

## Case Study #6 - Notes

### Camping As - Art / Science / Craft

*The enjoyment of a vacation really begins with the first preparation in which the participant makes free use of his own skill and ingenuity... Wilderness handicraft defines one's ingenuity displayed in making with his own hands devices which render the vacation less irksome... The fewer the items in your kit, the more must you have knowledge of how to live comfortably outdoors and how to employ the artifices of the camping art and how to utilize Nature's primitive stores.*

*Claude P. Fordyce - Trail Craft, 1922*

Beth was a well-seasoned Outward Bound staff working as a guide taking a small group of university students canoeing. As she and fellow guide Zabe packed for their trips, she initiated a conversation with Zabe about any extra equipment she was bringing along. She shared with Zabe that, hidden in her day pack, was a bucket full of coloring markers, paint kits and books devoted to inspiring journal writing. She justified carrying the extra weight of these fine art supplies by extolling the value of personal reflection, creative endeavors and group dynamic activities such supplies would allow on the trip. Zabe, in turn, showed her a canvas [ditty] bag she carried that held the only extra items she would bring: an assortment of both flat and crooked-bladed knives, which would allow campers to carve hollows to make such things as spoons. Zabe recounted her belief that a knife in the bush is as important as a pencil in the city. Her experience had revealed that few people carry knives with them in the bush any longer, let alone use them for much beyond spreading peanut butter. She wanted the students she guided to reflect upon, and learn the skills associated with providing for themselves in a natural location. Whenever she could, she would role model using a knife wisely and would encourage her students to try carving. The guide's conversation ended with both of them realizing that their trip goals and guiding techniques were quite different, and that neither of them truly understood the logic that gave rise to the other one's choices.

After their separate trips ended, when the small groups reunited as a class, students from Zabe's group told her of a conversation they had shared earlier with the other group.

They had heard that the group had forgotten to pick up their metal spoons after eating breakfast and departed for four days of camping with no eating utensils. The group ate its meals with improvised chopsticks, made with the only knife that happened to be brought by one of the group members. Facial gestures accompanied this story as her students imitated the frustration the others had expressed at having to eat such things as porridge and pudding with two sticks. Then her group members described the remarks and looks of awe on the faces of the other group's members when one of the beautiful spoons carved on our trip was revealed.

**Function and Aesthetics :**  
**Defining Craftsmanship**  
**By Zabe MacEachren**

**Case Study Resources**



- *Function and Aesthetics : Defining Craftsmanship*  
By Zabe MacEachren
- *The Application of Craft* By David Wescott
- *Crafting By Staging* By Steve Watts and David Wescott

## \* Text Questions to Consider:

1. What was the Outward Bound instructor's justification for carrying art supplies?

"She justified carrying the extra weight of these fine art supplies by extolling the value of personal reflection, creative endeavors and group dynamic activities such supplies would allow on the trip."

2. How does Zabe describe the importance of a "knife in the bush?"

"I recounted my belief that a knife in the bush is as important as a pencil in the city. My experience had revealed that few people carry knives with them in the bush any longer, let alone use them for much beyond spreading peanut butter."

3. How is "craft" defined in this case study?

"The author defines craft as an item that fulfills a function, requires the use of the hands to create, and uses materials identified as natural."

Look also at workmanship vs craftsmanship. Quality...Authenticity

4. What percent of students have actually made a craft? Collected natural materials?

"It is estimated that fewer than fifteen percent of students have ever made a craft, and even fewer have ever experienced collecting materials directly from the land."

5. Define "muddling through."

"It's the genius of the British race [sic] to muddle through!" (Richards, p. 21). This reply deeply bothered Hahn because he realized that the boy, in his innermost heart, believed that important contributions could be made without skill or effort. To "muddle through" means "to succeed despite one's inefficiency"

"...The development of multi-faculties (affective, cognitive, psychomotor) is basic and integral to a craftmaking experience. The roots of the ingenuity associated with human history are well represented by developments in the crafts that blend new ideas with new techniques."



6. What does "making things" do for people?

"Hahn understood the importance of education that strengthened and balanced a person's faculties. People developed an ability to balance faculties residing within themselves through making items that, at the same time, are deemed both functional and aesthetically pleasing."

"...they make an item that provides warmth and feeds the soul, and that ultimately makes it one of the most powerful items that has shaped human civilization. Such hand-made items are creations that are capable of satisfying many needs; what is insignificant is whether the item is classified a technological tool, an artful expression, or a craft. The point is that human ingenuity is reflected in the simple acts of creation that are capable of fulfilling the many needs of both the body and the soul to live well. "

"...abstract ideas and technological gimmicks that inhibit direct relationship to the land."

### 7. What is the difference between art, craft and technology?

"Increasingly, classifying a made item as either craft, art or technology has become a prevalent way of representing the item's worth. Today, countries are considered "developed" according to the technology and art which their citizens produce. Currently, [modern vs post-modern] craft is devalued next to art, and art is devalued next to technology."

### 8. How many examples does Zaby use to describe these terms?

Craft is the bridge between function and beauty - expression and utility - functional beauty. Both functional and aesthetically pleasing... simple yet elegant sense of aesthetics...

"Our notion of skill and craftsmanship has increasingly become associated with either the quality of usefulness, as evident through technology, or the quality of expressiveness, as evident in art. Perhaps, what should be asked is, where in education do learners acquire the traditional skill of blending the functional and aesthetic qualities of an item, and of what value is this blending skill?"

### 9. Consequently, how important are these semantic definitions to the author?

### 10. Why does Hahn value handmade projects?

"...Hahn must have implicitly recognized that the value of craftsmanship is derived from the total atmosphere of learning a craft, and that learning to make and complete a craft requires actions that demonstrate the balancing of many skills."

"...a handmade item is not only useful, but also beautiful, allows a person to demonstrate respect for the sources of the materials (plants, animals) and for the people who must routinely use the item."

### 11. What should be the outcomes of Hahn's "Experience Therapy?"

"Hahn's concept of education was simple - it was to develop a person to be righteous, vigilant, and an active citizen who had a sense of duty to his fellow person and to God (Richards, 1981). To Hahn, craftmaking aided students in this endeavor because the

experience emphasized learning a practical skill, taking care and being of service to others... Hahn demonstrated an unwavering commitment to using craftmaking experiences as a means to develop personal skill, commitment, patience, love of nature, good moral character and, most importantly, a sense of active citizenship."

12. How does Zaby's thesis resolve the other "social declines" mentioned by Hahn? She does not mention "Memory and Imagination" or Self-Discipline." Can these declines be addressed as well?

"In a world of limited resources and constant pressure to industrialize, an educational experience is required that draws attention towards practical and appropriate ways to fulfill both basic human and communal needs. Developing the skill and care associated with craftsmanship can serve these purposes."

1. Decline of Fitness - Manual Arts training - using hand tools.
2. Decline of Initiative and Enterprise - problem solving, use it up, wear it out, make do, or do without... make not buy - "they readily associate the ecological impact embedded in the craft's creation."
3. Decline of Memory and Imagination - heritage, mental templates/holograms
4. Decline of Skill and Care - working within the limits of the material
5. Decline of Self-discipline - consuming, fad/peer pressure, individualism
6. Decline of Compassion - knowing what it takes, materially, technologically

13. What is the difference between "intrinsic motivation" and "compulsion?"  
"...he emphasized the value of, and compelled students into, experiencing an understanding of craftsmanship derived from the experiences of craftmaking..."

### \* Context Questions:

1. How was craft perceived in historic context?

"Until the time of the Industrial Revolution, the fundamental human experience that influenced civilization was craftmaking."

2. When were "art" and "craft" separated?

"The intellect became associated with fine art during the European Renaissance when the term "art" and "craft" became separated. Notions of art became identified with something capable of moving an item beyond the realm of utility into that of pure intellect."

"It was not until 1888 that the words "Arts and Crafts" were officially joined...(A&C Movement in America)

3. What are the foundations of great civilization?

".....understanding that great civilizations are built upon the ability to both conceive and create practical items."

4. The author states: The experiences that educators offer students today are increasingly based upon digital or electronic technology that satisfies a very narrow purpose, or are based upon intellectual representations (i.e., fine art) that, in the author's opinion, are incapable of nourishing the body. This trend means that the human relationship with the land has become superficial as technological travel equipment (e.g., GPS) and aesthetic representations of places we travel (e.g., pictures and writing) increase. How many obvious contrasts between this modern approach and a traditional (post-modern) approach can you identify (ie. tents vs tarps, buckles vs knots)? (ie. tents vs tarps, buckles vs knots, stoves vs fire, packaged foods vs local foods, gear vs weather knowledge, risk management vs adventure, insurance (rescue vs personal responsibility, sport vs religion)?

5. What is the distinction between a "thing" and a "device?"

"In order to explain the loss of the holistic perception of the world due to the processes embedded in tools and their uses, philosophers describe various types of technology. Borgmann....Both Borgmann (1984) and Franklin use examples of crafts to describe their respective "thing" and "holistic" technological processes. A worthwhile exercise for experiential educators would be to ask them to describe their relationship to the materials they use in their practices. Are items "things" that provide connection to the world or "devices" that hide connection?"

6. What is lost with the separation of youth and adulthood?

"...the origin of experiential learning stemmed from the recognition of the holistic learning environment traditionally embedded in learning a craft (p. 123). "Traditionally, a boy learned alongside his father and a girl alongside her mother, an apprentice alongside the craftsman. It was not only skills that were learned, but also a spectrum of attitudes about the adult world"

7. How do we know that Hahn was concerned with tradition/heritage?

"Hahn stressed that good ideas should be taken from wherever they can be acquired. "In education, as in medicine, you must harvest the wisdom of a thousand years"

"Hahn encouraged wisdom to be uncovered from history instead of through fascination with modern novelty. Education was supposed to be about creating good citizens and not flamboyant individuals with novel gimmicks that drew attention to themselves."

8. Where do we find active craft traditions today?

3<sup>rd</sup> world countries...places where crafts are appreciated for their aesthetic functionality..."Today, countries are considered "developed" according to the technology and art which their citizens produce. Currently, craft is devalued next to art, and art is devalued next to technology."

**OPTIONAL READ: *The Importance of Traditional Woodcraft Skills***  
By Paul Van Horn (#4 in the Resources file)

**Case Study Questions to Consider:**

1. What tensions were created between the two staff members because of their contrasting styles? Can this be broadened to the field at large?

"...our trip goals and guiding techniques were quite different, and that neither of us truly understood the logic that gave rise to the other person's choices."

2. What are the two thrusts of MacEachren's thesis?

"the author to complete a dissertation entitled, *Craftmaking: A Pedagogy for Environmental Awareness*. One part of this research dealt with the importance of craftmaking experiences in shaping people's understanding of nature. Another part of the research considered Hahn's emphasis on craftsmanship as it arose from craftmaking experiences, as distinguished from non-craftmaking activities, that still can result in hand-made items."

3. What conflicts result when art and technology are the only means through which we learn?

"...to know the world through artistic and technologically-based practices, alone, is limiting and unbalancing because such experiences encourage the distortion that the mind never needs to heed the body."

Dragon Fly metaphor -

4. What are the "pillars of Outward Bound" based on Hahn's six "Social Declines?"

1. Decline of Fitness - due to modern methods of locomotion.
2. Decline of Initiative and Enterprise - due to the widespread disease of spectatoritis.
3. Decline of Memory and Imagination - due to the confused restlessness of modern life.
4. Decline of Skill and Care - due to the weakened tradition of craftsmanship.
5. Decline of Self-discipline - due to the ever-present availability of stimulants and tranquilizers.
6. Decline of Compassion - due to the unseemly haste with which modern life is conducted or as William Temple called "spiritual death".

5. How do the concepts of "commodification," "consumerism," and "recapitulation" addressed in previous case studies, apply in this case study?

"These "invisible" processes and "materials" of technology encourage the idea that matter is dead and therefore people can manipulate, control and rise above it. Any materials unconsciously viewed this way readily become commodities. Wood becomes lumber instead of a part of a tree or forest. Parts of plants or animals become paints and dye of living parts of nature.... abstract ideas and technological gimmicks that inhibit direct relationship to the land."

## 6. What is the role of "apprenticeship?"

"Traditionally, a boy learned alongside his father and a girl alongside her mother, an apprentice alongside the craftsman. It was not only skills that were learned, but also a spectrum of attitudes about the adult world"

### Really Test Yourself: Extra Credit

1. By comparing the chop-stick and spoon groups, write what you think might be the result of debriefing these groups. Use the concepts you have learned from prior case studies.

"The loss of such valuable experiences should lead educators to critically analyze the outcomes resulting from the fine art-based activities that have replaced craftmaking experiences and the skills required to use high-tech equipment in comparison to the skills required to make the equipment."

2. What is the value of MacEachren's "blending" theory? Explain and illustrate.

"...Hahn's educational approach was to blend the rational (reason), the spiritual (passion), and the appetite (concupiscence) that aimed to satisfy the bodily desires for a harmonized whole"

3. The period of classic camping's "Golden Age" was also the period of the Arts and Crafts or "Craftsman" movement. What affect, if any, do you think one might have had on the other. Did they hold any ideals in common?

### READ/View -

*Craftsmen of Necessity* - by Christopher Williams

*Anything by Morris, Rushton, or Stickley*

*One Man's Wilderness* - Richard Proenneke

*Alone in the Wilderness* - The Richard Proenneke Story VHS

*Building the Atkinson Traveler* - Rolin Thurlow DVD

*Craft in America* - book and /or PBS DVD

### Other Resources:

*Wooden Boats* - Michael Ruhlman

*The Nature and Art of Workmanship* - David Pye

*Making American Boys: Boyology and the Feral Tale* - Kenneth B. Kidd

*Apprenticeship in Craft* - Gerry Williams

*Handmade* - Drew Langsner

*The Edo Craftsmen: Master Artisans of Old Tokyo* - Thomas Judge

*The Arts and Crafts Movement in America: 1876-1916* - Robert Clark, Ed.

*Traditional Country Craftsmen - Geraint Jenkins*

**Fire articles file**

**Garrett Conover**

**Elders Of The Tribe:**

- Kurt Hahn
- Walter Bernard Hunt
- Ellsworth Jaeger
- Willam "Bill" Mason
- Bernard Mason
- Ross McKinney