected Responses	Potential Codes / Themes
(Benefits)	<i>In what ways did your leadership benefit from the program, either during or after it was completed?</i>	Connection
	-Biggest benefit was "connection"...connection with others, like we are bonded. Toni and others, Chris Antonetti, Peter Rea, Jay Hennessey, Lynn Petzold, Rick Rochelle (especially). (Interpersonal)	Self-Confidence
	-"Confidence" especially from the day of her "panic attack" climbing. "You can do difficult things." Vivid for me. (Intrapersonal)	Space for Exploration of Self
	-Space for exploration (Intrapersonal)	
(Methods)	<i>What activities (or learning methods) of the program benefited your leadership the most? How did those activities help you become a better (or more effective) leader, if at all, and why?</i>	Debriefs
	-After action debriefs...authentic feedback, sharing challenges, critique that was positive and real from peers. Learning from peers. (Interpersonal)	Authentic Feedback
	-Created a group charter at Rick's house. Need to have "fun" together. (Interpersonal)	Positive Critique
	-Not contrived exercises. No manufactured tasks. (Environmental)	Peer Learning
	-Bob's contrived game, not fun, seemed a bit out of place	Fun Together
	-Magic of being "fully in" the experience (Intrapersonal and Environmental)	Not Contrived
	-Let it unfold (Environmental)	Fully-in Experience
	-Professional development experience (Intrapersonal)	Let Unfold
	-Unpredictable, powerful perspective in that environment (Environmental)	Unpredictable
	-Ground that you are fond of (Intrapersonal and Environmental)	Powerful Perspective in Environment
	-They have something that is so special (Intrapersonal and Environmental)	Grounded
	-Perspective change, how you see yourself, and the world and you're so small in it (Intrapersonal)	Special
		Perspective Change
		How See Yourself
		Small in the World
(Transfer)	<i>Transfer: To what extent did leadership benefits of the program transfer back into your work environment after the program was completed?</i>	Confidence Transfers to Professional Life
	-Confidence transfers back into my professional life...I can now do things outside of my comfort zone. I make more confident choices, or maybe choice I would not have made previously. (Intrapersonal)	More Confident Choices
	-Deeper, calmer, with more empathy (Intrapersonal)	Choice I would Not Have Made

-“You can do difficult things!” (Intrapersonal)	“You Can Do Difficult Things!”
-The “Transformative Magic” of NOLS (Intrapersonal)	Step Back
-Instead of doubling down on the plan, step back and consider others more (Intrapersonal and Managerial)	Consider More
-Discussion with her boss...detailed debrief, CEO debrief (Interpersonal and Managerial)	Detailed Debriefs
-New way of asking questions...”have you asked your teammates” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)	New Way of Asking Questions
-Gift in re-telling to my boss (Intrapersonal and Managerial)	Consider Teammates More
	Gift of Retelling Expedition Stories

Name: "Observing"

Response Category	Selected Responses	Potential Codes / Themes
(Benefits)	<p>"You know, it doesn't matter what I do in life, I get always something out of it. So that's, that's number one. But for now, you're gonna observe them. We all are creatures of habit. That's all it is. You have already an attitude of being open and listening or you look what we, what we call positive affirming. That's all. You're only listened to what is confirming what you already believe anyway. So when you go to NOLS and you really want to say, okay, let me, let me understand where I am, you will take a lot out of it. If you just go there and see what you do is right, then of course you get that one out too. Right?" (Intrapersonal)</p>	<p>Observation</p> <p>Being Open</p> <p>Listening</p> <p>Positive Affirming</p> <p>Understand Where I Am</p>
	<p>"So this is all independent on this one. So what they give you, an example would be they do a lot of of leadership training and this, this French company and the lock means every six weeks at least a date. So, and the, the main reason for this one is because this one is a merger between several billion dollar companies. And of course they have different cultures and they want to know what kind of leadership team they have and they want you to understand what kind of leadership team is the one that designed, right. That one was by far more valuable than what we did at notes because first what they do is they, they un-useful mixed tests and they value this one with parallel test and then they ask you honestly and seriously is that you? And I'm pretty much comprise that it doesn't matter what test you on that when you have reached a certain age, you know yourself, it's pretty close." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p>	<p>Other Far More Valuable than NOLS</p> <p>It's Different (not right or wrong)</p> <p>Vulnerable</p> <p>Open Up About Weaknesses</p> <p>Trustworthy</p>
	<p>'So, and then when they, when they compare you with your teammates and your colleagues, then you see the end, the difference between somebody who is introvert and extrovert. You see somebody who is more analytical, why somebody is more based on the gut feeling and they, what they do is they explain to you how you work together. There's no right or wrong. They're stressed, right? It is different." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p>	<p>We Are All Human</p> <p>Shared Perspectives</p> <p>Other Programs Focus More on Your Personality</p>
	<p>"Well, you see what, what I liked about our CEO was that we were too, so to see, we didn't know each other, but we, we open up about our weaknesses and so on. That of course opens immediately something what I call a trustworthy. Yeah. Because if I, if I tell you something about me, which is not really the best chocolate side I have, that makes me vulnerable. Yeah." (Intrapersonal)</p>	
	<p>"So if somebody is, then I'm respectful enough to say, Hey, we are all human. We all have this kind of perspective that puts you more together."</p>	
	<p>"They don't do, they are more focusing your on your personality, right. And did have focusing on resilience." (Intrapersonal)</p>	
	<p>"So for me, for example, I'm I believe in servant leadership." (Intrapersonal)</p>	
	<p>(Methods) <i>How about the outdoor environment?</i></p>	<p>I Loved It!</p>
	<p>"I loved it. Totally. Outside the normal working environment, you are going, in many cases, we went to French Shirley's, which are 22 in a hotel, or we went to the mountain side where we stayed in a hotel. But it's a way from</p>	<p>Llamas are Characters</p>

your work environment that you are not allowed to have your phone or your emails checked, Right?" (Environmental)	Competition between Groups
"So that I can give you one example of what sticks to me is when we got encountered with the llamas. I never have been working with llamas, so I had no idea about the characters. When you think about after the 10 days, that's all you have. You have seen that the animals have their own character." (Environmental)	Some Uncomfortable in the Environment We Didn't Help the Weak
"You could see also for me, what was really helpful was to see how different people reacted. You had people who accept and were strong and there were others who were uncomfortable in the environment, but what I noticed is that we, we did not really help the people who were weak. At least that was my impression, that there was this surface where we verbally said it, but there was this, there was this competition between the groups and saying, we want to reach that spot. And the one who was slowing down was more or less, okay, we just do it because we want to win, not because we want you to accept." (Environmental and Interpersonal)	See How Different People React Unknown Situations Solve the Unknown You Haven't Done it Before
"So I think that's what you need as the leader that you, that you put in situations which are unknown to you. And then you need to take out of your toolbox the means which you think are suitable and you solve the unknown. Yeah. And do you make decisions under his, because you don't, you haven't done it before, so you don't know the outcome. And that I think is leadership. Because when you look at this one, there is leadership and this many people in this Valley like a buzzword and there's management, right? So for me, you need both, right? So management for example, when we talk about standard procedures, you need to have people who follow the accounting rules. You need people who follow the HR laws around the state. There's no leading in the sense of leading. But then you have also lead means you are, you're leaving the established school and you go somewhere and somebody is telling you to fall. Right? And so you can be a leader as long as you want. If nobody is following you, you are not a leader. Right? (Interpersonal and Managerial)	Don't Know the Outcome Talks in the Tent Networking the Most Valuable Listening to the People Around You Peer Learning Realizing Everyone Has Obstacles in Life
<i>I'm wondering which activities you remember that you thought were the most beneficial?</i>	Bonds You Together with Shared Memories, Moments
"Oh, it was talks in the tent." (Interpersonal)	Nature by Itself
"So choice, it is not only the, in that situation with NOLS, it's in general, when I go somewhere, the networking is most probably the most valuable of all training lessons. So it does matter if I go to INSEAD or I go to one of the university classes. That's not what you really get taught because you can read the books yourself. Yeah. It is more or less what you listen to from the people around you." (Interpersonal)	Walking (without talking) Frees Your Mind
"Yeah, and what, what I like about our tent, what I was listening to is everyone had some obstacles in his life. And it was interesting to see how everybody developed this mechanism, how to cope with it. Everybody has a different way and to say, okay, that one makes sense to me. For example, when you think about Casey STEM, where he has started and where he is today. That one was extremely impressive for me and saying, you can make it any time in life. It doesn't matter where you are there. You just need to get your act together." (Interpersonal and Intrapersonal)	Thoughts Buried Deeper Time to Listen to Your Inner Self Reminded of Childhood with Parents

	<p>“Then we have a closed group or you say all of them are together because the moment in the moment you have only one or two and two are not there. They come back to the office and then you have two teams. Right. So they, they, if you think about what bonds you together is the memories, the moments.” (Interpersonal)</p>	<p>Reflection on Life</p> <p>Everyone has to do Everything</p>
	<p>“What still sticks to me. Of course, that's the, the nature by itself. The lack of civilization. The lack of civilization. No phones, no car sounds. Yeah. There was no noise at all.” (Environmental)</p>	<p>Totally Out of Normal Environment</p> <p>Deeper Impact</p>
	<p>“So when tell you, when you look at the name that we've did, the day Heights, everybody did this one differently. For example, I also enjoyed not talking at all, not just walking. No, because it's like a rhythm walk because that frees your mind and you can thoughts which you have buried deeper and coming to your mind. That reminds me a little bit of my time when I went to the monastery for two weeks. So when you, when you shut out all the distractions and then you have time to listen to your inner self.” (Environmental and Intrapersonal)</p>	
	<p>“So if you, if you had the time off, some of us choose to explore and some others just said, okay, no, I sit in the camp, I read a book, I do nothing. So that tells us something about, I guess listeners. So, and I know myself, if I sit, if I would go on vacation athlete days on the beach, I would try and it, When I went to this case, I have to look at the pictures and somebody else. You went up into this Valley? Yeah. That'd be where you could look behind there. Hawk. There was several lakes where we went to the lakes and then we were climbing down. This one is most probably also connecting with as my, my childhood because that place up there, it looks really like the outs. And I've went a lot of, actually every single summer I went with my parents into the Alps and we did this hiking from, from one half to the other. And later on we went climbing with friends from school and you have this, we've got a timetable and nobody's going to say, okay, this one. And the names come back and pictures come back because certain areas of a member you remind you of something.” (Environmental and Intrapersonal)</p>	
	<p>“So the, the other topic, I think what would help, which is very typical of NOLS, is that everybody has to do everything. Also. So many of us never cooked because they have wives or they go out. Right. And then when you think about there was not a simple table, I would say it was not eatable yeah, August was all good.” (Interpersonal)</p>	
	<p>“Right, but that's, that's when I can clearly see what you just described, the people who never had this experience, but this one is because you are totally taken out of your normal environment. Right. Right. So if you don't have an association like we have with something similar, it's maybe a deeper impact. Right?” (Interpersonal and Intrapersonal and Environmental)</p>	
(Transfer)	<p>“So, and this one means that you are not always informed, right? Yeah. If you have reached an age where you are not, they'll have to prove anything. You don't want to be whatever's going to the next level because you're already at that level.” (Intrapersonal)</p>	<p>You're Already at the Next Level</p> <p>See Other Gain Confidence</p>
	<p>“So our job is more or less to like our kids where you all can see this one. You can see more potential in somebody who's in front of you then they see in themselves. Yeah. Yeah. For me, it's this, this satisfaction when people are</p>	<p>Transfer? Not at All, Unless with Same People</p>

in coach them, they do it and then you can see that they are gaining momentum and **gaining self-confidence**.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

Transfer to you normal work environment?

“**I would say not at all. Not at all. Not at all.** Because it's really like you, you read one book and you close that book and you open another book...Because it may have been different if you would have in your work environment the same people share...That'd be, cause when you, when you have this people worked, you had a **certain kind of bond** for this kind of environment and then you came back and you had the other people which you have worked for years before and they have always stayed in that environment. The problems are the same. The people behavior was the same. So you're **very fast back to what you did before**.” (Interpersonal)

“So, what would you do from time to time is of course you, **you have your notes and you will reflect**. But that one is only from time to time. But I do this one with all my documents where I have to behind in my office I have a desk where I have all the literature, which I think worthwhile to remember. And then then from time to time, but I have whatever meeting is canceled or whatever. I just take one out and then I just go through and I say, okay, forgot about this.” (Intrapersonal)

“I think it's more important than what you do in your office. It's more essential...So if you do it this way or that way in the office, it's really, that's better. **But if you will in nature and you make a mistake that may be not working well for you**. What I always have in mind is sailing. Let's assume that so far, for example, I still have contacts with grey and one of the partners, the, the owners of coast composites. Yeah. He paid for training costs and then participated in the Volvo ocean race on one of the legs. And that is, no, there is no for forever. If you make a mistake and you go overboard is the likelihood that take fish you out is pretty low. So in this case, of course there's a lot of liability if you had satellite phones, et cetera. So that, I think what else was still around the bear? The bear fans. That was the best play. Yeah. And just thinking about that, the bear is coming at full speed at you and you have to wait all, it's more or less 10 feet away. We have to have that one to practice.” (Intrapersonal)

“But otherwise, I don't know. There were some people who never camped that most probably is more, let's say, **intense**, where people that it's more **burned into their memories**. Sure. Yeah,” (Intrapersonal)

“What kind of would, comes to my mind from time to time is that **there is a different kind of life out there**. That's what I, you know, when you're in aerospace, you're always in large cities all over the world. That's my life. It's London or Delhi or Los Angeles. It's always big cities. And then you'll see people who work for NOLS and you'll listen to people from nodes and you can actually make a living in the middle of nowhere. That's true. So that, that thought comes from you from time to time. Whereas how would I, I would I like to do something totally different. Yeah. So it has nothing to do with what the training course was actually intended to, but **it starts a thought process**, like a say that **you can do things totally different than what you do today**.” (Intrapersonal)

“That's so I have the habit when I, when I fly, I do not work on my laptop right now because **as a leader you are not supposed to do constantly**

Very Fast Back to
What You Did
Before

You Have Notes, and
You Will Reflect,
from Time to Time

It Starts a Thought
Process

You Can Do Things
Totally Different

Compromise

Intense Memories

Corporate Parallels
with NOLS

something. There's this mainly thinking and out of the thought process you discussed a lot of ideas and a lot of thoughts and then you come to the conclusion that this is the way, and you discussed this, your team, you get the input and then you based on this one together, depending on what you have to decide, you either decide yourself or you let your team decide by leading them to a certain direction. Food coming back to NOLS, I think NOLS has definitely displayed. It has its place mainly with young. Especially in, in times like today, I think it's even more important than it was 20 or 30 years ago. I can't remember about you, but the in our childhood we had siblings. So this person, brothers. So from the very beginning you had to learn that there was a certain kind of compromise you had to compromise. That's all our own freedom was always limited by the freedom of our brothers and sisters. But nowadays you have a lot of people who seen the children and they come to the corporate world with, okay, when can I be the next CEO?" (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

"Then we'll can quite work that way. Right. It's also a date. That one is definitely helping. In Germany when I, when I was coming from high school, there was still the dressed, you had to go to the military. So yeah, and it's still sticks to me today. Well, I can stay candidate member. A lot of details actually in very great detail." (Intrapersonal)

"That's when there was, there was one exercise we work with, I was with the Navy for the us Navy entries, the army, and we had a Sergeant who was harder than anybody else. So when everybody, when every other platoon was going, it was raining or it was snowing or it was whatever, whether it was, it was unfavorable, they went to the classroom. And whenever it was shitty, you went out with us for Monte and when you, when you came to a mud hole and you wanted to hop around, no, he asked you to hop through the damn thing and then at night that's what you explained to you. I said, okay, people will smoking a cigarette. And then you saw from, I don't know how far away the damn light is. Okay. This is where you get the bullet idea. Yeah. So all these topics and then after three months, basic training, you cannot imagine how this platoon was formed. Right. So it was really this topic, which is some kind of cliché where you get broken as an individual, you are getting disassembled and then you are put back together as a team. So you felt that this one was worthwhile. You, you saw that the easy way is not always leading you to the best solution." (Intrapersonal)

"But this one is, has to do with the American culture. So when you look into them, corporate offices in Europe, it doesn't matter if it's Italy, France, England, Germany, the CEOs of large public traded companies disappear for three to four weeks on vacation. That's a while here. There's a lot of CEOs and leadership team members who are thinking, when you go 10 days on vacation, you're useless and therefore you need to get fired." (Environmental)

"So imagine this one would be your work, your work life, and it would be notes. So now if you think about what, what did we learn about, what is the parallels between what we did this one week and what is the, what you do at work. So number one is both, when you talk about leadership, you should have an objective of what for a long-term, what we call a vision. Right? That'd be, cause if so the saying is very clear. If you don't know where you're going, no need to accelerate." (Intrapersonal)

“But if, if we agree to that we are meeting next Sunday in San Francisco at fisherman's Wharf, you can take the text here, you can take a train, you can fly, you can walk, you can take your bicycle. There's a traffic jam. You don't have to call because you know, tomorrow, Sunday, whatever time officially. So you can make your own adjustments. Yeah. **So that one was the same with NOLS.** You can that you can, I can always do all this one between the corporate world and NOLS. So you came to a place and said, okay, this was on the map you wanted to go, but you couldn't go there because you couldn't see whatever. It was too steep. Right. So then you had to change the plan. So that one, I can **clearly see the parallels between leadership and NOLS.**”
(Intrapersonal)

Name: "Nature"

Response Category	Selected Responses	Potential Codes / Themes
(Benefits)	<p>"We were walking to either gear up or meat for hamburgers, hot dogs or something. The first night we walked from Noble Hotel and he asked me that simple question. He says, will Nature, what are your expectations? You know, Oh, this course. Yeah. I don't know if I spoke with you or not. I said, RL, RL, my expectations are to enjoy the Trek and come back safe. Yeah. I'm think I'm pretty specific, you know what I mean? And he said, no, no, no, no. I mean, pretty specific, you know, be specific. And I said, Oh know that's as specific as I can get, you know, enjoy this and come back." (Intrapersonal)</p>	<p>Expectations</p> <p>Enjoyment</p> <p>Safety</p> <p>Collaborate</p> <p>Get Along</p>
	<p>"And so I don't think he captured that until after it was over and we were at graduation, whatever. And he walked up to me because you didn't know he was a character. Yeah. and that's part of some of it is what we go through with these types of courses is meeting people that we don't know and quickly having to analyze and collaborate and get along and, or not, you know and, and but my point was he came up to me later and said specifically Nature, I now understand what you meant." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p>	<p>More Comfortable</p> <p>Being Uncomfortable</p> <p>Accountability and Responsibility</p>
	<p>"But, but to that point, I believe the leader needs to understand that that person has both accountability and responsibility, not only to themselves, because you've, you know, in your, in your what did his first responder [inaudible] course, the first thing they tell you is in order to be selfless, you need to be selfish...You know, and so that has always stuck into my head that sometime, you know, self preservation is, isn't about being selfish. We're not thinking of others. You know, it's about self preservation. You know? (Intrapersonal)</p>	<p>Self-Preservation</p> <p>Selfish to be Selfless</p>
	<p>"Wow. And so there's [inaudible] always courses and NOLs has presented, you know, it's full year dissertation. You know, there was a question about the benefit. First one would benefit and what sticks with me and when I speak to people when I go out and we have to talk again some other time because there's, it's just too much. We can talk about what we want to be specific about. This is when you first brought up benefits, what I learned first was to become more comfortable with being uncomfortable. (Intrapersonal)</p>	
(Methods)	<p>"And I think that's, you know, the essence of it. It's Bruce, nature is very objective, right? It doesn't care. He, she or it doesn't care. You know, who you are, what you think you are, what you think of yourself. All it cares about are you prepared, are you ready? You know, cause you know, unexpectedly, I'm going to throw some stuff at you. You know, remember we went through the thunderstorm and storm and so and another, and another area, and I just mentioned this cause I want you to speak is when we had that morning of kind of giving our, you know, opening up and speaking and we ended up with him on our team that more you, myself, there might've been someone else, but as we were going after the after, cause I, I had a tearful moment of expressing myself. So I was, I was in a point of having a moment of being with oneself as we started the day." (Intrapersonal and Environmental)</p>	<p>Nature is Very Objective</p> <p>It Doesn't Care Who You Are, What You Think You Are, What You Think of Yourself</p> <p>Unexpected</p> <p>Weather</p>
	<p>"And for some reason, and I'm not judging him. Okay. I'm not sorry. He was very obnoxious sometimes, you know, very loud, very. And I was like, can you just be quiet for a moment because we're going out and you, you, you, I was with you and you said something, like, I said, I might've asked you why, how do we get him today? And you said something like, did you get the</p>	<p>Opening Up and Speaking</p> <p>Tearful Moment Expressing Myself</p>

memo, you know, about our personalities and that we could be with him that day and kind of hope to maybe shed some things. And I thought that was so funny about, no man, I didn't get the memo. I don't know if that was just my imagination or is that the conversation? I mean, part of it is at Mmm, it is almost a program. It should be mandatory for any executive leading men. **Mentorship.**" (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

A Moment of Being
with Oneself

Be Quiet for a
Moment

Matching
Personalities

Mentorship

The Leader Is
Responsible

Agendas

"Well, you know, we had those moments and I want to go back to your analogy of the individual, the leader, the lead of the group in how they communicate. In, in, in **expedition management**, the leader should always look back pace. The leader is responsible. Right?. The group's not necessarily responsible to leaders responsible for the pace based setting. They are the ones who supposed to stop, analyze, look back and see if their pace is too fast. Yeah. Not that the pace of the group is too shallow. They have to move. But I found in the instructor course there was so many agendas. We were out for 35 days." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal and Managerial)

"**Nature has a way of, that's the growth, right?** There's growth does not come without being uncomfortable, but it was, you know, that, okay. That's what our society promotes. Being comfortable. Yeah. You know, in every which kind of way, you know. And, and, and to this point, we are promoting going into nature. We're promoting the ability to just go sit, be quiet, and **try to figure out how you fit big picture**. So my, my, my sacred question is my sacred question in my, what I do is how do you market to someone who doesn't even know it exists?" (Intrapersonal and Environmental)

Nature has a Way
(Growth)

Growth Does Not
Come Without
Being Comfortable

How Fit Into Big
Picture

"You were talking about that **experience of going out into nature, and I call it the spice of life, right?** The spice of the whole, of what I, that you're **totally integrated in presence and the energy of life is when you're daring**, you've done it, you're at the look, you're gearing up and you're making sure you're packed and you have all your centrals or what you think you need. And so you finally have your backpack ready and you're getting ready to go. You know, you prepared yourself, you know, as well as you think you're now geared up and now you getting ready to step on his bus and you're getting ready to go into something you have no clue or what you get ready to go in." (Intrapersonal and Environment and Managerial)

Spice of Life

Totally Integrated in
Presence

Energy of Life is
When You're Daring

"And, and that point, if you actually **take a moment to check your senses, you're like at a peak of wonderment**, right? You're, you, you know, there's **anxiety**, there's **tension**, there's **fear**, there's **happiness**. I call that the **spice of life**, man. You're, you're like you **like right there, man.**" (Intrapersonal)

"And what I found interesting going into the transition with a phone that has a camera in it. Yeah. You still have the phone in your hand. Yeah. You see, so it's like Mmm. It's still the sensation of electric. Yeah. Yeah. Okay. It's not separating. And I, the **bio rhythms of going into this natural space** and you know this through your own experience with military and everything else, **when someone puts a timeline on your experience, your body body almost automatically sinks in into that time**. Yeah. For instance, as soon as that day comes or that hour comes that that bus is supposed to come. If that bus doesn't come your shift, I think to where like your body shuts off. Yeah. I mean, I was reading an article and I know you're familiar with this, with **prisoners of war**. Yeah. You know, the people who supposed to be **the percentages of survival were the ones who did not put timeframes because once that time came in and you weren't freed or something didn't happen in your emotions start to go**

down a dark hole. Right. Does that make? Am I making sense there?"
(Intrapersonal)

(Transfer) "And this is what you're speaking about, this program, this executive training time is a constraint. And what is it and is not important as leader. Okay. And when I go back to that leader leadership, who determines what leadership, what is leadership? Okay. I mean, Mmm. As you can see, we have some people believe it's very subjective and what is good and what is bad leadership. Okay. I mean and, and we don't need to get political because let's just say, Bruce, I don't care if you're Republican or whatever. Have the ability to have the attributes of that position. Yeah. Because if you, if you're elected into that position and the expectation is, is that you have the capabilities for all people. Okay. Bring people together, not Cantor is a hell of a thing. Yeah. Well that's been used for centuries and centuries. Yeah. Yeah, so I'm more in term of leader development, in consideration of leadership development." (Intrapersonal)

Leader Development

Leadership
Development

Seeing With a
Different Lens

Takes Long Term to
Appreciate, Not
Short Term

See What the Big
Picture Is

Reflection

"And I was supposed to take the NOLS course a year earlier at Bruce and we were going through it. We were going through another reorganization and they asked me to postpone it. And within that year, my mother passed. Right. So alot was going on in this course as a, you know, kind of like, you know, what the hell is this all about? You know, what, you know what's going on. Mmm. And then I came back from that cause they debrief you, right. You know, you know, debriefing when you come back in, they can brief you on the site. Oh, you think you on this great experience. But everybody around here has, you know, nobody's special, you know, but when we go back home, they're still in their same world and you and you and I, and I, and Rick had an excellent, and I still have that point about going to the summit and seeing from the top and then coming back down. But the people down haven't seen it from that lens." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

"And they can either accept you, reject you or the neutral. Right. And when I came back, my circle did not necessarily embrace me the way I felt. And so, you know what I did? (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

"Well, this goes back to a, and you'll find that you find out the more our relationship grows. Did I many cases in conversation do a 360, I'll start the conversation. We'll go through the conversation and we'll come back to when we say that a sacred question is how do you market to someone something when someone doesn't even know it exists. And especially if what you are being exposed to is contradictory to societal norms because societal norms is about moving forward, not slowing down, do not reflect, you know, don't go back into history, don't do that work. But then you're putting a person into a natural environment that is bringing all of that out, right. Just sit your butt down, go through some experiences, see what this big picture is. And then once you go through all those experiences in nature, then you come back to a society of societal norm is saying, you got to move forward. Don't stop and reflect. So that kind of goes to what you were saying. It may perfect more in the long term. Okay. Versus a short term." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

Name: "Courage"

Response Category	Selected Responses	Potential Codes / Themes
(Benefits)	<p>"She is awesome. I am literally, I am so inspired by her in so many ways. Both you know, who she is as a person, their appetite and desire to continuously learn, the leader that she is, and then the courage that she has. I mean that, I mean, I had anxiety, a lot of anxieties going into the trip, but I can't begin to appreciate what it was like for Kathleen and Tony, the other, the other lady on the trip. And I admire so much of the courage to do it and the way they jumped in. And I tried to think about what the equivalent would be for me of, like going into an all-female week-long ballet camp or something. Not to be stereotypical, but just something that was like so far outside of my comfort zone and then add to it that I'm doing it with the, not only strangers but all opposite sex strangers." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p> <p>"It's incredible. Like the only, the only time I like yearned for electronics on the trip was to try to be able to record the content from what other leaders were sharing because I couldn't write notes fast enough, whether that was Peter or some of the discussions we had on leadership when we all got together and sat around and talk. I felt like I was immersed in this like master's course in leadership and experience. And it was like, if I could have just had a recorder the whole time, I would have had hours and hours of notes. So, and Peter was right there at the head of the list." (Interpersonal)</p> <p>"Yeah, that was, that was one of the things I probably enjoyed most is that, you know, to the extent you're able to lead or influence in that environment, it's solely based upon your ability to contribute and the relationship you built. There's no titles, there's no hierarchy. And if you want to be able to shape something or to contribute, you have to be able to contribute. You have to have the relationships to make that happen. And admittedly, the group we were with was such an extraordinary group that people leaned in and supported that. But it just, yeah, I was cognizant of the whole time that I was out there. It's like, okay, to the extent that Peter might listen to something I'm going to say or it's because I have something to contribute or because of his belief in me and it didn't have anything to do with my title or anything that came into it." (Interpersonal)</p> <p>"I try to do that in my life and be, you know, put myself in uncomfortable situations. And even the way I try to lead here is not through title. I feel like the way to lead is by first being a great teammate. And if you can be a great teammate first that then leadership sometimes will follow that. And so that I try to have that be my mindset and then to be immersed in an environment where so many people were demonstrating those behaviors every single day. It just reinforced that power to me." (Interpersonal)</p> <p>"I think you touched upon it. Yeah. I mean seeing that and seeing her strength and her courage made you want to do even more to help support it and be a better teammate. (Interpersonal)</p>	<p>Courage</p> <p>Anxiety</p> <p>Outside Comfort Zone</p> <p>Peer Learning</p> <p>Sharing</p> <p>Immersed</p> <p>Relationships</p> <p>Influence</p> <p>Ability to Contribute</p> <p>Belief in Me</p> <p>Uncomfortable Situations</p> <p>Teamwork</p> <p>Immersed in Environment</p> <p>Power</p> <p>Strenght</p> <p>Courage</p> <p>Be a Better Teammate</p>
		Conversations with Peers

leadership philosophy, mental model framework, or just general thoughts. I found that super powerful, one of the most powerful moments of the entire week for me started with “Who am I?” speech that Rick Rochelle gave it the first night we were there at his house. So first, I mean, just the very, from the beginning, the leadership tone that Rick set with inviting everyone to his home, right? Not an office, not someplace else. It was inviting him into his home and eating in his house and then sitting on his patio. And then Rick taking that first step in front of a group of strangers and you're telling a very personal, personal story that signal vulnerability immediately.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“And I think that that set the tone for everybody else to accelerate the connectivity of the group because here Rick was in front of us kind of baring his soul and sharing things that were the most part, his most personal thoughts or moment in his life. And you couldn't help but think like, wow, okay, Rick's willing to do that. I need to do my part to lean in and do the same thing. And I remember actually thinking when it got to my point to do, to whom I speech and the people, the story of the people that had gone before me, I was like, leave you in tears. Or like feeling this visceral emotion that when I went, I'm like, I'm not sure. My personal story is not that powerful. So what am I going to talk about? Like it was edited and it's intimidating group.” (Interpersonal and Intrapersonal)

“And I remember feeling anxious about that. So I think that process was super powerful. Again with the, with the way Rick set that tone and then the subsequent who am I speeches throughout the course of the week. Yeah. I think really brought the group together in, in a short period of time. And then the other thing just stands out as the quality of the conversations on the trails with people, with individuals and the way in which we rotated groups and tried to get times with different people. And you know, I pulled so much from those individual conversations and experiences that we had together.” (Interpersonal)

“And I'm generally more of an introverted person anyway, that's not like my sweet spot. And so to tell you know, to be that vulnerable and to share a story like that in a way that Rick did was no, it was, it was a powerful moment for me just to see. I know leaders often talk about being vulnerable, but I can't think of a better example than, than that one in my recent experience. And that that's something that always strikes me.” (Intrapersonal)

“It creates a much deeper connection. I feel that people feel like there is.” (Interpersonal)

“But, the way he (Rick) did depth and how vulnerable he was willing to do and not just do the superficial, who am I, but “Who am I?” at my core and what life experiences have shaped me to this point...was entirely different than anything I experienced.” (Interpersonal)

Sharing Views on Leadership

Personal Storytelling Most Powerful

Shared Vulnerability

Connectivity of the Group

Leave You in Tears

Visceral Emotion

Personal Story Powerful

Anxious

Super Powerful

Brought Group Together

Short Period of Time

Conversations on the Trails with Peers

Important to be Vulnerable

Share a Story

Deeper Connection

Shared Vulnerability

(Transfer)	<p>“I think it heightened awareness on some leadership behaviors maybe that I hadn't appreciated before. But to see it in that setting and experience it firsthand, to not only know that it's important to have like that white belt mentality, but to actually be in an environment where you, he didn't really know what you were doing. It's one thing to be able to try to like try to have empathy for someone who may be jumping into something new that you're experienced doing and coach them along and try to anticipate what they might be feeling. It's entirely different when you're actually doing it and you're the one in that environment. I think it gives you a greater appreciation for what it's like to be new to a group, what it's like to not maybe have the expertise that someone else has. You know, the vulnerability that it creates anxiety that creates those types of things. And then I think the thing that really continued to strike me the quality of the people and the quality of the teammates and individual attributes that maybe I had seen with Jay or Bob or Rick or Kathleen. So many of the things that I shared already and I'll find myself referring back to.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p>	<p>Heightened Awareness of Leadership Behaviors</p> <p>Find Myself Referring Back To</p> <p>Moments That Inspire Me as a Leader</p> <p>Courage</p> <p>Empathy</p> <p>Curiosity</p>
	<p>“Those moments inspire me as a leader. Like Kathleen's courage and empathy or Rick's Rick's curiosity or, you know, there's a lot of those things that I find myself reflecting back on saying, you know what, I need to be a little bit more like Rick here, or I need to be more like Jay here. I need to be a little bit more like Kathleen here or Peter and Mike. Those are the types of things that I just was around a group of really impressive leaders that I, you know, really inspired me to be better.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p>	<p>Reflecting</p> <p>Impressive Group... Inspired Me to Be a Better Leader</p> <p>Peer Learning</p>
	<p>“And that one in particular I've thought a lot about as I've tried to navigate a lot of really difficult situations or going through organizationally right now and that there are a lot of things I don't have answers to. And I think it's important for me to be vulnerable to the group and let them know that and share some of the ways I'm feeling the, the anxiety that I'm feeling and uncertainty that I'm feeling and well will continue to resonate with me.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p>	<p>Organizational Change</p> <p>Important to be Vulnerable</p> <p>Anxiety and Uncertainty</p>
	<p>“Like, I may not be able to do my land navigation five years from now, but I guarantee you I'll remember the “Who am I?” (Interpersonal and Intrapersonal)</p>	<p>Long-term Impact</p>

Name: "Discomfort"

Response Category	Selected Responses	Potential Codes / Themes
(Benefits)	<p>"We all get to the various leadership things, seminars and so on. But I think that it is sort of hands on leadership...it's immediate impact leadership as opposed to some of the more long-term things you go through." (Intrapersonal)</p>	<p>Immediate Feedback</p> <p>Deal with Unknowns, Unfamiliar, Uncertainty and being Uncomfortable</p>
	<p>"Because in its own way it's challenging because you know, you've got the physical challenge...I really wasn't sure how I was going to handle the physical part of it...turned out fine. But you know, I didn't know it was going to be fun." (Intrapersonal)</p>	<p>Anxiety and Stress as Motivators</p>
	<p>"And so it was a challenge and yet...what it made me think of was, throughout your career, you're presented with unknowns. You're asked to do things where you're not really sure you can do them. You think you can, but you're not positive. And I always try to say to people, 'Okay, you need to continue doing that for yourself and for others.' (Intrapersonal)</p>	<p>Celebrate Achievement and Shared Accomplishments</p> <p>Rediscover Layers of Yourself</p>
	<p>"And at the same time, that anxiety that it calls when you say, 'Let's go there,' and you haven't been there before, is a motivating thing. You know, anxiety is a motivator. The fear of failure is a motivator. And that exhilarating feeling when you say, 'Okay, let's go and do that thing we haven't done before.'" (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p>	<p>Window on Your Leadership from Outside Perspective</p> <p>Contemplate Leadership</p>
	<p>"And then you do it (particularly with a group) is invaluable feeling...when you're in the thick of it. When you're in the thick of it, it's kind of a rush to do that. And one of the challenges I think of being a leader is to transmit that sense to those who don't have it and also to celebrate the achievement once you get there." (Interpersonal)</p>	
	<p>"It was just people need celebration. And I think that that's a twofold thing. People need things to celebrate and then they need to celebrate them when that happened. And I think that NOLS gives you an opportunity, for little celebrations all along the way. We made it over that Ridge. We got the llamas down that Hill without them falling over us." (Interpersonal)</p>	
	<p>"And you're also exposed to new layers of yourself that are maybe not new old but, but recovered. Where I remember thinking back to some of my sports days, you know, where, where you're at the end of the practice of whatever and you think you cannot run another lap and you do anyway. (Intrapersonal)</p>	
	<p>"And I think that in a way the NOLS experience takes you outside your normal experience to give you the opportunity to look back upon and contemplate aspects of leadership that are important." (Intrapersonal)</p>	
	<p>"Yeah, it gives you a gives you a window on your leadership, the experience that allows you to gaze upon it in a more objective way as opposed to just know, go through it." (Intrapersonal)</p>	

	<p>“Yeah. Cause you don't feel like you should be leading. I don't feel like I should be leading with a compass.” (Intrapersonal)</p>	
(Methods)	<p>“That (personal storytelling) was impactful to me because when you go through and try to summarize for a group of people, most of them you haven't known very long, what your life was. It forces you to think about it, you know, to contemplate the various trajectories of your life and how they resulted in your being, being where you are. And I thought that was an important thing overall...the experience made me contemplate myself and my leadership more than I expected it to. (Intrapersonal)</p> <p>“...not immediately. For example, when you're the leader for a day...like one of the days, I was a leader, we went up to the peak of a mountain. And it was a pretty strenuous uphill hike. I think it was about seven of us went and yeah...that was fun. Challenging. And you know, I haven't led people out, you know, without you know, much direction and about, and without really knowing where I was going before.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p> <p>“I got the Llama wrangling job by default and I really enjoyed it and it's fun to deal with them...It's interesting because they don't respond like everybody else. And yeah, I found that I really enjoyed that task and getting to know them all the time and also understanding how to get them to do things they didn't want to do, like go downhill sometimes.” (Intrapersonal and Managerial)</p> <p>“You're cold, it's raining. You're hungry. You know, you have dysentery out in the woods. that is not fun.... And everybody got really tired on some days when you had long hikes uphill and, and made it through it.” (Intrapersonal)</p> <p>“I liked the sense of task and responsibility that you had all the time. No matter what. No matter how uncomfortable you are, you're tired. At the end of the day, you got to set up camp, you got to put the food away, you got to find work, clean your water and make sure it's potable get ready to cook, fire it up. And you know, you basically, you're working all day long.” (Intrapersonal and Managerial)</p> <p>“And then having that little time to sit on the rocks and look at the stars before you go to bed and tell stories. And then it's good night at a not so great night's sleep because you're sleeping on a rock somewhere.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p> <p>“Mine (my moment) was, mine was, I had that case of dysentery...from drinking the wrong kind of water early on and I couldn't shake it and I was periodically running off behind a tree and I was tired not sleeping very well. And hungry. And I was kinda going, what's, what's, what's actually good about this? Where's that good?” (Intrapersonal)</p> <p>“It's all mitigated by the, the being out in a pristine environment. I mean, it really is a pristine environment, personally getting in touch. You're with people who are sharing the experience in much the same way.” (Interpersonal and Environmental)</p>	<p>Tough Conditions</p> <p>Extreme Outdoors</p> <p>Sense of Responsibility</p> <p>Task after Task</p> <p>Leader of the Day</p> <p>Personal Storytelling</p> <p>Shared Trajectories of Life</p> <p>Pristine Environment</p> <p>Shared Experiences</p> <p>Being a Follower</p> <p>Outside Comfort Zone</p>

“So yeah. I mean, maybe there's something about **extreme** stuff in the **outdoors**.” (Environmental)

“You know that is different from everything else because **nature** is **implacable**, you're not going to talk it out of being **cold** and you're not going to talk your legs into not being **tired**. They are. Right? So I think that those kinds of things almost have to come in that sort of **environment**.” (Intrapersonal and Environmental)

“And this makes me think of discomfort. A lot of my retirement spending, the avoidance of discomfort, I'll try to be comfortable. I take on tasks and I, and I do stuff because the of **discomfort** is, it's not the goal of life. **Goal of life is to periodically embrace discomfort so you can advance in some way**. You have to **remember the discomfort** you had facing again and **remind yourself why you did that**.” (Intrapersonal)

“It's not a memorable experience in daily life, but up your tent getting and **getting to the piece of ground that you can sleep on**. Making sure you can **drink water**. **Everything is a challenge of sorts** when you're out there because you don't have your normal conveniences. So given that you **have to rely on your wits** and, and **sometimes on new knowledge**, you know, like how to, you know, how to assemble and start the propane gas. I don't know how to do that, but I learned how to do it for now. You're doing that on how to load, **how to properly load a Llama**, you know, and make sure the weight balance is right. And you know, all that stuff you are, you're just **going through task after task, after task all day long**.” (Intrapersonal and Managerial)

“And about **the NOLS experience that it was task laden**. And I think that is maybe, I don't know whether they overtly acknowledged that aspect of it and the **program is contributing to leadership**, but it is **the presentation of task after task after task** in a way that you don't face in normal life because you have comfort. That I think is, is part of the experience. And it's also part of why you go, why the f*** would somebody.” (Intrapersonal and Managerial)

“Yeah, **it was very stressful** to do that (read a compass). But yet, you know, you have your day (leader of the day) when you're guiding everything, so called guiding everybody with your compass. And so, and I don't, you know, I don't put up tents all the time, you know, I learned how to do it. And a lot of these people were, you know, Tim was a really good, really good camper and Liz camp all the time. A lot of people on the trip were like regular campers since I was a boy scout or whatever.” (Intrapersonal and Managerial)

“Yeah, there are sometimes at least, and so you pulled **out of your comfort zone** and asked to lead on things where you're not that competent. And that's, that's different **because we've gone forward in our careers, we've steadily progressed and we've gotten more and more competence and where we're not asked to do things and we have no idea how to do very often**. (Intrapersonal)

“Yeah. There are very few of that (contrived scenarios), being a leader for the day, you know, take the group on this expedition. But yeah, you're faced with an endless part, a little task, most of which you're **unfamiliar** with or **uncomfortable** doing and **uncomfortable** while you're

doing them because you might be **tired** or it's **rainy** or it's **cold** or **hot** or whatever. Right. We've got an air conditioned office, do it.”
(Intrapersonal and Managerial and Environmental and Interpersonal)

On being a **follower**: “Yeah. And that's unfamiliar. That's uncomfortable too.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

Bruce: Yeah. People aren't used to being **followers** necessarily if they've been leading for a decade or so.

“Not me, **I was always, you know, lead at work**. And that's, that's important too because I think we all know that, **that leaders have to be aware of what followership is all the time because most of the people around them are following**. So you have to be able to tune in to that part. It otherwise you're a less effective leader.” (Interpersonal and Intrapersonal)

“You know, and **be aware, self-aware**. I think **self-awareness** was a good thing for me too, because, you know, I've been in that bubble of being a leader for a long time and when I'm thrust into a situation where everybody else is a leader and most of them are better at the basic tasks that we're confronted with than I am. That's **humbling**. So it was a good, it was **good dose of humility** too.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

(Transfer) “You don't get pushed to that level. And **when you become a executive behind a desk**, and I remember one hike where we kept going and going and going and I was pulling the llama behind me and we looked and...our goal was way the hell up there and we had gone at it. I was a point where I was just putting one leg before the other and it said, I have to get there, but it's going to be one step at a time. And that's very different experience. So again, you know, I exercise all the time, but **I don't push myself to that**.” (Intrapersonal)

Self-Awareness

Humility

Humbling

Deal with Stress

“It might be **stress**, it might be trying to **figure out the answer** to a problem or trying to **deal with a difficult person** that, you know, different, different things where you have **to push through**...But it's important to have that **reservoir**. I think I remember how **to push through** them.” (Intrapersonal)

Push Through Discomfort

Remember “Can I do it?”

“I think it **flexes muscles** that maybe **haven't been on flexed for a long time**. And **reminds you of your state of mind** when you're at your wit's end and you just have **to keep on going** anyway.” (Intrapersonal)

Can't Get at a Conference Table or Behind a Desk

“And we don't have that much, I don't have that much **discomfort** in my life anymore. **Discomfort** is, I didn't, I didn't sleep well last night.” (Intrapersonal)

Have a Reservoir to Handle Stress and Discomfort

“Anxiety is part of that, you know, 'Can I do it?' Will this project **succeed**? You know, will I be able to **talk to this person** I'm on the phone with and, and doing what I want them to do. You know, all that **stuff is in gray**. It's part of how you **operate as a leader**. When you're in leadership roles.” (Intrapersonal)

“I don't **remember** last week as well as I **remember** that.” (Intrapersonal)

“Yeah, I think that there are scenes that through of that week that come back to as though they're in a movie. Yeah. Then I'm replying, I can see them and then they're long periods, you know, **just the daily hike** where you're just going up and down and up and down. That kinda trails off.”
(Intrapersonal)

“Yeah, but there are moments when you're, you know, you're all **crowded around a conference** and you're trying to figure out where the hell you are and how are you going to get over there and what's that landmark that we're looking for. **I mean, I don't do that in normal everyday life.** You know, I know how to get around it. I mean, I've got GPS, you know, I could walk anywhere. And you're out there. You're forced to concentrate on things that are typically mundane, you know, like getting food.” (Intrapersonal)

“I forget you **forget the discomfort and remember the good points.**”
(Intrapersonal)

Name: "Tension"

Response Category	Selected Responses	Potential Codes / Themes
(Benefits)	Bruce: So how did you benefit from NOLs and that week you spent in the winds?	Reflection
	"I, I think I never stopped. I just kept going...Um, I mean, it was a moment of reflection when you're there, you pause and it makes you think, um, well the benefits of the outcome as a person, how you grow and you learn from the experiences and how you adopted into your real world. I mean, if you're really good at doing that, I mean, some people may be, may not have that same experience and everybody has a different experience from my experience. That's pretty much it, it's kind of like when you're going through that process and you have a reflection on how that affects you later on it's, um, pretty, (Intrapersonal)	Self-Confidence Observing Others First Personal Challenges Self-Care Self-Confidence
	Bruce: Can you give an example of one of those reflections that might happen years after?	Reflect on Moments Reflection
	"Hmm, well let's for the moment there, back it up, I almost did not go because of personal reasons at home. And so when you reflect on that, that pretty much dictated my world. It was just like, everything else comes first, but me so like caring for the whole world, that first reflection was a self care to say, okay, I am worthy. I am, I am powerful to do this. And it's just like the world stops. And that was just like exciting, um, to have that first reflection. So I guess for me, like I said, it was a really a profound experience that I can reflect on moments to go back and just think of the way things happen, you know, is a reflection of who I am. It's like, uh, I can't even explain it that well. So as far as another example moving forward, um, I think there weren't any roadblocks, you know, when I came back and you just keep doing more freely without any hesitation. Um, and that, that goes beyond voicing my opinions at home and voicing my opinions, um, at the table meeting anywhere on that. Um, but in a calm, um, feminine way of leadership, not in a, I mean, when it comes time, but you know, I have to, but for the most part, it's just kind of like observing everybody first and then, and then stepping up, um, to things that are really important." (Intrapersonal)	"Who am I?" Profound Experience Get Through Challenging Times Overcome Roadblocks Voicing My Opinion Observing Others Personal Accomplishments
	"Yeah. Um, the confidence level. Yeah, that would be a good way. It's not that I didn't have a voice. It's just a different way of, um, using it and also letting other people lead as I watched them lead to get to where it needs to go. And then, you know, then I guess it should be in a way of there's some times where I have to navigate the whole process and it goes there, but let it feel natural instead of, um, I, gosh, I can't even think right now, but, and letting them take the, the ownership together without you just say, this is how you do it, you know, not without just giving direction, it's basically just leading them there. And sometimes it's faster for us to just say, here are the instructions, do it. Whereas you pause and you kind of work through it together or just navigate it together. So that it's a successful outcome and where the next person feels like they're heard and worthy and sometimes the outcome can be different and we both learn from it. Um, and then it could be the same outcome, but in a different way." (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)	Group Accomplishments Feminine Way of Leadership Ownership Teamwork Life Transfer
	"I think you're absolutely correct in every aspect of your life. I mean, for me as a mother, for example, it's always interesting or it comes back and my	Workplace Transfer

(Methods)	daughters will call me and go mom, you were right. And it's not about being right. Or even when you're at work, it's not about getting that out of boy. You are right. It's not about that. It's about like feeling empowered that you were able to navigate to that and how that lead them in that direction without being again, um, feeling like being demanding and pushy , but just being more of a role model in a positive way so that they can understand, um, the benefits and then..." (Intrapersonal)	Leadership Style
		Role Model
		"What am I here?"
		Wake Up Call
	"Yeah. So Kevin and I look at each other and we go, why am I here? You know, we look at each other, we look around and we really said, you know, a really blast, you know? And, um, but for me, I was a huge reflection of why am I here? It was kinda more like a wake up call. Right." (Intrapersonal)	Reflection
		Introspection
	<u>Bruce</u> : Do you remember specific <u>activities</u> we did that week that stand out to you?	Working with Tent Mates
	"Yeah. As far as the planned activity, I think the, I think most importantly was the, I know it sounds really petty, but that whole tent thing , the tent thing was for me, uh, complicated. And I, and I got the reason why we, the whole skill set to, to, you know, I'd rather delegate. (Intrapersonal)	Complicated Tasks
		Setting up Tent
		Delegating to Others
	"Yeah. The whole thing about NOLS, everybody partly, I liked the way that is a model of I value. And it's really important, I think in a successful, I guess when you're starting to own a business or you're starting and in any aspect to put yourself in the other person's shoes. So when you start from the bottom and you go to the top, but instead of just saying, uh, Ron, you know, just you're good do that, you know, delegate everything to him because he's like a mountain man. Right? (Intrapersonal)	Assuming Roles
		Group Dynamics
		Self-Leadership
		Reflection
		Voicing
	"Um, and then of course the reflection too, is like, when I'm trying to learn something for him to be pushy and like want to take over yeah. You know, it's like you pick your battles because you knew what his personality was. Right. Was it even worth it? You know, it's like really, you know, that was probably one of the activities that, and then of course voicing, Hey, I got this, you know, like, you know, like she's put my voice down, I got this. And then, um, you know, just like, again, self-leadership as far as giving, um, is it Dana, was that his name? (Intrapersonal)	Self-Leadership
		Privileged
		Ah Ha Moment
	"There were a couple of those moments, but not particular case. It was more like, maybe it was just for him, but, and you know, we're really privileged to begin with. So it's like we have everything we need at home. And we know have, you know, we're really, really privileged . And I think it was just like a different take for him than for me. (Intrapersonal)	Introspection
		Place in the World
		Perspective
	"There was like, why am I here from you? It was more of an aha moment, you know? So you get five people, they all have different notice, different opinions. It's like, I don't have it. Somebody could say, I don't have anything wrong with me. Why am I here? I see in that respect, uh, everybody has something to contribute or have a life experience or have had something to impact. But it wasn't that it was just really self-reflection why are you here? There could be a lot of reasons. And what, how you take, what you take away from. It is a bigger why than if you look at it, how you, what you're giving to another person and what you're taking , it's a, it goes both ways. I don't know how I think some people think about why am I what's in it for me versus as a universe?"	Self-Awareness
		Adversity
		Frustration
		Can't Keep Up
		Challenging
		Everybody Had to Prove Something

<p>“There were a lot of those moments. I mean, you know, that would be the first one is like, mine brought me here. I'm going to kill them. It's cold.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p>	Prove Something to Myself
<p>“Well, yeah, it might melt down. Like I just can't keep up. I mean, like what the heck? I just can't keep up. And it was just like, I just said, like, you know, it was just super frustrated. I mean, as far as keeping up with the petty stuff, I mean, it was just driving me crazy and it gets frustrating. How come I can't do, I'm not for god sake.” (Intrapersonal)</p>	Self-Confidence Admiration for Others
<p>“The moment of chill, like whatever, you know, it's like, they, I felt like they had approved something. I only had to put something to myself. Yeah. And I didn't, I mean, everybody had to prove something to themselves in a different way. I was just like an admiration to see that, wow, you got this, you know, or score or even Susie to see like shit, she has it together. And I still can't even blow up this stupid mattress. So I gave up blowing it up just so I can save five minutes, you know, it's just, yeah. I just put, left it in my, I left it in the, down at the bottom just so I wouldn't have to unpack it and pack it. I was just finding ways. So it was just being creative, thinking outside the box.” (Intrapersonal)</p>	Thinking Outside the Box Teamwork Courage Shared Accomplishment
<p>“Um, I was really fortunate not to. I mean, I mean, there was the moments when we were scaling up the, the highest peak and we were in our team, all of us were kind of together, but separate when we were all trying to get to the main peak. I mean, I thought that was pretty, pretty, uh, empowering to be able to scale the mountain. You've really courageous. I had never done it before. You really feel like, wow, this is like unbelievable. I mean, for somebody that you would think I'm a little bit afraid of Heights. It's another thing of telling yourself that versus there's no time that urgency is you have people behind you, you're pulling the llamas. We got to get to the top. And you know, that urgency of feeling that everybody's depending on each other, um, was a really good activity. And that happened, you know, those things happen naturally and you couldn't.” (Intrapersonal, Interpersonal, and Environmental)</p>	Fear of Heights Perseverance Depending on Each Other Nature Environment
<p>“I get the whole NOLS situation. Now, when I, when I was there, like I said, why am I here? I never really read anything. I just showed up. I had no idea the whole, I mean, I think I did, but I was kind of blinded with everything that was going on at home when Ron was just diagnosed with cancer. So I couldn't figure out why, what I mean. So I was kind of in a fog to begin with, but that one looked to me, really stood out as like, wow, I am so much, I'm so capable of her dad and my life that it just, from that point on just kept going up. You can only go up from that point.” (Intrapersonal)</p>	Reflection Life Transfer Self-Confidence Connectedness
<p>“Yeah. It's pretty transparent. What you see, I mean, you know, you have to get comfortable and that's the hardest part for people is to feel really comfortable with everybody. And you're sleeping with them. You're, you're like connected to the hip.” (Interpersonal)</p>	Incompetence Feeling like a beginner
<p>And one of the examples was when Ron, you know, expert Ron, um, which, uh, he's a book exactly. Pedia for all that. I mean, he was great, but at the same time, he also needed a whole back. And I think, I mean, I don't know if he did or not, but it was, uh, when he threw that fish across the, I mean, and just killed Dana's confidence or whatever Dana was like, when we talked in the circle was like, what do you hope to learn? I mean, there's something new that you want to learn that you don't, you know, you all, bro, everybody's</p>	Building Confidence Scaling Heights

	brilliant there. Everybody had these incredible skills and his was, I, you know, I suck at cooking , you know, he never didn't want to do that. And then Ron killed it by throwing. I mean, he was just finally building confidence cause I would just like lead, like here's all there. This is what you do. And then he burned his hand pretty bad. And then everybody, you gotta learn through those. All right. Well thank you.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)	
(Transfer)	<p>“Um, you know, I would, Hmm. I think COVID is a perfect example of how people can't get. Weren't able to adapt quickly to uncomfortable situations. Um, and I keep, and for me, and the biggest takeaway reflecting back on that is I would say that the whole NOLS, um, um, program only elevated my career and, um, from my career to my personal life and being in the community. So it was, uh, I was already pretty adaptable to things at work, but I was even ultra more sensitive to other people around me. Yeah. And those in my community. So, you know, like my income doubled, I mean, that is impressive. I mean, and there's just so many skills that as far as takeaway that I could reflect back on some of the skills that were just naturally subconsciously done that out in the field that are being done just probably naturally. And some of them, I would say I kind of already had, but not, not to that, to where you're more the confidence level, the courageous level, the ability to feel, um, comfortable when you're really uncomfortable with situations, Justin just embracing it and not looking back. And so my whole motto is, you know, I can only go up from here and not, and that's, um, that's how I live my life, I would say, (Intrapersonal)</p> <p>“I don't know. I forgot it was on. Um, and that's super it for me really. And I, and obviously that building the trust every single day, I never take anything for granted with any of my clients. I can not have a relationship with any of my clients without that trust. If I don't have that trust or not, we're not going to work together because they're already there. They're not committed. Yeah. And so then I know that I need to even work. Um, it's not necessarily harder. It's really more asking the questions of where, what are we missing in order, like doing a debrief or in order to learn a little bit more about if there's something that's lacking on my end or an experience that they've had, that they can feel comfortable sharing, um, so that we can bridge that gap and create that trust. So that's super important.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p> <p>“Well, for you can never project your, your, um, like weather or conditions and outcomes as people like to predict those in a office or in a classroom or at home everything's rigid schedule timeline and everybody, you know, so when you're out, um, you ha you have things that kind of fall in naturally and people kind of would embrace it. And that's how you feel if your, um, people work together that way. And, um, you know, you you're either you have a weakness or you can step up and help others. And I think, um, that is a really important, uh, takeaway with others is the way you show up for them, whether you're at work or out in the field. I mean, if you don't, if you're not with our teams, if we didn't show up, then at, you said somebody else done, um, back, and that's not any difference.” (Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)</p> <p>“Like if at work, if you don't show up for a meeting or, um, you're, you're not doing what you're, you're a part of whatever was supposed to be done for work, then you're also letting others down. And I think the example doing that out in the open kind of falls back to the natural way of it out in the</p>	<p>Adapt Quickly</p> <p>Discomfort</p> <p>Reflecting Back</p> <p>Elevated Career</p> <p>Workplace Transfer</p> <p>Life Transfer</p> <p>Adaptable</p> <p>Self-Confidence</p> <p>Courage</p> <p>Comfortable when Uncomfortable</p> <p>Embracing Discomfort</p> <p>Life Transfer</p> <p>Building Trust Daily</p> <p>Relationships with Clients</p> <p>Debriefs</p> <p>Trust</p> <p>Unpredictable</p> <p>Teamwork</p> <p>Depending on Others</p> <p>Others Depending on You</p> <p>Workplace Transfer</p> <p>Transparent</p> <p>Authenticity</p>

natural woods was easier because it's just blowing like, Oh, if you don't show up, you're not going to be, we're not going to be able, we're not going to get there on time to do two before dark. Right. And then you're not, **you're letting the team down**. So it's not any different than at work. If you don't show up and you're late and the project isn't done, then you're really slowing the project down and you're **letting others down**, I think. And I don't think that that can happen. The point is, I guess you can't see that naturally”
(Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

“And then being trans and **being transparent** because you're, you're not going to hold back. They see you, uh, you're not going to make up any stories. **You have that trust**. So the same thing, if you can't fulfill your team at work, um, whatever it is that you're doing, um, then you don't have a trust. Sarah will have somebody else that is, but, so that's what we created when we were out **there is this trust and the support that I don't think that at work, you have, that it takes a long time and we've built that right away within a week.**”
(Intrapersonal and Interpersonal)

APPENDIX E

Survey Instrument – Microsoft Word Version

About this Survey

Purpose: This survey seeks the perspectives of senior leaders like you who have completed an executive leadership expedition at the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). Your responses will help us better understand the benefits of using experiential methods (such as outdoor activities) in executive development programs by capturing valuable insights from the program participants themselves.

Instructions: Your participation in this survey will take less than 30 minutes. Please answer each question by simply reflecting on your NOLS executive leadership expedition.

Anonymity: All answers will be kept anonymous with no intent to identify those who respond to this survey.

Results: This survey is being administered by NOLS in partnership with the University of San Diego as part of a doctoral (PhD) dissertation in Leadership Studies by a fellow participant of the NOLS executive leadership expedition(s). If desired, results of this study can be shared with you by contacting either the researcher (Bruce Loveless at xxxxx@san Diego.edu) or NOLS directly (Lynn Petzold at lynn_petzold@nols.edu). The results will be retained by NOLS to help make future executive leadership expeditions even better!

Thank You! Thank you for your participation in this survey and your continued Expedition Behavior!

1. **How long have you been an executive leader?**
 - ☐ Less than 2 years
 - ☐ Between 2 and 10 years
 - ☐ More than 10 years
2. **Which of the following best describes the most senior position you've held? *(either a current or former position)***
 - ☐ Owner / Founder
 - ☐ President / CEO
 - ☐ Executive Director / Managing Director
 - ☐ Partner / Principal
 - ☐ Senior Executive / Vice President
 - ☐ Board Member / Board Chair
 - ☐ Other, please specify: _____
3. **How long were you in that most senior position?**
 - ☐ Less than a year
 - ☐ Between 1 and 5 years
 - ☐ More than 5 years
4. **In that senior position, how many people worked for you?**
 - ☐ Less than 10
 - ☐ Between 10 and 100
 - ☐ Between 100 and 1,000
 - ☐ More than a 1,000
5. **Which of the following best describes your primary sector?**
 - ☐ Public
 - ☐ Private
 - ☐ Non-Profit
 - ☐ Government
 - ☐ Other, please specify: _____
6. **Which of the following best describes your primary industry?**
 - ☐ Banking / Finance / Insurance / Real Estate
 - ☐ Communications / Telecom
 - ☐ Community / Social Services
 - ☐ Government / Military
 - ☐ Healthcare / Pharmaceutical
 - ☐ Hospitality / Travel / Leisure
 - ☐ Manufacturing
 - ☐ Media / Sports / Entertainment
 - ☐ Mining / Construction

- ☐ Professional Services / Consulting / Legal
 - ☐ Retail / Consumer Products
 - ☐ Teaching / Education Services
 - ☐ Technology (Software / Biotech)
 - ☐ Transportation / Airlines / Shipping
 - ☐ Utilities / Energy
 - ☐ Other, please specify: _____
7. In what year did you complete your NOLS executive leadership expedition? *(your most recent year)*
- ☐ *(Select from the Pull-Down List for the Specific Year)*
8. Which type of NOLS executive leadership expedition did you complete? *(select all that apply)*
- ☐ Backpacking
 - ☐ Sea Kayaking
9. Overall, to what extent did your leadership benefit from your NOLS experience?
- ☐ To a great extent
 - ☐ Considerably
 - ☐ Somewhat
 - ☐ Very little
 - ☐ Not at all
10. Which of the following best describes how you benefited (if at all) from your NOLS experience? *(select up to three)*
- ☐ Learned new leadership framework(s)
 - ☐ Increased my self-awareness
 - ☐ Gained leadership experiences (or examples) to use or reflect upon
 - ☐ Increased my self-confidence
 - ☐ Expanded my network
 - ☐ Allowed me to practice leadership away from my normal work environment
 - ☐ Pushed me outside my comfort zone
 - ☐ Reminded me of the importance of being a good follower
 - ☐ Gained valuable experience leading peers
 - ☐ Made me a better teammate
 - ☐ Increased my ability to get along with different types of people
 - ☐ Changed my perspective (or worldview)
 - ☐ Other, please specify: _____
11. Which one of the following planned activities during your NOLS expedition was the most beneficial to your leadership development?
- ☐ Being the Designated Leader ("Leader of the Day")
 - ☐ Planning and Pre-Briefing (at the beginning of each day)
 - ☐ De-Briefing and Feedback (at the end of each day)
 - ☐ Personal Storytelling ("Who am I?" or "Leadership Journey")

☐ Other, please specify: _____

12. Regarding the Designated Leader ("Leader of the Day"), which role was more beneficial to your leadership development?

- ☐ Being the Designated Leader ("Leader of the Day")
☐ Being in the role of Follower (observing others as the Designated Leader)

13. Regarding Personal Storytelling ("Who am I?" or "Leadership Journey"), which role was more beneficial to your leadership development?

- ☐ Telling my Personal Story ("Who am I?" or "Leadership Journey")
☐ Listening to the Stories of Others

14. Which of the following best describes the amount of planned activities (like those described above) during your NOLS expedition?

- ☐ Not enough
☐ About right
☐ Too many

15. Which of the following additional activities was the most beneficial to your leadership development? (select up to three)

- ☐ Being a Follower
☐ Being in Nature (Outdoors)
☐ Conversations with my Fellow Participants (while hiking or kayaking)
☐ Conversations with my Tent/Kitchen Mates
☐ Time for Personal Reflection
☐ Working Together as a Team
☐ Other, please specify: _____

16. How beneficial was each of the following activities to your leadership development during your NOLS expedition?

Activity	Least Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Very Beneficial	Most Beneficial	Not Applicable
Being the Designated Leader ("Leader of the Day")	1	2	3	4	N/A
Planning and Pre-Briefing (at the beginning of each day)	1	2	3	4	N/A
De-Briefing and Feedback (at the end of each day)	1	2	3	4	N/A
Personal Storytelling ("Who am I?" or "Leadership Journey")	1	2	3	4	N/A
Being a Follower	1	2	3	4	N/A
Being in Nature (Outdoors)	1	2	3	4	N/A
Conversations with Fellow Participants (while backpacking or kayaking)	1	2	3	4	N/A
Conversations with Tent/Kitchen Mates	1	2	3	4	N/A
Time for Personal Reflection	1	2	3	4	N/A
Working Together as a Team	1	2	3	4	N/A

17. Overall, which activity during your NOLS expedition had the most lasting impact on your leadership? How so?

- (Open Ended Question)

18. To what extent (if at all) did you improve in the following areas because of your NOLS experience?

Area	Not at All	A Little	Some	Much	A Great Deal
Communications	1	2	3	4	5
Judgment and Decision Making	1	2	3	4	5
Observing and Noticing	1	2	3	4	5
Organizing and Planning	1	2	3	4	5
Problem Solving	1	2	3	4	5
Risk Management	1	2	3	4	5
Task Management	1	2	3	4	5
Teamwork and Collaboration	1	2	3	4	5
Time Management	1	2	3	4	5
Stress Management	1	2	3	4	5

19. Which of the following best describes a condition or factor that contributed most to your leadership development during your NOLS expedition? (select up to three)

- ☐ Unfamiliar environment
- ☐ Physically challenging
- ☐ Feeling incompetent
- ☐ Dependence on others
- ☐ Intensity of the outdoors
- ☐ Uncertainty of outcomes
- ☐ Facing adversity
- ☐ Compressed timeframe
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

20. To what extent (if at all) did you experience the following during your NOLS expedition?

Experience	Not at All	A Little	Some	Much	A Great Deal
Shared hardship	1	2	3	4	5
Shared sense of accomplishment	1	2	3	4	5
Shared vulnerability	1	2	3	4	5
Emotional bond or connectedness	1	2	3	4	5
Mutual trust	1	2	3	4	5
Mutual respect	1	2	3	4	5

21. To what extent (if at all) did experiencing the following emotions during your NOLS expedition contribute to your leadership development?

Emotion	Not at All	A Little	Some	Much	A Great Deal
Anxiety	1	2	3	4	5
Discomfort	1	2	3	4	5
Fear	1	2	3	4	5
Excitement	1	2	3	4	5
Exhilaration	1	2	3	4	5
Frustration	1	2	3	4	5
Stress	1	2	3	4	5

Inspiration	1	2	3	4	5
Joy	1	2	3	4	5
Uncertainty	1	2	3	4	5
Vulnerability	1	2	3	4	5

22. How did the emotionally impactful moments you experienced at NOLS benefit your leadership development (either during or after your expedition)? Why do you think that is?

○ (Open Ended Question)

23. In the table below, complete the sentence, "The NOLS experience was critical to my development of..."

Critical to Development	Not at All	A Little	Some	Much	A Great Deal
Compassion	1	2	3	4	5
Confidence	1	2	3	4	5
Connection	1	2	3	4	5
Empathy	1	2	3	4	5
Executive Presence	1	2	3	4	5
Humility	1	2	3	4	5
Patience	1	2	3	4	5
Perseverance	1	2	3	4	5
Perspective	1	2	3	4	5
Reflection	1	2	3	4	5
Self-Awareness	1	2	3	4	5
Trust	1	2	3	4	5

24. To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience?

Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I learned more about myself	1	2	3	4	5
I was reminded of what it's like to be a beginner	1	2	3	5	5
I didn't really learn anything new	1	2	3	4	5
I have greater appreciation for the outdoors	1	2	3	4	5
I'm not sure how what I learned applies to my work environment	1	2	3	4	5
I was reminded of what it's like to be a follower	1	2	3	4	5
It made me a better leader	1	2	3	4	5
It changed my life	1	2	3	4	5
I see the world differently now	1	2	3	4	5
It increased my desire to be in the outdoors	1	2	3	4	5
It made me more interested in studying leadership	1	2	3	4	5
The impact of NOLS on my leadership development has increased as time has passed	1	2	3	4	5

25. How have you been able to apply (if at all) what you learned at NOLS as an executive leader after completing your expedition? Please provide an example if possible.

○ (Open Ended Question)

26. **How have the benefits from your NOLS experience evolved or expanded over time (if at all) since completing your expedition? Why do you think that is?**

- ☐ (Open Ended Question)

27. **Which of the following additional activities would further benefit your leadership development the most? (select all that to apply)**

- ☐ 360-degree assessment and feedback
- ☐ Executive leadership coaching
- ☐ Formal mentoring program
- ☐ Executive peer advisory group
- ☐ Other, please specify: _____

28. **Finally, would you recommend a NOLS executive leadership expedition to another executive? Why or Why not?**

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Why or Why Not? (Open Ended)

APPENDIX F

Survey Instrument – Qualtrics Online Version

About this Survey

Purpose: This survey seeks the perspectives of senior leaders like you who have completed an executive leadership expedition at the National Outdoor Leadership School (NOLS). Your responses will help us better understand the benefits of using experiential methods (such as outdoor activities) in executive development programs by capturing valuable insights from the program participants themselves.

Instructions: Your participation in this survey will take less than 30 minutes. Please answer each question by simply reflecting on your NOLS executive leadership expedition.

Anonymity: All answers will be kept anonymous with no intent to identify those who respond to this survey.

Results: This survey is being administered by NOLS in partnership with the University of San Diego as part of a doctoral (PhD) dissertation in Leadership Studies by a fellow participant of the NOLS executive leadership expedition(s). If desired, results of this study can be shared with you by contacting either the researcher (Bruce Loveless at bloveless@sandiego.edu) or NOLS directly (Lynn Petzold at lynn_petzold@nols.edu). The results will be retained by NOLS to help make future executive leadership expeditions even better!

Thank You! Thank you for your participation in this survey and your continued Expedition Behavior!

Construct 1: Demographics and Intro**How long have you been an executive leader?**

- ☐ Less than 2 years
- ☐ Between 2 and 10 years
- ☐ More than 10 years

**Which of the following best describes the most senior position you've held?
(either a current or former position)**

- ☐ Owner / Founder
- ☐ President / CEO
- ☐ Executive Director / Managing Director
- ☐ Partner / Principal
- ☐ Senior Executive / Vice President
- ☐ Board Member / Board Chair
- ☐ Other, please specify:

How long were you in that most senior position?

- ☐ Less than a year
- ☐ Between 1 and 5 years
- ☐ More than 5 years

In that senior position, how many people worked for you?

- ☐ Less than 10
- ☐ Between 10 and 100
- ☐ Between 100 and 1,000
- ☐ More than a 1,000

Which one of the following best describes your primary sector?

- ☐ Public
- ☐ Private
- ☐ Non-Profit
- ☐ Government
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Which one of the following best describes your primary industry?

- ☐ Banking / Finance / Insurance / Real Estate
- ☐ Communications / Telecom
- ☐ Community / Social Services
- ☐ Government / Military
- ☐ Healthcare / Pharmaceutical
- ☐ Hospitality / Travel / Leisure
- ☐ Manufacturing
- ☐ Media / Sports / Entertainment
- ☐ Mining / Construction
- ☐ Professional Services / Consulting / Legal
- ☐ Retail / Consumer Products
- ☐ Teaching / Education Services
- ☐ Technology (Software / Biotech)
- ☐ Transportation / Airlines / Shipping
- ☐ Utilities / Energy
- ☐ Other, please specify:

**In what year did you complete your NOLS executive leadership expedition?
(your most recent year)**

YEAR: (select YEAR from the pull-down list)

Which NOLS expedition did you complete? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Backpacking
- ☐ Sea Kayaking

Construct 2: Benefits and Methods

Overall, to what extent did your leadership benefit from your NOLS experience?

- ☐ To a great extent
- ☐ Considerably
- ☐ Somewhat
- ☐ Very little
- ☐ Not at all

**Which of the following best describes how you benefited (if at all) from your NOLS experience?
(select up to three)**

- ☐ Learned new leadership framework(s)
- ☐ Increased my self-awareness
- ☐ Gained leadership experiences (or examples) to use or reflect upon
- ☐ Increased my self-confidence
- ☐ Expanded my network
- ☐ Allowed me to practice leadership away from my normal work environment
- ☐ Pushed me outside my comfort zone
- ☐ Reminded me of the importance of being a good follower
- ☐ Gained valuable experience leading peers
- ☐ Made me a better teammate
- ☐ Increased my ability to get along with different types of people
- ☐ Changed my perspective (or worldview)
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Which one of the following planned activities during your NOLS expedition was the most beneficial to your leadership development?

- ☐ Being the Designated Leader ("Leader of the Day")
- ☐ Planning and Pre-Briefing (at the beginning of each day)
- ☐ De-Briefing and Feedback (at the end of each day)
- ☐ Personal Storytelling ("Who am I?" or "Leadership Journey")
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Regarding the Designated Leader ("Leader of the Day"), which role was more beneficial to your leadership development?

- ☐ Being the Designated Leader ("Leader of the Day")
- ☐ Being in the Role of Follower (observing others as the Designated Leader)

Regarding Personal Storytelling ("Who am I?" or "Leadership Journey"), which role was more beneficial to your leadership development?

- ☐ Telling my Personal Story ("Who am I?" or "Leadership Journey")
- ☐ Listening to the Stories of Others

Which of the following best describes the amount of planned activities (like those described above) during your NOLS expedition?

- ☐ Not Enough
- ☐ About Right
- ☐ Too Many

Which of the following additional activities were the most beneficial to your leadership development? (select up to three)

- ☐ Being a Follower
- ☐ Being in Nature (Outdoors)
- ☐ Conversations with my Fellow Participants (while hiking or kayaking)
- ☐ Conversations with my Tent/Kitchen Mates
- ☐ Time for Personal Reflection
- ☐ Working Together as a Team
- ☐ Other, please specify:

How **beneficial** was each of the following activities to your leadership development during your NOLS expedition?

	Least Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Very Beneficial	Most Beneficial	Not Applicable
Being the Designated Leader ("Leader of the Day")	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Planning and Pre-Briefing (at the beginning of each day)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
De-Briefing and Feedback (at the end of each day)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Personal Storytelling ("Who am I?" or "Leadership Journey")	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being a Follower	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Being in Nature (Outdoors)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conversations with Fellow Participants (while backpacking or kayaking)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Conversations with Tent/Kitchen Mates	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Time for Personal Reflection	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Working Together as a Team	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Overall, which activity during your NOLS expedition had the **most lasting impact** on your leadership? How so?

To what extent (if at all) did you **improve** in the following areas because of your NOLS experience?

	Not at All	A Little	Some	Much	A Great Deal
Communications	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Judgement and Decision Making	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Observing and Noticing	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Organizing and Planning	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Problem Solving	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Risk Management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Task Management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Teamwork and Collaboration	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Time Management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stress Management	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Which of the following best describes a condition or factor that contributed most to your leadership development during your NOLS expedition? *(select up to three)*

- ☐ Unfamiliar environment
- ☐ Physically challenging
- ☐ Feeling incompetent
- ☐ Dependence on others
- ☐ Intensity of the outdoors
- ☐ Uncertainty of outcomes
- ☐ Facing adversity
- ☐ Compressed timeframe
- ☐ Other, please specify:

To what extent (if at all) did you experience the following during your NOLS expedition?

	Not at All	A Little	Some	Much	A Great Deal
Shared hardship	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Shared sense of accomplishment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Shared vulnerability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Emotional bond or connectedness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mutual trust	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Mutual respect	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what extent (if at all) did experiencing the following emotions during your NOLS expedition contribute to your leadership development?

	Not at All	A Little	Some	Much	A Great Deal
Anxiety	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Discomfort	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Fear	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Excitement	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Exhilaration	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Frustration	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Stress	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Inspiration	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Joy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Uncertainty	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Vulnerability	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How did the emotionally impactful moments you experienced at NOLS benefit your leadership development (either during or after your expedition)? Why do you think that is?

Construct 3: Transfer

In the table below, complete the sentence, "The NOLS experience was critical to my development of..."

	Not at All	A Little	Some	Much	A Great Deal
Compassion	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Confidence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Connection	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Empathy	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Executive Presence	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Humility	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Patience	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Perseverance	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Perspective	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Reflection	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Self-Awareness	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
Trust	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience?

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I learned more about myself	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was reminded of what it's like to be a beginner	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I didn't really learn anything new	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I have greater appreciation for the outdoors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I'm not sure how what I learned applies to my work environment	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I was reminded of what it's like to be a follower	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It made me a better leader	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It changed my life	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I see the world differently now	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It increased my desire to be in the outdoors	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
It made me more interested in studying leadership	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
The impact of NOLS on my leadership development has increased as time has passed	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

How have you been able to apply (if at all) what you learned at NOLS as an executive leader after completing your expedition? Please provide an example if possible.

How have the benefits from your NOLS experience evolved or expanded over time (if at all) since completing your expedition? Why do you think that is?

Which of the following additional activities would further benefit your leadership development the most? *(select all that apply)*

- ☐ 360-degree assessment and feedback
- ☐ Executive leadership coaching
- ☐ Formal mentoring program
- ☐ Executive peer advisory group
- ☐ Other, please specify:

Finally, would you recommend a NOLS executive leadership expedition to another executive?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

Why or Why Not?

APPENDIX G

Survey Results – Qualtrics Output

Default Report

NOLS Executive Leader Survey
December 2, 2020 9:35 AM PST

Q1 - How long have you been an executive leader?

Q2 - Which of the following best describes the most senior position you've held? (either a current or former position)

Other, please specify:

Director

Communications Director, Board Member

Chief Justice, Massachusetts Appeals Court

Area Manager

Senior

Practice owner, academic clinic director

CAPT, USN

Director in a large health care org

I'm a healthcare provider (leadership model is different)

Senior Focal Engineer

CFO / SVP / Business Unit President / Board Chair... not all are there and I'm not sure which you would consider "most senior"

Program Director, oversee FTEs and program strategy.

Sr Internal Auditor

Q3 - How long were you in that most senior position?

Q4 - In that senior position, how many people worked for you?

Q5 - Which one of the following best describes your primary sector?

Q5_6_TEXT - Other, please specify:

Other, please specify:

Sports

Previously in Non-Profit and Private

Public, private, government- equally divided

Other, please specify:

Semi-Private

Q6 - Which one of the following best describes your primary industry?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Which one of the following best describes your primary industry? - Selected Choice	1.00	17.00	7.32	4.61	21.30	65

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Banking / Finance / Insurance / Real Estate	9.23% 6
2	Communications / Telecom	0.00% 0
3	Government / Military	15.38% 10
4	Healthcare / Pharmaceutical	13.85% 9
6	Other, please specify:	20.00% 13
7	Community / Social Services	1.54% 1
8	Hospitality / Travel / Leisure	6.15% 4
9	Manufacturing	1.54% 1
10	Media / Sports / Entertainment	6.15% 4
11	Mining / Construction	1.54% 1
12	Professional Services / Consulting / Legal	6.15% 4
13	Retail / Consumer Products	0.00% 0
14	Teaching / Education Services	6.15% 4
15	Technology (Software / Biotech)	9.23% 6
16	Transportation / Airlines / Shipping	1.54% 1
17	Utilities / Energy	1.54% 1

65

Showing rows 1 - 17 of 17

Q6_6_TEXT - Other, please specify:

Other, please specify:

Environment/conservation

Sports

Environment, natural resources

Natural Resources

philanthropy

Medical Device...both R&D/Clinical as well as initial commercial activities

Other, please specify:

Holistic Health

Aerospace/Defense

Sports performance and Wellness

Human Performance

Startup/Entrepreneurship

Agriculture/Forestry

Logistics - Supply Chain

Q7 - In what year did you complete your NOLS executive leadership expedition? (your most recent year)

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	YEAR: (select YEAR from the pull-down list)	12.00	21.00	18.12	2.23	4.97	65

#	Field	Choice Count
1	2000	0.00% 0
2	2001	0.00% 0
3	2002	0.00% 0
4	2003	0.00% 0
5	2004	0.00% 0
6	2005	0.00% 0
7	2006	0.00% 0
8	2007	0.00% 0
9	2008	0.00% 0
10	2009	0.00% 0
11	2010	0.00% 0
12	2011	4.62% 3
13	2012	1.54% 1
14	2013	3.08% 2
15	2014	1.54% 1
16	2015	7.69% 5
17	2016	10.77% 7
18	2017	21.54% 14
19	2018	15.38% 10
20	2019	26.15% 17
21	2020	7.69% 5
		65

Showing rows 1 - 22 of 22

Q8 - Which NOLS expedition did you complete? (select all that apply)

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

Q8_6_TEXT - Other, please specify:

WIDGET_ERROR.ERROR

Q9 - Overall, to what extent did your leadership benefit from your NOLS experience?

Q10 - Which of the following best describes how you benefited (if at all) from your NOLS experience? (select up to three)

#	Field	Choice Count
3	Increased my self-awareness	15.22% 28
6	Other, please specify:	3.26% 6

#	Field	Choice Count
7	Learned new leadership framework(s)	6.52% 12
8	Increased my self-confidence	10.33% 19
9	Expanded my network	7.07% 13
10	Pushed me outside my comfort zone	13.59% 25
11	Reminded me of the importance of being a good follower	10.33% 19
12	Gained valuable experience leading peers	2.72% 5
13	Made me a better teammate	3.26% 6
14	Increased my ability to get along with different types of people	6.52% 12
15	Changed my perspective (or worldview)	3.80% 7
16	Gained leadership experiences (or examples) to use or reflect upon	8.15% 15
17	Allowed me to practice leadership away from my normal work environment	9.24% 17
		184
Showing rows 1 - 14 of 14		

Q10_6_TEXT - Other, please specify:

Other, please specify:

Helped build resilience

All apply at some level

Started an active relationship w/ NOLS that continues to this day

I figured out my weaknesses (Decision Paralysis under pressure) and my need to practice my leadership skills

Gave me experience / content which I could bring back to my team and use in my coaching and writing.

Not so much the expedition itself but the personal work it led me to do afterwards has been invaluable in terms of my own self-awareness, sense of self-worth, and personal/family relationships

Q11 - Which one of the following planned activities during your NOLS expedition was the most beneficial to your leadership development?

Other, please specify:

Other, please specify:

Everything

Q12 - Regarding the Designated Leader ("Leader of the Day"), which role was more beneficial to your leadership development?

Other, please specify:

WIDGET_ERROR.ERROR

Q13 - Regarding Personal Storytelling ("Who am I?" or "Leadership Journey"), which role was more beneficial to your leadership development?

Q14 - Which of the following best describes the amount of planned activities (like those described above) during your NOLS expedition?

Q15 - Which of the following additional activities were the most beneficial to your leadership development? (select up to three)

Other, please specify:

Other, please specify:

Other, please specify:

being in conversation with the instructors

Practicing non judgement

working with Llamas

Feedback from instructors

All the above

Perhaps attending the course of itself. I am the first in my region to attend a NOLS course.

More input in developing the plan

Q16 - How beneficial was each of the following activities to your leadership development

during your NOLS expedition?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Being the Designated Leader ("Leader of the Day")	41.00	46.00	43.67	1.32	1.75	63
2	Planning and Pre-Briefing (at the beginning of each day)	41.00	46.00	43.51	1.18	1.39	63
3	De-Briefing and Feedback (at the end of each day)	42.00	45.00	43.92	1.20	1.44	63
4	Personal Storytelling ("Who am I?" or "Leadership Journey")	41.00	45.00	43.83	1.19	1.41	63
5	Being a Follower	42.00	45.00	43.98	0.92	0.84	63
6	Being in Nature (Outdoors)	42.00	46.00	44.46	0.92	0.85	63
7	Conversations with Fellow Participants (while backpacking or kayaking)	41.00	45.00	44.27	1.03	1.05	63
8	Conversations with Tent/Kitchen Mates	42.00	45.00	44.03	1.08	1.17	63
9	Time for Personal Reflection	41.00	46.00	43.95	1.23	1.51	63
10	Working Together as a Team	42.00	45.00	44.25	0.93	0.86	63

#	Field	Least Beneficial		Somewhat Beneficial		Very Beneficial		Most Beneficial		Not Applicable		Total
1	Being the Designated Leader ("Leader of the Day")	6.35%	4	22.22%	14	46.03%	29	20.63%	13	4.76%	3	63
2	Planning and Pre-Briefing (at the beginning of each day)	1.59%	1	31.75%	20	49.21%	31	15.87%	10	1.59%	1	63
3	De-Briefing and Feedback (at the end of each day)	0.00%	0	25.40%	16	31.75%	20	42.86%	27	0.00%	0	63

#	Field	Least Beneficial		Somewhat Beneficial		Very Beneficial		Most Beneficial		Not Applicable		Total
4	Personal Storytelling ("Who am I?" or "Leadership Journey")	4.76%	3	17.46%	11	46.03%	29	31.75%	20	0.00%	0	63
5	Being a Follower	0.00%	0	14.29%	9	58.73%	37	26.98%	17	0.00%	0	63
6	Being in Nature (Outdoors)	0.00%	0	9.52%	6	26.98%	17	61.90%	39	1.59%	1	63
7	Conversations with Fellow Participants (while backpacking or kayaking)	1.59%	1	11.11%	7	33.33%	21	53.97%	34	0.00%	0	63
8	Conversations with Tent/Kitchen Mates	0.00%	0	19.05%	12	39.68%	25	41.27%	26	0.00%	0	63
9	Time for Personal Reflection	3.17%	2	19.05%	12	36.51%	23	39.68%	25	1.59%	1	63
10	Working Together as a Team	0.00%	0	11.11%	7	41.27%	26	47.62%	30	0.00%	0	63

Showing rows 1 - 10 of 10

Q17 - Overall, which activity during your NOLS expedition had the most lasting impact on your leadership? How so?

Overall, which activity during your NOLS expedition had the most lasting im...

I found having time away from the office was priceless and having time to reflect was excellent.

Being the designated leader because it allowed me to apply the skills I had been learning and seeing others put into action during the course of the expedition.

Teamwork that occurred during my leadership day, due to the magnitude of the challenge faced and the relative efficiency with which our team achieved success.

receiving feedback from others, and listening to different perspectives

Preparing for leader of the day. Taking the time to plan and be intentional.

Conversations and relationship building with others.

Getting to meet and know people with out there outside there professional label/identity.

Conversations with tent mates

I would say listening to Rick Rochelle's stories, quotes and readings. Mostly the ones that had to do with our human connection to the natural world. I am a caregiver for elderly people with dementia, so not your typical leadership role, but a leader nonetheless on a different level. My NOLS experience gave me a different outlook on life and living that I don't feel I could have received anywhere else.

Both sharing and listening to the Who Am I stories. In my view, vulnerability is an essential component of building meaningful trust. Rick Rochelle modeled that vulnerability on the very first night prior to beginning our journey. The rest of our teammates followed his lead and shared very personal and powerful stories accelerating the group coalescing into a team.

My husband totalled my car right before heading out. I got the call when walking into meeting the group at the NOLS HQ. While I was on the trip I felt extremely weak, out of breath and couldn't even carry my pack. I was powerless and could have easily given up. I had to rely on others which has always been difficult. Very uncomfortable feeling. Flash forward, my husband's accident ended up being how we found out he had Stage IV Cancer. Because of the trip, I had the reflected on the fact of how challenging it can be for someone to accept help. It helped me be a better caregiver.

Telling my personal story, because I had not really told all of it before. Some of the more recent events in my career (early retirement) were very hard for me to talk about. This helped me tell that story, and the support from my fellow trekkers was invaluable, still is.

Map reading in the Winds, with llamas. We had gotten disoriented by a large flat opening, many user trails, and unmarked official trails. We followed a trail and checked maps, and finally got to a high point that we could look over a valley. We knew we had to turn around because the boulder field ahead could not be navigated by the llamas. The map could not be reconciled, we could not agree on our location on the map. Even as leader of the day, I deferred to the instructor that we were at a certain place, but the topographical elements did not confirm that. I could-should have insisted that we get full consensus on our map location. We were not at the location we thought (and we could see that at the end of the day). We ended up at a lake near the flat area (where we had been 4-5 hours earlier), with another of the 3 small groups, that had gotten "lost" in a different way (the third got to camp on the first try). As it was about 7 pm, the other instructor pulled out the GPS to confirm location on the map and both groups easily navigated to the designated camp area. Lesson was that map orientation is essential, that compromising wasn't ok when the facts-map didn't support it, and that as leader-of-the-day I had pulled back on my leadership.

Overall, which activity during your NOLS expedition had the most lasting im...

Working as a team as I was able to recognize my insecurities / shortcomings and where I could add more value. Very apparent when you are doing activities that you have not done before or are not well-versed in (setting up camp, cooking outside).

For me, it was the days when I was a "follower" and watching others leadership styles emerge. It was interesting and, at times, challenging to have a different leaders and then see how the group responded or worked together to reach the next destination. We had an awesome group with very different personalities and comforts being in nature (particularly on the water), and we really pushed each other sometimes.

De-briefing after days' activities and feedback from instructors

Conversations with fellow participants and tent mates had the most lasting impact on my leadership. Just listening to other leaders work and life experiences was very beneficial in framing how I approach similar situations.

As LEader for the Day, briefing the team as to the Plan.

Watching others lead

being a designated leader and challeing myself.

Hearing about others career joumeys, their personal / professional trials and tribulations, acknowledging everyone has their struggles. Equally lasting, were the relationships formed with some of in the group, and relying on others for everyday tasks some of which having significant consequences in the wild outdoors.

personal time as not enough !

Time for personal reflection. It was apparent I have so much more to learn and achieve. I also felt courageous and realized I am capable of so much more. This makes me smile!:)

The most challenging hiking day - and the reflection that followed/occurred during the day made the most lasting impact. It made me realize that I can do difficult things and that they will be messy (not graceful) and that's OK. The coaching, support from teammates and the lessons I learned about both leaning into who I really am and communicating with others were powerful and have very much stayed with me.

The course was an extension of a 50 year history with the school- one that has been life changing. The real benefit for me of this course was simply being in the mountains with a truly great bunch of folks. It was a blast.

Hearing about other's perspectives on leadership and then watching them "in the wild" ... that allowed for a nice comparison with my own, both the theory and the practice.

I feel the most impactful activity was listening to others perspectives/experiences and applying their lessons learned to my own unique leadership style

Giving feedback on subjects I know, in a manner that caused change in another rather than resistance

Personal storytelling. Getting to understand where everyone was coming from helped me to understand people's involvement and helped establish empathy. For me, I found the story telling helped me to understand that the things I find easy are not so easy for everyone else and vice a versa. Empathy is often neglected in the business world so I really appreciated that activity and have tried to incorporate it in my company.

Thinking back (was 4+ years ago), I really can't think of anything I took away from the experience that I use on a regular basis. I enjoyed doing it and meeting everyone in the group but other than that I don't have any significant takeaways.

The friends I have acquired....one in particular. We live on opposite coast but now talk and text regularly.

Overall, which activity during your NOLS expedition had the most lasting im...

When I fell - in all fours in water. If I hadn't followed the recommendation of my leader (to take fewer pictures) so I put my camera in my backpack. Otherwise it would have been ruined. It was all intuitive but very powerful

My Leader of the Day experience involved dealing with one particularly unhappy camper. Navigating that challenge expanded my awareness of the importance of using persuasion when managing others.

Working together in real time out on the water. This required getting to know everyone's strengths and weaknesses, and being in tune to the NOLS leaders. Then, being able to handle adverse situations as a team.

The Personal Storytelling and the feedback from my peers was invaluable. I was at a crossroads with my career and the opportunity to share my experience and solicit feedback changed my career and my life.

I teach leadership in several contexts. Both courses improved my mastery of various frameworks, but also gave me a number of stories that I've told specifically to illustrate leadership principles to others. Those stories are invaluable, and likely the greatest recurring benefit.

Having the NOLS instructor give me feedback on how I was not demonstrating Active Followership when the team really needed that. Nature as the "third instructor" - rough waters, struggle and falling out of the kayak on a landing. It had a big impact because I was so triggered emotionally by the incident - I was fairly useless for a couple of hours afterward (major amygdala hijack).

trading leadership roles. I found myself too often leading from behind. This has consequences for the team.

Honestly, the unplanned activity of losing a person for a short period of time. The coordinated and collaborative response and debrief of that response.

Having to navigate from point A to point B (especially on the day when we navigated out of Stough Creek Basin and over the pass) on a map where there were no paths and communicate and work together as a team to make sure everyone succeeded was the most influential aspect that I took away from the course.

My LOD experience was exceptionally impactful because I had the opportunity to lead someone who was struggling in ways that I've never seen someone struggle. I had to adapt my leadership style on the fly.

For me perhaps the talks between the hikes; I am young in age, and, come from a very distinctive background (A stateless refugee living in the desert). Throughout hike conversations I identified my weaknesses which is the greatest gift my NOLS teammates has offered me.

Connecting with Tent Mates, created new life-long relationships, didn't expect that this late in life, and makes me realize every relationship is so valuable, even when you least expect it.

conversations with teammates

Aborted trip up a mountain due to conditions

Connections

When I was challenged to build consensus and make a decision in my role as Leader of the Day (about whether to stop and set camp or move on), and then over time reflecting on that struggle and noticing the interpersonal dynamics that created conflict, including my actions and others. It was interesting to realize that NOLS had given three of us the Leader of the Day role, but not the authority to make a decision. Whether intentional or not, this was the source of most of the conflict that our group had to work through.

Intentionally going outside my comfort zone... and enjoying it!

Personal reflection

Overall, which activity during your NOLS expedition had the most lasting im...

All of the conversations with a group of people that are committed to becoming better people and better leaders. Could have used more time for personal reflection.

Handling a challenge and leading my team during it when I was appointed designated leader of the day. Also, offering my "leadership journey" pushed me out of my comfort zone as I am not normally comfortable talking about my personal story/journey.

Learning to deal with adversity & uncertainty (through direct experience of it, but also through conversations / framework for how to think about managing adversity, uncertainty, and risk in an environment that wasn't completely controlled, ex: animals not cooperating, weather, route finding, interpersonal conflict, etc.

Spending time w/ others.

Conversations

Lynn Petzold's exercises around personal storytelling. As adults, we are very rarely put into new situations with strangers we get to know on an intimate level. NOLS brought together people from so many different walks of life - my group had people with family wealth, those with deep histories of depression, orphans, adoptees, tech guys, and educators. Their stories reminded me that motivation comes from different sources and provided a new perspective on what's going on beneath the surface of those around me.

Conversations with the staff

expedition behaviors. problem-solving as a team. Getting lost on my day as a leader and having our NOLS guide help me get back on track. Persevering when we wanted to stop.

most lasting is how my NOLS experience, instantly at work and consistently every since - improved my ability to relate to a diverse employee base including the employees of much younger generations. NOLS reminded me that you are never too old to value the lessons taught by NOLS.

Both being a follower (getting to experience the leadership of others and see what worked and what didn't) and getting feedback on my own leadership.

Taking extended time away to be quiet in nature—without the interruption of communications /phone/ technology. It slows things down and allows clarity to exist where previously there was too much noise.

The lasting trusted relationships built with so many people on my trips.

Listening to others to understand their stories, and who they are

We had numerous members of our team participating and it brought our relationship to a level I had never expected. The ability to "disconnect" and then reconnect in a totally different environment while Kayaking, Cooking etc. was beyond my expectations. To this day we regularly discuss and share our experience. Our NOLS leaders played a large role in making sure we were engaged, exchanging partners from the day etc

Q18 - To what extent (if at all) did you improve in the following areas because of your

NOLS experience?

#	Field	Not at All		A Little		Some		Much		A Great Deal		Total
7	Task Management	9.52%	6	19.05%	12	46.03%	29	19.05%	12	6.35%	4	63
8	Teamwork and Collaboration	1.59%	1	7.94%	5	34.92%	22	41.27%	26	14.29%	9	63
9	Time Management	9.52%	6	26.98%	17	42.86%	27	15.87%	10	4.76%	3	63
10	Stress Management	12.70%	8	12.70%	8	38.10%	24	22.22%	14	14.29%	9	63

Showing rows 1 - 10 of 10

Q19 - Which of the following best describes a condition or factor that contributed most to your leadership development during your NOLS expedition? (select up to three)

Q19_7_TEXT - Other, please specify:

Other, please specify:

shared commitment to learning

Structured instruction on leadership

All the above. None of the above.

none

Working w/ a expedition member who was struggling physically and emotionally

The fear barrier: I was concerned my panic disorder would prevent me from completing the expedition. However, feeling secure and trusted by my team members allowed me to complete a physically challenging and stormy expediton that I'd never thought I'd complete.

Did not feel like I grew as a leader due to this experience; however, it was fun being outdoors, unplugged and with great people.

SPace and time

Q20 - To what extent (if at all) did you experience the following during your NOLS

expedition?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Shared hardship	1.00	5.00	3.16	1.06	1.12	63
2	Shared sense of accomplishment	2.00	5.00	4.10	0.81	0.66	63
3	Shared vulnerability	2.00	5.00	3.83	0.92	0.84	63

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
4	Emotional bond or connectedness	2.00	5.00	3.84	1.01	1.02	63
5	Mutual trust	2.00	5.00	4.21	0.80	0.64	63
6	Mutual respect	3.00	5.00	4.33	0.69	0.48	63

#	Field	Not at All		A Little		Some		Much		A Great Deal		Total
1	Shared hardship	7.94%	5	14.29%	9	42.86%	27	23.81%	15	11.11%	7	63
2	Shared sense of accomplishment	0.00%	0	4.76%	3	14.29%	9	47.62%	30	33.33%	21	63
3	Shared vulnerability	0.00%	0	9.52%	6	23.81%	15	41.27%	26	25.40%	16	63
4	Emotional bond or connectedness	0.00%	0	14.29%	9	17.46%	11	38.10%	24	30.16%	19	63
5	Mutual trust	0.00%	0	1.59%	1	19.05%	12	36.51%	23	42.86%	27	63
6	Mutual respect	0.00%	0	0.00%	0	12.70%	8	41.27%	26	46.03%	29	63

Showing rows 1 - 6 of 6

Q21 - To what extent (if at all) did experiencing the following emotions during your NOLS expedition contribute to your leadership development?

#	Field	Not at All		A Little		Some		Much		A Great Deal		Total
2	Discomfort	8.06%	5	33.87%	21	29.03%	18	17.74%	11	11.29%	7	62
3	Fear	29.03%	18	33.87%	21	27.42%	17	4.84%	3	4.84%	3	62
4	Excitement	1.61%	1	9.68%	6	19.35%	12	37.10%	23	32.26%	20	62
5	Exhilaration	3.23%	2	12.90%	8	19.35%	12	33.87%	21	30.65%	19	62
6	Frustration	16.13%	10	27.42%	17	33.87%	21	14.52%	9	8.06%	5	62
7	Stress	16.13%	10	29.03%	18	35.48%	22	12.90%	8	6.45%	4	62
8	Inspiration	1.61%	1	12.90%	8	22.58%	14	27.42%	17	35.48%	22	62
9	Joy	1.61%	1	11.29%	7	14.52%	9	40.32%	25	32.26%	20	62
10	Uncertainty	6.45%	4	19.35%	12	37.10%	23	19.35%	12	17.74%	11	62
11	Vulnerability	1.61%	1	24.19%	15	30.65%	19	24.19%	15	19.35%	12	62

Showing rows 1 - 11 of 11

Q22 - How did the emotionally impactful moments you experienced at NOLS benefit your leadership development (either during or after your expedition)? Why do you think that is?

How did the emotionally impactful moments you experienced at NOLS benefit y...

The emotionally impactful moments helped to strengthen my sense of empathy with teammates and colleagues because these instances helped me to better "see" teammates as individuals with their own set of feelings, values and experiences.

Being sick for the first two days of the expedition gave me a new appreciation for my ability to manage through discomfort

helped us feel connected and to build trust, and as a result to open up to our vulnerabilities

Intensity of experience far removed from normal life allows more time and space for open/honest reflection

I think that those moments allowed me to tune into my thoughts, feelings and emotions in important ways. Anytime I get to practice this, I think I get to become a better leader

I gained the most from dealing with a difficult team member.

Learned that being uncomfortable has a time limit, knowing that makes it easier to tolerate

As someone with an anxiety disorder and a bit of a loner, the concept of NOLS was frightening to me. I will say that the first morning, prior to getting on the bus, was the toughest for me. "Anticipatory anxiety" as my mom calls it, took over my body that entire morning. I made over a dozen trips to the bathroom throughout the morning and cried on the phone to my mom on that last phone call. (I later learned my teammates had made bets that I wouldn't get on the bus. Ha!) However, once I was on the bus, I made a decision to trust the decision making process that got me there. It was not long after that I settled into our routine and into a comfort level I could operate in. By the end of the expedition, I was trusting these teammates, who five days earlier were complete strangers, with my life. There is a lot to be said for that. NOLS provided this life changing experience that afforded me an entire level of self-assurance I never knew I could have and that alone has made me a better leader.

Engaging with such extraordinary leaders and PEOPLE inspired me to be a better leader, teammate, friend, husband, and father.

I think it made me look at the personal connections more. What is someone going through, and is there a way I can be of better service to their growth.

Just the fact that I did this and was able to do it physically was a tremendous experience for me. The area was incredibly beautiful - the people fantastic, all with their own quirks, as I am sure they considered me and each other the same way. Some amazing and fascinating life stories. Led by incredible and very experienced people. I will say this, one of my tentmates (who I am still in touch with) was on the older side of NOLS attendees, so that kept us with a particular leader with more emergency medical experience.. That person was just phenomenal to hike with, from life experiences, to knowledge of the natural world, to just genuine patience and care for others and the environment. Hiking with them was a privilege. And I loved the llamas. Many of my co hikers did not, for me, they were a plus. Caring for and managing them may have been the biggest learning experience of all.

.

NOLS really helps put things into perspective as far as little things throughout a normal day in normal life. I definitely don't sweat the small stuff like I used to, and that was the first thing I noticed once I was back home. Having this amazing experience with such great people/instructors, in a setting that is so vast and spectacular, makes you realize what's truly important and what you need for yourself in your life and leadership journey.

Risk management (crossing a snowfield on a slope and bushwhacking to a peak with unknown suitable camp locations) opened my eyes to the differences in decisions and choices when making them for the group rather than for myself.

How did the emotionally impactful moments you experienced at NOLS benefit y...

I think the challenge of the discomfort and anxiety that came with the experience perhaps made me a more compassionate leader but I am really not certain of that. Because my reasons for attending NOLS had little to do with my work and leadership skills this is a difficult question for me to answer. It was really about personal growth which should ultimately result in better leadership but hard for me to define.

Probably as greatly as the learning did. With emotional breakthroughs comes learning, and I think I learned a lot WITH my team. Certainly, I learned FROM them, and from the experience. I wish I had been able to share more emotionally with them. I didn't know how to at that point.

Helped me understand and appreciate more ways people support their teammates.

The remote setting, the wilderness, the team being self-sufficient / dependent opens a level of vulnerability not possible in a professional (comfortable) setting. Social anxieties are shed, vulnerability is easier. Empathy is more natural. Being in the outdoors away from the safety and comfort of civilization forces more authenticity in my view, making emotional connection an impact much easier. You simply cannot create the same shared bond over a professional presentation or an industry dinner as you can when you're in a small group in the outdoors.

Realized that the team had my back! I was still valuable even though injury prevented from full participation.

I was very uncomfortable with many aspects of the expedition. I was very inspired to accomplish something outside of my comfort zone. I felt brave, exhilarated, and ready for so much more.

Those moments opened me up to new insights and greater self-reflection. They also formed a deep bond for me with my teammates. The emotionally impactful moments were really the cornerstone of the learning experience for me - they both catalyzed my learning and serve to keep it vivid and meaningful for me.

My limited typing skills preclude capturing an even remotely accurate answer to this question. Further, I cannot separate this course from my 50-year experience with the school in considering emotional impact.

The joy and excitement about being in the wilderness sharpened the focus on leadership learning ... and perhaps even more in retrospect as looking back at that time is entirely positive, which makes the leadership portion positive as well.

Understanding how different people with different experiences respond to and overcome stressful situations and physically demanding events helped to expand my perspective outside of my current work environment.

I realized that I too often rush to make decisions. While there is a time to for that, it is more often a better decision to take the time to ask the right questions. Additionally, taking some time can help refine the strategy and to get the group to buy in and ultimately help accomplish the desired outcome.

Helped me open up.

Not sure that it impacted my leadership. Maybe it flattened the field. Out there there are no "pedestals" on which to stand. Every one is equal. Education background none of that really matter.

I was very happy to be away from work in a beautiful natural environment. Taking time to observe and reflect on basic needs that motivate and satisfy individuals refreshed my interest in actively working to improve my management practice.

I felt a huge sense of accomplishment becoming a team and then executing out on the water in a short amount of time. Sea kayaking seems to be a great way to compress a lot of leadership variables into a short amount of time, which also leads to a lot of emotions in a short amount of time, reminding me that there is a huge emotional component to working as a team.

The emotional bonding that occurred was a product of the shared experience, teamwork, the natural beauty we all experienced together. That bond helped me appreciate the full potential that exists within a shared experience. As a leader, learning how to recreate a shared experience can be a powerful way to lead an organization.

Again, it's the stories that I'm able to tell others that provide the most prominent recurring benefit.

How did the emotionally impactful moments you experienced at NOLS benefit y...

The exhilaration and uncertainty of sea kayaking translated in to more of an open-ness and sense of adventure with other leadership situations not in the wilderness. I think I became more open to the uncertainty that any moment can bring.

Shared vulnerabilities creates trust and opens lines of communication. This leads to authenticity/getting to know the real you, increasing trust and strengthening communication.

Greatly - self reflection. After my trip I had a better sense of purpose and commitment to being better - as a person, leader, husband, dad, etc.

One of my biggest takeaways from my expedition was how dramatically our group bonded and grew once we set the stage to be vulnerable with each other. No one pretended like they had it all together and everyone was very comfortable sharing their struggles. As a response we listened to each other and supported each other and it was such a refreshing and invigorating environment to be a part of.

I had just retired from the military--a career that brought excitement, exhilaration, inspiration, and joy--and was heading into a second career that likely wouldn't include those emotionally impactful moments. My expedition reminded me how much I needed these. So I adjusted course. It was an absolute game changer.

I figured out that identity is self-formed, not inherited. I joined the expedition carrying a great pain and feeling helpless because of lack of respect I always face on daily basis on my daily life (Self-leadership). However, I figured out that I have chosen, and have decided, to stay in a very toxic environment that judges me in everything that I am not. I am not a refugee if I belong to my ambition, I am not in limbo if I had a SMART Goal/Dream, and, recognizing that I have the ability to define who am I and where do I belong to transcended me from feeling helpless to taking effective actions.

I realized the power of vulnerability, for a leader to draw upon, when needed or when available.

good to feel like a beginner

n/a

The course was fun, but I did not feel that it impacted my leadership development.

Through the NOLS experience, and the Leadership Journeys in particular, I learned how powerful an experience it is in a group setting when leaders go first, with a willingness to be vulnerable, and how others readily follow suit once that "culture" of the group has been established.

Reiterated to me the importance of vulnerability in growth.

Not at all..It helped me personally not as a leader

Increased my ability to empathize

Be a designated leader for my team, and working together through a mutual challenge was the most impactful. I found inner confidence and tapped into my intuitive knowledge to guide the team out of our predicament. I have used that inner strength as I assumed a new leadership role following the expedition. Also, sharing with the team, my personal leadership journey required a significant amount of personal courage. It was a moment of great vulnerability for me (parts of my past offered were difficult to discuss). In the weeks and months to come, I have felt more comfortable talking about my past and articulating the lessons which shape my leadership character and journey. I'm learning to use this selectively to connect with my team, colleagues, and external partners.

Frustration at how I was treated by others who were in leadership roles over me led to lessons about how to treat (or not to treat) others when I'm in a leadership role (ex: be careful about micromanaging in ways that come across as disrespectful or controlling.) Enjoying being outdoors was a big part of the reason I went, so that was an important part of the experience, but I have enjoyed being outdoors in many other circumstances so it didn't seem like an especially important contributor to my leadership development, it seemed more like an added benefit that made the learning more enjoyable and made me more willing to make the time to participate in the first place.

Good to be vulnerable and recall how that makes you feel back in the real world.

How did the emotionally impactful moments you experienced at NOLS benefit y...

As a reminder of self

At the time of my NOLS expedition, I was at a crossroads in my career and personal life. NOLS came at a good point for me to escape out of my bubble and put myself in an unfamiliar situation that provided fresh perspective.

The experience gave me several stories and memories to draw on when thinking about leading and following in my average working day.

I improved on using my emotion of uncertainty, after NOLS, as an engine for better observing, better listening, better elicitation, which combined for better decision making.

The most emotional impact came from gentle questioning/conversation with one of the expedition leaders after telling my personal story. It really led me to reexamine my perspective in a variety of situations and do a lot of personal work to become more true to myself and less sensitive to what others think of me. I eventually came to realize that authentic relationships can not be formed when I am trying to be someone other than myself. Also, as a leader early in the expedition, I realized that the group was not all on the same page and my co-leader and I had set a very different goal from what some others may have wanted. Instead of seeing individual behaviors as problematic, it led me to try to see the others person's perspective and be open to modifying the journey if not the end goal with everyone in mind. That was a surprisingly emotional moment for me because leadership had long meant getting people to do what you tell them to do and accomplishing a goal as it was originally set. I lost some of my rigidity in this experience and that was a good thing.

I think it softens you a bit.

Surprised you didn't ask specifically about EB. I definitely increased by ability to be empathic, be vulnerable, and be curious about other peoples stories. By far the greatest takeaway from all of my trips was the power of EB to bring a team together and make it not only cohesive, but highly effective!

I am comfortable to quite the degree outdoors, however, learning to listen to gain the emotional impact of others was important. at the time, my wife and I were dealing with her terminal cancer diagnosis. This was a respite and the way to shift focus from potentially dying to living. it was well received (and my wife is healthy today)

You were forced to depend on others in an enviornment I had never experienced before. So you were completley vulnerable (I had never kayaked for more than an hour or two and had never slept in a tent) and dependent on others to share teach and pull thier own weight.

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	Compassion	1.00	5.00	3.23	0.91	0.82	62
2	Confidence	1.00	5.00	3.31	1.23	1.50	62
3	Connection	1.00	5.00	3.45	0.98	0.96	62
4	Empathy	2.00	5.00	3.50	0.86	0.73	62
5	Executive Presence	1.00	5.00	2.89	1.17	1.36	62
6	Humility	1.00	5.00	3.44	0.99	0.99	62
7	Patience	1.00	5.00	3.53	0.96	0.93	62
8	Perseverance	1.00	5.00	3.50	1.15	1.31	62
9	Perspective	1.00	5.00	3.95	0.94	0.88	62
10	Reflection	1.00	5.00	3.87	1.01	1.02	62
11	Self-Awareness	1.00	5.00	3.89	1.08	1.16	62

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
12	Trust	1.00	5.00	3.60	1.10	1.21	62

#	Field	Not at All		A Little		Some		Much		A Great Deal		Total
1	Compassion	1.61%	1	17.74%	11	46.77%	29	24.19%	15	9.68%	6	62
2	Confidence	8.06%	5	16.13%	10	37.10%	23	14.52%	9	24.19%	15	62
3	Connection	3.23%	2	12.90%	8	32.26%	20	38.71%	24	12.90%	8	62
4	Empathy	0.00%	0	9.68%	6	45.16%	28	30.65%	19	14.52%	9	62
5	Executive Presence	12.90%	8	25.81%	16	30.65%	19	20.97%	13	9.68%	6	62
6	Humility	1.61%	1	14.52%	9	40.32%	25	25.81%	16	17.74%	11	62
7	Patience	1.61%	1	14.52%	9	27.42%	17	41.94%	26	14.52%	9	62
8	Perseverance	6.45%	4	12.90%	8	25.81%	16	33.87%	21	20.97%	13	62
9	Perspective	1.61%	1	4.84%	3	22.58%	14	38.71%	24	32.26%	20	62
10	Reflection	1.61%	1	8.06%	5	24.19%	15	33.87%	21	32.26%	20	62
11	Self-Awareness	1.61%	1	9.68%	6	25.81%	16	24.19%	15	38.71%	24	62
12	Trust	3.23%	2	12.90%	8	30.65%	19	27.42%	17	25.81%	16	62

Showing rows 1 - 12 of 12

Q24 - To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your

NOLS experience?

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
1	I learned more about myself	1.00	5.00	4.18	0.75	0.57	62
2	I was reminded of what it's like to be a beginner	1.00	5.00	4.02	0.99	0.98	62
3	I didn't really learn anything new	1.00	4.00	1.47	0.76	0.57	62
4	I have greater appreciation for the outdoors	2.00	5.00	4.26	0.76	0.58	62
5	I'm not sure how what I learned applies to my work environment	1.00	4.00	1.81	0.82	0.67	62
6	I was reminded of what it's like to be a follower	1.00	5.00	3.98	0.77	0.60	62
7	It made me a better leader	2.00	5.00	4.05	0.81	0.66	62
8	It changed my life	2.00	5.00	3.84	1.05	1.10	62
9	I see the world differently now	2.00	5.00	3.79	0.90	0.81	62
10	It increased my desire to be in the outdoors	1.00	5.00	4.27	0.97	0.94	62
11	It made me more interested in studying leadership	2.00	5.00	3.81	0.90	0.80	62

#	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std Deviation	Variance	Count
12	The impact of NOLS on my leadership development has increased as time has passed	1.00	5.00	3.74	1.08	1.16	62

#	Field	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Total
1	I learned more about myself	1.61% 1	1.61% 1	6.45% 4	58.06% 36	32.26% 20	62
2	I was reminded of what it's like to be a beginner	1.61% 1	6.45% 4	19.35% 12	33.87% 21	38.71% 24	62
3	I didn't really learn anything new	66.13% 41	24.19% 15	6.45% 4	3.23% 2	0.00% 0	62
4	I have greater appreciation for the outdoors	0.00% 0	3.23% 2	9.68% 6	45.16% 28	41.94% 26	62
5	I'm not sure how what I learned applies to my work environment	41.94% 26	38.71% 24	16.13% 10	3.23% 2	0.00% 0	62
6	I was reminded of what it's like to be a follower	1.61% 1	3.23% 2	11.29% 7	62.90% 39	20.97% 13	62
7	It made me a better leader	0.00% 0	3.23% 2	20.97% 13	43.55% 27	32.26% 20	62
8	It changed my life	0.00% 0	14.52% 9	20.97% 13	30.65% 19	33.87% 21	62
9	I see the world differently now	0.00% 0	9.68% 6	24.19% 15	43.55% 27	22.58% 14	62
10	It increased my desire to be in the outdoors	3.23% 2	3.23% 2	8.06% 5	33.87% 21	51.61% 32	62
11	It made me more interested in studying leadership	0.00% 0	8.06% 5	27.42% 17	40.32% 25	24.19% 15	62
12	The impact of NOLS on my leadership development has increased as time has passed	3.23% 2	9.68% 6	25.81% 16	32.26% 20	29.03% 18	62

Showing rows 1 - 12 of 12

Q25 - How have you been able to apply (if at all) what you learned at NOLS as an

executive leader after completing your expedition? Please provide an example if possible.

How have you been able to apply (if at all) what you learned at NOLS as an...

Managing risk in the pursuit of difficult objectives is directly applicable to my work leading real estate development projects

Not specifically as an 'executive' leader, but certainly as a leader in the broad sense of the word. I gained greater understanding of how others may perceive my communication style, when it is not my intent. I also am working at being more vulnerable, and being able to tell my story in a more compelling way.

I have been able to collaborate with other senior leaders in key ways.

Peer leadership was new to me. I have used the skills learned from NOLS in many situations.

Being patient with others, less pre judging. The people I didn't care for at the beginning of the expedition have become life long friends

My husband was diagnosed with Stage IV Cancer at the same time a Director was placed between myself and the CEO of our organization. When my husband started radiation and chemo and I continued to work and use intermittent FMLA, I was told by my new supervisor, "Been there, done that." I knew at that moment I no longer believed in where I worked. I stayed through my husbands treatment, but began reviewing my resume. I ended up having interviews with The Attorney General's office of the State of Michigan, Michigan Department of Civil Rights Office, Michigan House of Representatives Democratic Caucus, Michigan State Housing Development Authority. I felt confidence enough to apply, let alone interview. Four months ago, during a global pandemic, I ended up taking a position with the Department of Defense. I feel many of the self-imposed limits I previously felt are no longer there.

I think completing NOLS in a way helped me to think about having the courage to do different things in my life, Perhaps gave me more confidence as I charted new paths for myself. After returning I decided to go to MBA school, completed my degree with honors, embarked on a new career in climate change and managing climate and sea level rise impacts, including climate impact on national security. I live a life of perpetual learning, and a sense of urgency to make progress in our changing world to prepare and adapt for climate change. I'm not sure I could say that about my prior career, heck, I've even taken on new athletics interests, learning to scull, and working my way up to a rowing a racing level single shell.

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Patience and asking for help when needed. Managing expectations.

Probably just more confidence in a leadership role.

After completing my expedition the position I now hold as Chief Justice opened, and I was appointed to it. I have pursued many resources to learn the leadership skills required for my position, but I often reflect back on the leadership lessons from the expedition as part of my learning. I went into the expedition with a great deal of back country camping experience, mostly with small groups. The group expedition aspect was new. But for the most part the outdoors element of the expedition was not the most important part of the experience - it was the first focused leadership training program of any type I participated in, and the setting was just (for me) a pleasurable aspect of the course alongside the instruction - though it provided a vehicle for several important leadership lessons. I was glad to have had the course as a baseline once I assumed my position as Chief Justice and began pursuing a variety of other executive leadership courses and resources.

I learned how to "get out of the way" of team mates that knew more about a particular subject than I did. I was humbly aware of my challenges with some of the tasks and took that opportunity to learn from others that were much better at them than I was. I had no issues being a follower.

I have been able to communicate better with my minions. Sharing the "route" of the day is important to me, and communicating clearly what the expected challenges of the day are has made it easier to work together to overcome them. When things go bad, it's been helpful to remember the unexpected challenges encountered in NOLS and HOW the leadership there communicated with us what we needed to do to best survive our environment.

How have you been able to apply (if at all) what you learned at NOLS as an...

I am now more observant of my team looking for little ways to grow trust among teammates and to better understand the relationship challenges among individuals within my team.

Seeking deeper personal connection with members of my team; a desire to hear their personal story and perspective vs. focussing most of professional work, challenges, accomplishments.

I can do anything I put my mind to. I can lead and follow. I take it all in and process as no decisions need to be made immediately.

I apply the debriefs in my work, home, and with my community groups. Lessons learned and how we can do better. I continue to challenge myself and when I feel uncomfortable I know I'm headed in the right direction. This year with COVID was without an exception.

Absolutely. A couple of things: 1. I'm more willing to do difficult things 2. I'm better at stepping back from a problem or challenge and engaging my teammates 3. I try to "put down my pack" when I'm faced with a challenge so that I can shift my perspective on an issue and stop carrying a bunch of baggage or preconceived notions with me. 4. I'm more willing/able to truly embrace who I am as a leader and stop trying to contort myself into someone else

None

Being intentional in developing and tending to a shared sense of trust through experience. I've found that groups that share experiences - not necessarily at the intensity of NOLS - but still shared - develop a sense of each other that can develop in bonds which enhance the group's performance.

See below

Not directly

I haven't.

NA

It has been 7 years... unfortunately, it is a fond memory but now something a recall consciously in my leadership roles

I believe I improved soft skills as a result of my NOLS experience.

The main takeaway was to take time to better understand other's strengths and weaknesses (for the NOLS program it was mostly physical, but also emotional).

I use the Leadership Educator Notebook as a reference for teaching others. Just last night I pulled it out to coach my wife through an organizational challenge she's facing in a co-worker. One story from my sea-kayaking course pertained.

I am currently not in a role of executive leadership. My overall definition of leadership has very much expanded. I really like the 4/7/1 model and integrate it into my teaching. (I am currently an adjunct professor of leadership).

Leading from Behind has its place but don't get used to it. Increased emphasis on self-awareness. When asking someone to do something, simply insert a "please".

I lost about 25 lbs after returning, work out more, and am more present in my life. I also at work at a lot of changes and rather than fighting some of them I was able to accept what I controlled and navigate through them where looking back I am in a much better leadership position now than I was then.

How have you been able to apply (if at all) what you learned at NOLS as an...

I've incorporated the idea of debriefing into my clinic team (i.e. discussing what we've learned during pandemic and how to restructure our clinic habits to continue to accommodate the changing world we live in). In addition, I train new procedurists and have also incorporated a longer debriefing at the end of the day to discuss skills gained in the procedure and make goals for next training session.

I refer to the group decision making model frequently. I also refer back to the four leadership roles.

I learned that in times of uncertainty how to navigate my environment and gather information about my environment before taking a decision. Nowadays, I try to confirm the assumptions before I move on with it in any project by asking other teams whether or not they are familiar with this assumption. I am currently rotating in different department to understand how the workflow works instead of making assumptions of how does it work and build my actions in false assumption.

I'm much more present now, and seek opportunities more regularly to feel grounded. To slow down, become more aware, a bit more quiet, relying more heavily on my noticing and observing skills. A work in progress.

More intangible than tangible

I enjoyed the course and people; but it was not critical in my leadership development. To be honest, I was not expecting that either.

Following my initial ELLE trip, I have attended a NOLS Alumni trip almost every year. With each trip I take notes and try to write an article about the experience, the lessons learned and some application of those lessons to my work and the work of my team back at home. Knowing that I will be trying to write an article forces me to notice the experiences and the lessons being learned in real time, and taking notes daily in a journal for the same reason helps to reinforce and document the experience and the learning.

It has helped in mentoring my team

yes perseverance

Sharing personal stories at work to show vulnerability and improve the time it takes to build trust. I've also been a lot more mindful of when a new employee comes on board and has to learn all of our systems and procedures. It's helped me be more patient and empathize with them more.

In my executive role, I've applied the following lessons I learned during my NOLS trip: (1) increased vulnerability and self-acceptance; (2) increased inner confidence leading more senior members/leaders; (3) more nuanced and discerning awareness of risk management: planning, identification, mitigation, and strategy; (4) greater empathy and sensitivity supporting and meeting teammates at where they are vs. where I want them to be. In the last year, I assumed a more senior position which includes senior and junior members, the lessons I've learned during NOLS has helped me build trust, enhance communication. and foster team building.

Most directly applicable was how to think about risk management, such as thinking about different aspects of risk (ex: likelihood vs. severity). Also just in general, instilling a sense of pride in being able to deal with adversity and uncertainty / thinking of myself as someone who is good at dealing with adversity and uncertainty, and at learning from it.

Spend more time w/ my staff reflecting on decisions and processes

Patience, empathy, and understand of the needs of those around me. Sharpened emotional intelligence has been the major tactical takeaway. Personally, a greater appreciation of time away from work, particularly in nature, as a tool for reducing stress and creating balance.

I'm a better listener and have more patience with difficult people.

Backpacking is an excellent metaphor for life and I draw on it to think through challenges and solve problems.

After NOLS, I experienced having more success getting the most effort from teammates. One example was when I was in charge of delivering a response to a request for proposals for a Government contract valued at \$44 Million. Several members of my technical team were frustrated, their confidence was ebbing and they were ready to give up. I used some techniques I learned at NOLS, to include: rolling up sleeves and working alongside them, avoided delivering the answers I had, elicited their concerns and listened, and restored their confidence in themselves. We finished what became a winning Proposal on time, and under budget. Thanks a million (literally) NOLS !

How have you been able to apply (if at all) what you learned at NOLS as an...

The most impact has come from perspective taking and increased flexibility. As a leader early in the expedition, I realized that the group was not all on the same page and my co-leader and I had set a very different goal from what some others may have wanted. Instead of seeing individual behaviors as problematic, it led me to try to see the others person's perspective and be open to modifying the journey if not the end goal with everyone in mind. In my previous experiences, leadership had been synonymous with getting people to do what you tell them to do and accomplishing a goal as it was originally set and in the specified timeframe. "Do what you say you're going to do and on time". I lost some of my rigidity in this experience and that was a good thing. From a business perspective, clinging to a goal that no longer makes sense can be dangerous. And not having your team on board with the direction you're headed and the way you intend to get there can be also.

Can show up with greater empathy and vulnerability. Better able to teach and share power of EB to others.

Learning to listen in today's workforce is paramount to understanding the problems and delivering solutions

Q26 - How have the benefits from your NOLS experience evolved or expanded over time

(if at all) since completing your expedition? Why do you think that is?

How have the benefits from your NOLS experience evolved or expanded over ti...

Continued reflection on my NOLS experiences, as well as observing results of applying them, continuously reinforces their value and provides new insights regarding their merits.

small nuggets or insights take root, and I continue to self-reflect, and to understand how my leadership style, communication etc plays out in multiple scenarios as I gain more experience.

Inspired additional and continued learning about leadership and making use of shared resources.

Continuing to get opportunities on how to work with others on a team.

NOLS condensed a lot in one week. I have been unpacking what I experienced/learned and apply it often.

I use the experience as a reminder that sometimes you need to be out of your comfort zone to grow in many aspects of ones life.

I continue to seek out ways to problem solve. I seek others input. I realize when I asking for more feedback and input, there is a greater ability to achieve success as it reflects more of those I serve.

I just think back to having the courage to change, and to trust my own abilities and to be able to prepare myself to have the courage and intellect to do new things. I was less secure in that way prior to NOLS, and faced crushing disappointment at the end of my prior career. NOLS helped me push past that and beyond it..

I've participated in four other NOLS expeditions, so they are cumulative. All increasing my respect and admiration for the leadership, nature, personal awareness, and team aspects of courses. A continuing life journey that has been and continues to be influenced and shaped by the NOLS experiences.

I still don't sweat the small stuff! The perspective gained from NOLS is embedded in my brain.

Please see previous answer.

Because I am no longer in a leadership role (retired) this is a difficult one to answer.

I'm getting better at sharing emotionally, which has been a personally difficult thing for me. I've also taken a leadership position in my son's Boy Scout Troop, and NLS definitely prepared me to be an active, dynamic leader.

The NOLS experience provided me experiences to continually draw wisdom from...as I have new experiences at work my reflections on my NOLS course and my learnings from it evolve.

It's created a deeper desire to make a NOLS leadership experience an annual necessity; the experience created or deepened relationships which are invaluable and provided the space for perspective I would not have otherwise gained.

Collaboration has improved and listening before I speak!

How have the benefits from your NOLS experience evolved or expanded over ti...

The benefits I learned were priceless. You can't learn what you gained out in the wilderness in a textbook or classroom. The skills I developed I use every day as a businesswoman, mother, wife, and community leader. The experience was truly life-changing and left me thirsty for so much more in life.

I think as I've had time to reflect and put my lessons into practice - as well as deepen my relationships with my NOLS teammates - I've seen even more benefit from my NOLS experience.

The evolution of my total Nols experience has continued unabated over time measured in decades. This course was part of that evolution. Note that I was a student on this course- the first time since I was a student in 1970's on my original student course and a year later on an instructor course- the first in the school's hx. What a grand and wonderful evolution.

I've become more willing to let team members take the lead while I play the role of a supportive follower.

I see greater value in perspectives from people who's experience is vastly different than my own. I have come to better understand and empathize with people who deal with stress differently than I do. I think the exposure to a variety of perspectives/experience from other team members during the course helped my understanding

My biggest takeaway was to be empathetic before being judgmental. I try to do this daily and even though I don't always succeed I am getting better at it.

They haven't.

Increased empathy and patience...seems to be growing as I get older...

Not sure that it has evolved or expanded but it is a great memory. Photos still scroll through my screen saver and I enjoy them

I don't think the benefits have evolved over time. I might need to take another trip to derive additional benefit from experience at NOLS.

I continue to reflect on the experience - a lot happened in a short amount of time. And, it helps that the group stays connected via direct messaging.

Not much reflection occurred on the course. I laughed when I read that question. Our days were too full for reflection. It's the reflection since that have allowed me to synthesize and relate what I learned.

I'm not sure how to describe this. I think of the expeditions I have taken (2) often and find myself continually coming back to them. The memories are strong.

Increased emphasis on establishing an emotional connection. regardless of the audience. This happens very effectively simply by listening and understanding the audience.

From NOLS I also wrote a personal Manifesto that I review every day. It guides me. Without NOLS I am not sure I would have done that and it has proven an extremely valuable tool in my life.

While my experience was only a short time ago (August 2020), I went on the trip for more of figuring out personal changes/growth I wanted to make for myself. I think when I got back from my expedition, I wanted the changes I wanted to make for myself to happen overnight. For example, when of the questions I had for myself was when I wanted to leave my current job and consider transitioning to a different role in medicine. At first when I got back, I felt I needed to have a deadline for myself to make those changes. However, as time has gone on, I've realized that the confidence and insights from my trip have stayed very central in my day to day and knowing that I have been ok to remind myself that life is a journey so I don't have to place such strict deadlines and specifics in career/professional changes and just focus on growing in my values. I will still move forward and do new things with this mindset but it keeps more doors open.

I've become a more humble leader. I've learned that it's OK to be "human"...to stop trying to be infallible.

How have the benefits from your NOLS experience evolved or expanded over ti...

Defining my self-identity. I loved space, and, a NOLS instructor taught Astronauts at NOLS. I started enriching myself with knowledge about space, and, the future of space by visiting countries like Luxembourg and learning about how they focused on gaining a foothold on space. I think that space is the new frontier. I'd like to self-define my self as an explorer because explorers are remembered of their risk-taking and adventures, and, never of their assigned identity.

Time for reflection since NOLS has allowed me to appreciate more fully how that week helped shift my perspective, my worldview. Mostly in the area of self-awareness, how I see myself and where I fit in the world (or an organization). And then how others might see me, and how I show up each day, in the world that surrounds me. Do your best, ask others, "How can I support you?" Lead when that's needed, follow when that's best. That's Expedition Behavior. It's always a work in progress.

Relationship building that simply takes times

Power of unplugging.

Friendships have proved resilient and lasting. Subsequent trips both reinforce the original learning and also introduce new dynamics and learning opportunities, often in relation to the varied personalities of the different instructors, each fantastic and interesting in their own way. Annual NOLS trips also help to reinforce and expand the learning over time.

Not sure

no

I've been on monthly zoom calls with my Nols team every since the expedition ended, so the journey of learning is ongoing!

I've expanded my circle and network of friends, mentors, and professional acquaintances. This expanded circle/network continues to support my leadership philosophy and skill set. I continue to grow as a "student" of leadership, and this, in turn, has helped my team.

I'm not really sure.

Well, I encourage others to do it.

NA

I don't know that it's expanded but I certainly cherish it more and more as time passes. In fact, I'm taking my daughter on a similar NOLS trip this summer.

My ability to reach to and relate to diverse members of aligned staff as well as employees in other sectors, especially the younger, less experienced teammates - has much improved, over time. I believe that behavioral strategies, built on moral truths, deliver better and better results if applied long term.

The expansion of benefit over time is due to the personal work that NOLS inspired me to do. It has impacted all areas of my life and inspired me to keep up the work and do more of it. Also, seeing the benefits of my altered perspectives in my work environment has inspired me to keep up the new behaviors and keep looking for more ways to improve.

Have become a much more deliberate and intentional learner. Have ben able to curb a lifelong tendency of doing all the talking, and do a TON More asking and listening.

Listening has become very important to me, even when I disagree with the speaker. It has helped me to understand their point of view, even if I disagree.

Q27 - Which of the following additional activities would further benefit your leadership development the most? (select all that apply)

Q27_7_TEXT - Other, please specify:

Other, please specify:

None at this point but all of the above when I was in a leadership role.

Tough question. Thinking, thinking, thinking

N/A - I actually work as an executive coach and faculty and use these methods.

Q28 - Finally, would you recommend a NOLS executive leadership expedition to another executive?

#	Field	Choice Count
1	Yes	96.77% 60
10	No	3.23% 2

62

Showing rows 1 - 3 of 3

Q27_7_TEXT - Why or Why not?

WIDGET_ERROR.ERROR

Q29 - Why or Why Not?

Why or Why Not?

Few things can safely replicate an outdoor expeditions ability to expose leadership/teamwork shortcomings, and provide near immediate ability to observe improvement. Similarly, the opportunities to experience the impacts of various approaches to risk management (under the guidance of good instructors) is most likely unparalleled in any other low risk educational format.

I gained so much, and the shared learnings and personal growth, with the chance to practice in real situations, cannot easily be experience in the frontcountry. Lynn and Dave are awesome instructors.

Terrific leaders and facilitators on the trip. Great chance to meet others and learn from incredible and challenging experiences

I have recommended the course highly. I do so for the leadership skills taught,the community experience and the physically challenging natural environment.

I think that it was an experience that was out of my athletic ability but I persevered, and others can too.

Overall, it was a fantastic and enjoyable experience. Although anxiety producing at the outset, being disconnected from the outside proved to be incredibly powerful and provided me the opportunity to be fully immersed in the NOLS experience and fully engaged in the conversations with the extraordinary leaders I was fortunate to expedition alongside.

Because the experience left me changed.

The experience will be different for everyone, but valuable for all.

.

I found the benefits of meeting new people, pushing myself outside my comfort zone and being outdoors to be humbling and exhilarating. Good to experience life outside of the bubble.

So many NOLS alum had said to me "you come back from NOLS a changed person." And while it's sometimes hard to describe the how/why that happens, I saw it and felt it immediately after returning home. You have clarity and purpose that comes from the experience. Plus, you get to totally unplug, be in spectacular settings, exert your body and mind together on a daily basis, have fun, and feel so accomplished. NOLS is a game-changer.

I thought it was both effective and enjoyable.

I believe just being in nature and all of the vulnerability that comes with that is important for any one in a leadership role. Having conditions that are out of our control is very beneficial to those of us that like to control everything in our work environments. If nothing else just being "disconnected" for several days to clear out the noise is a great time for reflection.

I would, and HAVE suggested others take a similar course from NOLS. It gained perspective, and many of my colleagues take "desk" leadership courses, sitting at a table and TALKING about leadership. It's different when it's cold outside, and the bugs are biting, but the stars are out. When leadership determines whether you sleep on rocks or not. Or how wet and cold you get. When there's skin in the game, it means more.

The experince is truly unique and the learnings unpredictable.

Skills building for the front-country and profound personal learning....

Strongly recommend for the reasons shared in earlier answers. 10/10

Why or Why Not?

YES!!! Best thing I did for myself!

It's THE MOST impactful leadership development experience I've had.

Without question a solid course under the umbrella of a school. I'd go into the mountains any time with another crew like we had on my course/ instructors, students, even Silas the llama.

Definitely ... it will change your life!

Absolutely a great experience. Largely depends on who the other participants are, but our group and instructors were great

Good experience. Outdoor anecdotes are valuable for leadership

Simply because I think everyone would benefit from time in the outdoors. Additionally, being dependent on total strangers forces you to think differently and to give up some control. Even without a strict curriculum this will help develop character and wisdom.

I would recommend an expedition, as I said, I really enjoyed that part. From a leadership perspective I didn't take much away.

Its all about being in a very different unfamiliar space...learning to trust others whom you don't know and being aware of what is going on...we all get so comfortable in the day to day execution of our jobs. This is an out of the box experience...

I think it was a great program and I enjoyed it. It was a safe way to get outdoors and enhance my leadership

It is a unique experience that combines learning practical leadership lessons in an excellent environment.

It is a great program, well-organized and well-thought out. I met a great group of people and have a lasting connection with them.

I've recommended the Executive Leadership expedition to scores of peers, many of whom have completed since completed NOLS courses (typically with USNA's Faculty program).

I think that a NOLS expedition is a unique form of learning that most executives would benefit from (not necessarily all).

On a NOLS expedition, you can expect the unexpected. If you are looking to challenge yourself to the point of failure, look no farther.

Most executives sit in meetings all day and then get a nice dinner and a glass of wine or go on a golf course. It is stale. Like working out progress comes from changing routines and experiencing uncomfortable things. NOLS provides that perspective. It challenges executives to reflect on what they are doing vs. just being on auto-pilot.

Being able to navigate the outdoors the way we did really built confidence and resilience in a timeline that is very rare with other leadership series. Also, being able to have honest, real conversations with a diverse group of successful people of different fields was a unique and valuable experience. I'm a huge believer in diversifying the people you network with because you learn more from having a conversation with someone who is different than you. Being alone together for a week with ample time for conversation makes a NOLS expedition a really special way to bond with people.

At its best, it's a game changer. At its worst, it's a week in one of the world's most beautiful places with some pretty awesome people.

NOLS is a challenge; it takes a person beyond their comfort zone where their solid confidence about their knowledge often shows erroneous. Is it at times where these we are honest about weaknesses which gives us a direction on where do we need to improve? I do not know! but it is that isolation that allows for self-reflection to occur.

Why or Why Not?

It's a life changing experience, if you see it that way. The work after NOLS is as important as the work that week, and it takes time to realize that, I think. But NOLS gets you headed in the right direction, if you choose to accept that and go to work afterwards. It CAN change your life, if that's right for you.

Build relationships in a unique setting

Maybe. It would depend on the leader. It would be a HUGE yes to a young leader who is not experienced in the outdoors. I would not recommend NOLS to someone who has spent a lot of time outdoors or is looking to do something that is more extreme.

Absolutely, and I often do. We all need to get away at least once a year, unplug to recharge, bathe in nature, meet new people, struggle together, learn new things.

Great experience... challenging and inspiring.

it could give them time for self reflection

It's a truly unique experience that you can't really get in many other places. The ability to disconnect for a week with a group of people committed to being better for their family, friends, and employees is special.

For the community, learning, camaraderie, and self-development. This is an excellent course that is well designed and offers an attractive return on investment, both in terms of time, resources, money, and many other qualitative, immeasurable benefits.

I would have chosen "maybe" if that were an option. Or "it depends." I did a regular 30-day NOLS expedition when I was a young adult, and that was much more impactful than the executive leadership expedition, partly because it was longer, but also because it was at a time of my life when I hadn't had as much leadership experience and I was still learning to be independent. By the time I attended the NOLS executive leadership expedition, I was at a point in my career where I honestly wasn't as much interested in the leadership lessons, I was more just interested in having a fun outdoor adventure with interesting peers. My recommendation for others would depend on where they are in their careers and what kind of experience they're looking for. I think it would be especially impactful for someone who hasn't had much outdoors experience beforehand. And also, someone earlier in his/her career and leadership development journey.

Best leadership experience ever - -

I have already recommended it to others. As I mentioned earlier, it is a rare opportunity to get out of our bubbles and meet a whole new set of people from different backgrounds and approaches. It's a good reminder that people think, behave, and are motivated differently than ourselves.

Generally positive but I think my experience was negatively affected by the large presence of executives from one company on our trip. Of the 12 on the expedition, 5 were from the same company and they did not genuinely attempt to assimilate in the group.

Amazing experience. One that will test you and appreciate teams and the outdoors.

based on my own NOLS experience, I was able to recommend an expedition to other executives, who in every case responded favorably, I think, because they easily discerned my own authenticity and community-connection regarding the subject.

From a personal growth and development and "soft skills" perspective, there's a lot to be learned and gained.

I recommend it all the time—it's great for taking a leader out of their comfort zone and having their skills tested in the real environment Of nature—as well with other executives who may or may not adhere to ones style of leadership.

It will be a life changing event for 95% of people who go.

I believe it is a chance to disconnect and reconnect to nature and to executive groups. (peers). I think that for those of us that are prior military, it gives a chance to learn how to shift our leadership style.

Why or Why Not?

As noted earlier it was an amazing experience that words cannot describe. I would encourage everyone to try it and you will find that the ROI on your time and investment will be the highest of your career. It simply doesn't get any better.

APPENDIX H

Internal Consistency of Dependent Variable

Case Processing Summary

		N	%
Cases	Valid	62	100.0
	Excluded ^a	0	.0
	Total	62	100.0

a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.861	8

Item-Total Statistics

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? - I learned more about myself	27.23	23.063	.538	.852
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? - I was reminded of what it's like to be a beginner	27.39	21.454	.551	.852
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? - I was reminded of what it's like to be a follower	27.42	23.067	.519	.854
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? - It made me a better leader	27.35	21.511	.708	.835
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? - It changed my life	27.56	19.135	.788	.821
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? - I see the world differently now	27.61	21.684	.597	.846
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? - It made me more interested in studying leadership	27.60	22.507	.495	.857
To what extent (if at all) do you agree with the following statements about your NOLS experience? - The impact of NOLS on my leadership development has increased as time has passed	27.66	19.703	.693	.834

Scale Statistics

Mean	Variance	Std. Deviation	N of Items
31.40	27.556	5.249	8

May 4, 2020 9:39 AM PDT

Bruce Loveless
Sch of Leadership & Ed Science

Re: Expedited - Initial - IRB-2020-332, EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FOR EXECUTIVE LEADER DEVELOPMENT

Dear Bruce Loveless:

The Institutional Review Board has rendered the decision below for IRB-2020-332, EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING FOR EXECUTIVE LEADER DEVELOPMENT.

Decision: Approved

Selected Category: 7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Findings: None

Research Notes:

Internal Notes:

Note: We send IRB correspondence regarding student research to the faculty advisor, who bears the ultimate responsibility for the conduct of the research. We request that the faculty advisor share this correspondence with the student researcher.

The next deadline for submitting project proposals to the Provost's Office for full review is N/A. You may submit a project proposal for expedited or exempt review at any time.

Sincerely,

Dr. Thomas R. Herrinton
Administrator, Institutional Review Board

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