

## **AN OUTDOOR ADVENTURE PROGRAMME INFUSED WITH OLYMPIC VALUES IN TEACHING OLYMPISM TO UNIVERSITY STUDENTS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Olympic education and the underlying concept of Olympism draw largely on the writings of Pierre de Coubertin, the founder of the modern Olympic movement. Olympism is a philosophy, not only for the competition and victory of elite athletes, but also as a holistic approach throughout an individual's lifespan. Olympism uses participation and cooperation in physical and movement activities as medium for education. The purpose of the study is to determine the role of an outdoor adventure camp, infused with Olympic values, in a multicultural student cohort setting at a university in Johannesburg. Qualitative data were collected by means of focus group discussions with the camp participants. Data were analysed with ATLAS.ti to develop themes and categories. The findings revealed positive experiences among the participants with an understanding of the Olympic values of respect and friendship, and their relationship to the participants' daily lives when interacting with their peers and family. Although the participants understood the concept of excellence, its relevance and application in their daily activities were not as prominent as respect and friendship. Follow-up interventions are recommended to ensure sustained implementation on and off the sports field.*

**Keywords:** Cultural activities; Outdoor adventure; Multicultural; Higher education institutions; Olympism; Olympic values; Team-building.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Education is a construct that seeks to foster and facilitate excellence. It contributes to the enrichment of the human experience enabling one to excel in life (Culpan, 2015). University students may experience a number of factors that negatively relate to their academic performance and achievement. These factors may include financial difficulties, the transition from high school to higher education institutions (HEIs), peer pressure/influence and the multicultural environment. Higher education institutions in South Africa report dismal student graduation rates as a norm. The 2002-2003 South African survey revealed that South Africa has the highest number of higher education students in sub-Saharan Africa, but that less than 20% actually graduate (Page *et al.*, 2005). Peer influence is one factor that often negatively affects academic performance. It is also evident that students receive support from their peers or have learnt that they can seek help from their peers (Fakude, 2012). Peer groups are, therefore, an important agent of socialisation into the multicultural HEI.

It is generally accepted that participation in physical education, sport, games and similar movement initiatives and interventions can play a significant role in the socialisation process of people and the development of group cohesion (Parry, 1998; Roux, 2002; Bloom *et al.*, 2003; Roux *et al.*, 2008; Senécal *et al.*, 2008; Binder, 2012). Olympic Education (Todt, 2015) and Olympism Education (Culpan, 2015) could be seen as an alternative to public sport and leisure education regarding the development of social cohesion. Such interventions that develop social cohesion are often induced by team-building initiatives (Roux, 2000/2002). Individuals may learn about themselves to evoke creativity and solidarity, to understand equality and to comprehend life as a whole (Todt, 2015).

People participating in the Olympic Values Education Programme (OVEP) of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) are encouraged to experience values-based learning and assume the responsibilities of good citizenship. The OVEP communicates the benefits of sport and physical activity through an understanding of Olympism (blending sport with education and cultural expression) and its impact on individual health, enjoyment and social interaction (Parry, 2006; Culpan & Wigmore, 2010).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

According to Šukys and Majauskienė (2013) and researchers, such as Parry (2006), Naul (2008), Culpan and Wigmore (2010), Binder (2012) and Culpan (2015), Olympic education, based on Olympism, is an effective means of education. Blending sport with culture and education, Olympism seeks to create a way of life based on the joy in effort and the educational value of good example and respect for universal ethical principles (IOC, 2013). Parry (2006) also argues that the philosophy of Olympism focuses not only on the professional athlete but on every person throughout their whole life and/or only on competitions and victory, but also on participation and cooperation. Thus, Olympism focuses on the improvement of personal and social life and not only on sport activities (IOC, 2013). Olympism is embraced by the IOC and the ideology behind it has not been static. Hence, transformation within the Olympic movement is often evident in its values, which have been adapted to the relevant historical, political, social and cultural shifts of society (Chatziefstathiou, 2012). Values of inclusion ('all sports for all people', as per De Coubertin in 1919) have become more prominent as the sexist, racist and exclusionary characteristics of the past have progressively given way to a more inclusiveness. Yet there are concerns about human rights, gender discrimination, doping, gambling, social responsibility and sustainability that still prevail (Chatziefstathiou, 2012).

Although it has been suggested that the promotion of Olympism is best maximised through physical and sport education, learning opportunities should also be created in other leisure and recreation endeavours, with a movement culture that includes various forms of play, games, dance and other deliberate exercise and initiatives. Olympic and Olympism education should be introduced not only in sport, but in real-life situations and activities as a tool for social and personal development (Bondar, 2015; Culpan, 2015; Varfolomeeva & Surinov, 2016). These Olympic values include humanism, mutual understanding, friendship, equality, solidarity and keeping to fair rules (Šukys & Majauskienė, 2013; Todt, 2015).

The four-yearly Olympic Games are associated with a set of 'Olympic values'. Although these values relate directly to sport participation, they could be used in general life as they provide excellent guidance for living a life based on achieving goals, making the most of individual talents and opportunities, and caring for others. The British Council, in line with International Olympic Committee (IOC, 2013), define the Olympic values as follows:

- Respect – fair play, knowing one's own abilities and limits, and taking care of one's health and the environment;
- Excellence – how to give the best of oneself on the field of play or in life, taking part and progressing according to one's own objectives;
- Friendship – how, through sport, to understand each other despite differences.

The teaching of values is a complex process (Binder, 2012) that takes place in all the aspects of life of children and youth. Influences, such as the family, immediate community and religion, are key factors in this process. In many countries, the responsibility for developing values has become the responsibility of the schools in the formal teaching setting. There are many political and social difficulties that Olympism proposes to face. It is also necessary to seek solutions to economic and social inequalities, concepts, such as multiculturalism and gender issues (Todt, 2015).

Social groupings are part of human relationship within society. Social interaction, relationships and forming collectives or groups occur. Socialisation, the active life-long process of learning and social interaction through which people acquire personality and learn the ways of the society they live in, is embedded in diverse and multilevel domains (Coakley & Burnett, 2014). Social learning theory (the formation of identity as a learned response to social stimuli) emphasises the social context of socialisation, when the behaviour and attitude of an individual develop in response to reinforcement and encouragement from those around them (Bandura & Walters, 1963; Bandura, 1977).

A group has a specific meaning in different contexts, such as in sociology and in sport, as well as in various work groups. A group develops power and a distinct culture (Kebaili *et al.*, 2015). Group cohesion is a dynamic process where group members tend to remain together in the pursuit of a common purpose and goals, as well as for the satisfaction of the affective needs of the members (Bloom *et al.*, 2003; Martin *et al.*, 2013). Social cohesion is the degree to which members of a group like each other and receive personal satisfaction from one another's presence (Martin *et al.*, 2013). Group cohesion can include either task cohesion, social cohesion, or both. Social cohesion is defined as when participants spend time together or share common interests outside the common purpose of the group; task cohesion is where group members unite to accomplish a specific task (Martin *et al.*, 2013).

People participating with others in recreation and adventure activities will gain psychological, physical, emotional and spiritual benefits (O'Connell & Cuthbertson, 2009; Sibthorp & Jostad, 2014). Increasing a sense of unity and cohesiveness can be accomplished through team-building activities (Senécal *et al.*, 2008). A team-building intervention, however, should be designed to increase interpersonal effectiveness, self-effectiveness, group cohesion (social and task) and effectiveness (individual and group) (Johnson, 2005; Bloom & Loughhead, 2011).

“Team building intervention is based on the *action theory*” (Johnson, 2005:25). This theory can be conceived in a four-stage cycle, namely (a) take action; (b) assess consequences and obtain feedback; (c) reflect on how effective actions were, and (d) implement the revised action. As participants engage in this process, they have to perceive themselves as capable of implementing the procedures and strategies as being appropriate to their social world. This process of continuous improvement is repeated several times until expertise in the use of group skills, such as cohesive intra-group relationships, bonding, sharing, caring are developed.

Deliberate team-building strategies have been successfully employed in business, industry, education and sport to enhance cohesion and unity through the development of task and social aspects (Bloom & Loughhead, 2011). Bloom and Loughhead (2011) argue that team-building interventions have demonstrated performance with increased adherence levels and advanced interpersonal relationships. A conceptual framework for team-building was presented as a process of *inputs* (team inputs were conceptualised as individual and team characteristics that needed consideration prior to any team-building intervention); *throughputs* (the processes by which the inputs are converted into outputs); and *outputs* reflect changes in behaviour (Stevens & Bloom, 2003).

As a person grows older and more mature, it becomes more necessary for external bodies to be involved in his/her life. The university is an established academic institution in which the behaviour of an individual is sharpened to develop a way that leads to a more harmonic and authentic human development, hence starting to remove social exclusion and oppression amongst other negative attitudes (Todt, 2015) and to equip him or her for occupational socialisation. Social learning and socialisation should be prerequisite for the discussion on team building. You socialise or are socialised and, at the age of around 14 years, the peer group becomes the most important significant other. Then you form peer group relations that would support the idea of intra-group cohesion to be applied to students and the research setting. By applying such an intervention, a university could assist their students towards a flourishing academic career, as well as thereafter.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study was based on a three-day adventure camp with second-year university students (N=120) from a university in Johannesburg, South Africa. The camp programme consisted of numerous recreational activities sequenced specifically to ensure optimal group experience. The envisaged outcome of this intervention programme was that the students will develop interpersonal skills, such as trust, communication and diversity, and to understand the value of having a relationship with their peers in developing a sense of community during their studies and consequently to rely on their friends for study and social support (Smith *et al.*, 2010).

The sequencing (Tuckman, 1965) was adapted from and based on the sequential model developed by Roux (2000/2002). The participants were grouped as equally as possible into ten smaller groups, with gender and race representing the demographics of the composition of the university student body. As the programme progressed, sessions were administered where participants reflected and provided feedback about their experience of the various programme

activities. Before the camp, the facilitators were trained for the execution and facilitation of the various activities, as well as how to create teachable moments, how to address the various Olympic values (respect, friendship and excellence) within this context of the camp programme, how it could be employed in a real life situation, and how to plan and conduct a debriefing session.

## **Programme**

### ***First session (ice breakers and own identity): Day 1***

The aim of these activities was to facilitate communication skills, trust (sharing personal feelings and ideas), problem-solving, leadership, interaction, cooperation and commitment. This was enabled by the participants introducing themselves and sharing personal feelings, ideas and experiences with other group members, to effectively work together as a team with victory over the other teams as a common goal (Roux, 2002).

1. Human knot (the group (n=10) of participants standing in a circle, participants connect hands with two other people in the group to form the human knot. As a team they must try to unravel this 'knot' by untangling themselves without breaking the chain of hands).
2. Relay games (energisers).
3. Know-yourself activities (with the support of the participants' choice of an object from the veld that best represented their personality) – identity.

### ***Second session (group identity and problem-solving initiatives): Day 1 and Day 2***

The aims of this session were to acquire group cohesion, identify the purpose and vision of the group, as well as to plan and communicate individual roles and to develop leadership skills.

1. To design, paint and display a group name and logo (T-shirts);
2. To compile a collage of pictures and paper snippets to represent the characteristics of the individuals, as well as the characteristics and identity of the newly founded group (Posters);
3. To prepare food on an open fire and share the meal with the group at a table decorated with the objects the participants had collected from the veld during the previous session to represent their personalities (*Potjie-kos*).

*Debriefing:* After concluding with a brief discussion on the content of the activities, the group members shared their experiences of their involvement with the planning, designing and making of the T-shirts, posters and food. This also provided the opportunity for participants to explain their feelings about the contributions of their counterparts towards the completion and outcomes of the activities. During this session the Olympic value **respect** was defined and introduced to the participants. The participants then engaged in explaining ('talk' according to Binder, 2012) how they could identify a teachable moment from the various activities done so far, for teaching respect.

### ***Third session (indigenous and cultural activities): Day 2***

The aims of this session were to promote interaction, foster understanding and awareness, develop mutual respect (giving participants some insight into different cultures), celebrate diversity within a multicultural society and identify similarities within and between cultural groups. Each activity was introduced with a brief background narrative and a description of

how to execute the activity. The participants had to learn to sing an Afrikaans folk song, *Ek soek na my Dina*, (translated: *I am looking for my spouse*) before an accompanying dance was introduced. **Respect** as an Olympic value was reinforced by participating ('action' according to Binder, 2012) in the following three activities:

- *Dibeke* - an invasion game of Sotho-speakers;
- *Ek soek na my Dina* - a traditional folk dance of the Afrikaans-speaking population;
- *Kho-Kho* - a chasing game associated with those of Indian descent.

*Dibeke* and *Kho-Kho* are recognised as national indigenous games promoted by Sport and Recreation South Africa for nation-building (Mkhontu, 2006).

*Debriefing*: The content of the activities for this session was discussed in detail. The participants had to discuss the positives and negatives they had experienced while singing and dancing *Ek soek na my Dina*, and playing *Dibeke* and *Kho-Kho*. The participants had to reflect on the positive involvement evident from other participants within their own group (n=10). During this session the Olympic value **friendship** was introduced to the participants. The participants then had to explain ('talk' according to Binder, 2012) how they could identify a teachable moment from the activities for facilitating respect and friendship.

#### ***Fourth session (obstacle course and concert): Day 2***

The aim of this session was to develop the following competencies: brainstorming, identification of talents, ordering of ideas and imagining alternatives, interaction, communication and leadership skills, and performing with other people in front of an audience.

*Obstacle course*: The aim of this activity was to achieve individual, as well as team-oriented outcomes. While an individual attempted and overcame a challenge on the equipment, the other participants remained on the ground acting as spotters and encouragers. Group members were expected to support one another physically and emotionally (Prouty *et al.*, 2007). Although the groups were competing for the best time, safety, support and cooperation (Parry, 2006) were key factors. Therefore, the time of the person who finished last in each group was taken as the official time for the group. All 120 students participated. *Friendship* as an Olympic value was reinforced with participating ('action' according to Binder, 2012) in the obstacle course. Thereafter, the definition for **excellence** was provided and explained ('talk' according to Binder, 2012). Teachable moments during all activities, for **respect**, **friendship** and **excellence**, were discussed.

*Concert (role play)*: A concert was organised, with the theme 'Olympic Values'. The aims were for participants to develop a sense of aesthetic understanding, explore emotions, gain confidence in their own abilities, learn to respect and depend on others, appreciate the values and attitudes of their own and other communities, and develop group dynamic skills (Taylor, 1991). The play was staged in front of all students and staff (n=133) attending the camp.

*Debriefing*: This debriefing session was similar to previous sessions. However, for the last two activities the participants had a high level of interaction with the total group (n=120). Participants were asked, after the initial debriefing, to call upon any participant from any group

to stand up, so they could be praised and hugged for performance in demonstrating respect (fair play, good sportsmanship), friendship (a positive attitude towards themselves and others), and excellence (their contribution towards the success of the camp). The session was concluded with a prize-giving ceremony and free social interaction.

## PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study was to determine the role of the camp, which focused largely on the Olympic values, in educating individuals (students) about Olympism in a multicultural setting.

## METHODS

### Ethical clearance

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Faculty of Health Sciences, University of Johannesburg Research and Ethics Committee (reference: REC-01-127-2014).

### Participants

The university students (N=120) who participated in the outdoor adventure camp were invited to attend a focus group discussion session, of whom four students availed themselves. The one male and three female participants were over the age of 18 years, fluent in English and from different ethnic backgrounds. All the participants were enrolled as full-time undergraduate students.

### Data collection

Two independent researchers facilitated the focus group discussion, which was audiotaped and transcribed *verbatim* for analysis. Field notes were taken during the discussion in addition to the audiotapes. To ensure anonymity, participants were given alphabetical codes (A, B, C and D) as identification. A comfortable venue familiar to the participants was utilised for the discussions. The focus group discussion started with the introducing the researchers and participants, in addition to an orientation to the aim of the study and research procedure. Formal consent was obtained to audiotape the discussion. Participants were given the opportunity to withdraw from the discussion at any time, if they so wished. At the end of the 45 minute discussion, the participants were granted an opportunity to change information if desired.

The *interview schedule* for the focus group discussion, the following topics were examined:

1. Discuss the actual activities in the programme;
2. How did you experience the activities?
3. Explain your feelings towards your counterparts' input during the execution of the activities;
4. Discuss the Olympic values that have been learnt;
5. Discuss how the Olympic values were introduced;
6. Explain the value of such a camp for teaching the Olympic values;
7. Explain what your purpose in the bigger group (second-year group) was, including what your feelings and attitude towards being a student at the university are;

8. How could typical or similar activities be used to assimilate real-life situations (at home, with your friends and at work).

### Data analysis

The transcript of the discussion was examined by the two researchers to identify emergent themes. A qualitative data management computer programme, ATLAS.ti, was used to help organise the data. Three steps in the coding process namely, open, axial and selecting coding were used. With open coding all relevant comments relating to the research topic was highlighted. The researchers then used the axial coding to review the initial codes and determine categories based on connections and consistency. Selective coding was done in which all coders were reviewed to determine the relevance and links with the main research topic. Discrepant themes were deliberated upon and new codes were added to reproduce the best results possible. Themes were divided into categories and sub-categories.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results are presented in the broad categories conforming to the three Olympic values of respect, friendship and excellence, and all subsequent corresponding sub-categories.

### Respect

#### *Fairness and equality*

Throughout the discussions, underlying concepts of *fairness* and *equality* were evident from the feedback of many participants about the camp as a whole and the various individual activities. Using energising games to divide the total group (N=120) into smaller groups (n=10) was perceived as a fair way to move friends away from each other for the purpose and duration of the camp.

*At first they told us to like to stand according to our height, like from shortest to tallest, and then secondly they were like ... according to the first letter of our names and surnames and then the other one was according to our birthdates and stuff. And then "boom" [laughter] we were like separated from your friends like altogether.* (Participant A)

*Then they, like once that was all done, we were in a line, they said like okay, you that first person in the line "you go to that corner, you go to that corner, you go to that corner" and then they just split us up. That is how we got into groups of people we didn't know, and I think this was fair because all our groups were more and less equal.'* (Participant C)

The feelings of *fairness* and *equality* filtered into their perception of different activities and how positively they experienced taking turns to prepare breakfast or lunch, cleaning up, having to bid on ingredients for the *potjie* and 'first come, first serve' when allocating beds (Senécal *et al.*, 2008). Although one participant felt that their group should have won the *potjie* competition, they expressed that they still enjoyed it thoroughly. Another participant spoke about their group knowing that they would not win the obstacle course because they were given a two-minute penalty at the start, but that they developed great bonding, hence this did not hold them back from competing and having fun (Senécal *et al.*, 2008).



*... and the second day the other groups had to make lunch or breakfasts. So like basically taking turns and the like. One group could like prepare the meal and then the other group would come clean up. (Participant A)*

*We had a two-minute penalty so there was no way were going to win. So we just went out to enjoy it and have fun. Everyone tried, tried themselves out, to jump over an obstacle or two by themselves to see if they can and if they couldn't, we tried to help them. It was just really fun and funny at the same time. (Participant D)*

### ***Goodwill and peaceful co-existence for social support***

Participation in all the activities required consideration of team mates and the members of the other groups. Several participants indicated that most of the activities took them out of their comfort zone. However, they did not refuse to participate nor did they make any fuss. The participants expressed an understanding of how some people would fear some activities. The obstacle course and the ice breakers, where they were required to encroach on a person's personal space, were good examples of this. One participant indicated that she was an only child and that she found sharing a room quite difficult.

*I remember there was one girl and in one of the courses she was literally just sitting on the 'paal' [pole] and she was like "I can't move", she couldn't do anything. With the help of her group members, they actually pulled her through because working together they [the group] actually made her continue and finish the obstacle course. (Participant B)*

Another two participants pointed out that being on stage acting in a play was difficult for them, however, they expressed their gratitude for being part of the group and that, through their collaboration, the group would succeed. One participant even played the leading role in their group's play.

*I did actually go on stage. I had the main role in our thing. (Participant D)*

The feeling of *belonging and social support* was experienced while enjoying each other's company, so much so that after the activities were completed for the day the participants freely organised a small party for themselves. For some, a peaceful co-existence was experienced when attending to chores, such as cleaning up and preparing food. There was a mutual understanding of individual roles, limitations and expectations.

*It [the obstacle course] actually showed a lot of people's true characters because you had to wait for everyone to be over the one obstacle in order to like carry on with the next. So just like shows how much people are willing to help and willing to help others in order to like benefit you all. And that nobody was being selfish or just caring about themselves. It was a team effort. (Participant C)*

Even though *trust* was not specifically expressed, it was a general feeling among the participants. Unfortunately, negative experiences were mentioned, some with incidents occurring prior to the camp connected to how *goodwill* was expected in a group. Participants reflected on how people are disrespectful or unfriendly on campus towards people of authority, the opposite gender and people of different ethnicity. This resulted in a noticeable effect on the group participants. The expectation that 'everyone has the Olympic values in them' revealed the negative experience of one participant who stated that someone had stolen her money

during the camp. While incidents like these were not foreseen, the participants all agreed that negative behaviour should be corrected to uphold the peace.

*Like maybe say like "OK, find someone not being respectful" and them then being penalised and stuff. Because I know in my group ... someone stole money actually from my handbag, it could have only been someone from my group. (Participant C)*

Goodwill was also mentioned when participants spoke about everybody enjoying the traditional Afrikaans dance, *Ek soek na my Dina*. A few Afrikaans-speaking participants knew the song but were unaware that there was a specific dance to go with it. None of the participants expressed resistance to learning the dance, dancing with each other or even to dancing in front of the group, although it was not part of their heritage.

*Well, what I enjoyed a lot was the Dina dance. We actually got to know people really well and it was funny, because no one had done it before or maybe like one or two people. Some people have heard the song but they don't know the dance. We were all like learning something new that no one has done before so no one had room to judge or laugh at you or anything. So it was just really fun. (Participant C)*

## **Friendship**

### ***Level of friendship, empathy, honesty, mutual understanding, trust and compassion***

The participants all agreed that the camp provided an opportunity to meet new people and get to know their peers better.

*I feel like I have made friends but I'm not going to call it a friendship that I'm going to phone this person over the weekend and be like "let's go do something". (Participant C)*

Most participants acknowledged that participating in such activities with previously unknown students holds the potential for future benefits especially in the university setting where they might collaborate on assignments, share information and enjoy a feeling of belonging (Martin *et al.*, 2013). Creating supportive networks could support students in their academic preparation and performance,

*I definitely think there are a few, I wouldn't say a lot, but there are definitely a few that I still talk to a lot now during lectures, after lectures about academics because of the camp. If it wasn't for camp, I would have never spoken to them or met them otherwise. (Participant D)*

*What D [Participant D] has said is quite true because even after the camp I actually had a group of most of my camp mates for one of the assignments that we had to do and I worked well with them and we actually got a good mark. (Participant B)*

*The normal people that you see on a daily basis, but like ... now or straight after class you guys can still just chill with your classmates and talk and then you can get the slides and stuff that you missed out on during the week or something like that. (Participant A)*

Even though the participants expressed that the level of friendship was rather superficial, the majority expressed that they felt much more at ease in one another's company. The initial foundation and building blocks for possible friendships were created. The value of friendliness was also revealed when one participant shared with a friend that 'they are not out to get you'.

*Like now when you see them [the other students] you can have a conversation with them and things are like okay, such that you don't feel awkward or it just feels like everyone is nice and no one is out there to get you. (Participant C)*

***Being willing and open to knowing one another*** (given the possible divides based on ethnicity, gender, etc.)

Any effort towards friendship will begin with building trust (Bloom & Loughead, 2011). The participants recognised that this does not happen when people do not know how to express themselves and when they are unfamiliar with one another. This could be due to the fact that they are registered for different qualifications, they come from different social-economic backgrounds and ethnicities. Some participants, drawing from their sporting background, indicated that when people share a mutual goal, they will work together to achieve that goal.

*...and because we don't know each other we don't even trust one another. (Participant B)*

*Like in [a] sense we are in a team sport, you don't know these people, but because you enjoy this sport ... you have to get along with them so you can all win that one common goal. (Participant B)*

Many of the activities were set up with the objective to provide the participants with the opportunity to share some aspects of their lives and get to know other people. This would not normally have occurred in this way in an academic setting at the university (Roux, 2002). The individual activities, such as the one where the participants had to retrieve something from the field that represented themselves, provided an easy way of sharing personal characteristics, something that otherwise could have been challenging (Šukys & Majauskienė, 2013, Todt, 2015).

*I brought sand, because I said my thing was I'm down to earth. And another, I remember, another person in our group brought a piece of bark from a tree and he said that the bark protects the tree just as how he protects his family and friends. (Participant D)*

*In my group, I remember this other boy had a plant. ... He pulled the plant out and he also had the roots there and then he told us like ... even though he is living this side in Jo'burg [Johannesburg] and no longer in KZN [KwaZulu-Natal] ... he doesn't forget his roots and where he's from and then ... he feels like he's growing tall like the tree, or the plant in this case. (Participant A)*

Some of the participants knew each other prior to the camp, but participating in these activities created an opportunity for meeting their peers and knowing them better (Roux, 2002).

*...because making the poster I got to know this person on a different level. As we were sitting down and pasting our pictures and stuff, I got to know that actually instead of me thinking this person is actually this side, like one side of themselves. You got to know a vast amount of knowledge about them. Because even though it is something that they hold dear to them, they were able to share it with everybody. Not just the group, but even during, when we presented to the whole camp. (Participant B)*

Although the idea of splitting friends into different groups was to create opportunities to meet new people and open up about themselves, some participants found that certain group members kept company with the people they knew.

*There were a few girls in my group that didn't socialise much at all, I still do not know much about them still the rest were good. (Participant C)*

## **Excellence**

### ***Determination to fulfil obligations***

Although many of the activities were non-competitive, the participants as a team felt the need to be daring, bold as well as in supporting their team mates when participating and completing the assignments (Šukys & Majauskienė, 2013; Todt, 2015). This need was clarified further by one participant who stated that through knowing more people in the class because of the camp, it became easier to look for people to assist with specific academic assignments. Those people may not necessarily be close friends.

*But it was really fun to brainstorm and think about what we're going to do for the play. I really enjoyed that. Like our group coming together to talk about it, was really fun. (Participant D)*

*My group didn't actually experience any difficulties with regard to planning and managing the play. Everyone was very open-minded towards everything. (Participant C)*

*I was afraid of everything. I was scared but when I got there it was fun, I'll say because I'm not a very active person, I just don't like being out of my comfort zone. (Participant A)*

### ***Emancipation***

When asked to clarify and define *excellence* as an Olympic value, participants found it difficult to express themselves. They did not mention *excellence* specifically, however in different parts of the discussion their statements leaned towards the theme of *emancipation*. Participants felt a sense of freedom. Even though many participants classified themselves as either active or not so active, the activities were experienced as challenging yet well-suited for everyone to master (Roux, 2002; Bloom & Loughead, 2011). Some participants mentioned supporting each other. One participant revealed that doing well in newly formed groups, thus outside their normal friendship circle, was important.

*The obstacle course because I'm really an outside person. I like being active and stuff. (Participant B)*

*I remember on our last day there, our teacher had to come to our room three times just to get us out of bed. Then I also remember she said "hey A [name] wake up" and then I got out of bed and I pretended I was looking for my shoes in order just to ... [sentence not finished]. And then when she [the teacher] walked out, I just jumped straight into bed again. I was like "I'm not going". (Participant A)*

*It was nice to help other people as well to overcome what they thought they couldn't do. (Participant C)*

## **CONCLUSION**

Despite having different experiences of working with new groups of people, participating in different physical activities and being in the outdoors, the majority of participants gave feedback that leaned towards an overall positive experience of the outdoor adventure programme. With reference to the purpose of the study, two of the Olympic values, *respect* and

*friendship*, were evident throughout the feedback session. Participants clearly reflected on experiences at the camp relating to the Olympic values of *respect* and *friendship* and the respective subsections. The participants expected to experience an environment where people are respectful towards all others and are treated fairly with equal opportunities. This demonstrates a desire for a harmonious environment, both at the university and in the general community. Negative feelings about meeting or working with new people were not evident nor did the participants express conflict about learning from one another. The *openness* and *willingness* of the participants to put themselves in a position where they shared their background, heritage and fears was made easier by an activity that placed all participants on an equal playing field.

*Friendship* may be viewed more as *friendliness*. The researchers were of the opinion that using an activity to divide the groups into smaller groups, deliberately separating friends for the purpose of the camp, made the participants more open to meeting new people. This action also stimulated the participants to behave similarly in real-life situations, such as on university campus, in new classes or potentially even in their future workplace. Although no real new friendships were formed at the time, the participants felt more at ease in this group of acquaintances than before. Social support is essential for any university student, thus expanding their social circle in the class, and it would benefit them greatly. The participants indicated that on several occasions following the camp, they could draw more easily from peers to collaborate with assignments, leading to better results. The development of a sense of belonging within a peer group on campus plays an important role in a student's success (Culpan, 2015). Consequently, any opportunity to experience *friendliness* among peers is very important.

According to the results of this study, the third Olympic value, *excellence*, was unfortunately not prevalent. Throughout the discussion, its underlying sub-categories, *determination to fulfil obligation* and *emancipation*, were present, demonstrating a subconscious understanding of *excellence*. The participants indicated that they did not hold back their capabilities, and stepped out of their comfort zones to strive to be their best.

Because of low student availability, the sample group was relatively small, making the generalisation of the results difficult. The probability of non-recurrence could have been limited by making recordings of the debriefing sessions during the camp instead of holding a formal focus group discussion after the camp. It was clear that this outdoor adventure programme provided an opportunity to foster trust, respect and good relationships and, in addition, to develop social networks that could assist students with academic and social support during their academic career at the university. More opportunities for initiative programmes should be created at tertiary institutions. Greater emphasis should be placed on the three Olympic and the four Paralympic values as major and overarching values, and as such it is recommended. Since there are many political and social difficulties, it will be necessary to seek solutions to economic and social inequalities, concepts such as cultural diversity and gender issues (Varfolomeeva & Surinov, 2016).

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