

# Sail Training as a *Cultural Community*

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<http://www.ncl.ac.uk/cflat/>

# Sail Training

Since mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century adapted as a type of situated residential outdoor adventure education; training ***by the sea*** as opposed to ***for the sea***

- Kurt Hahn
- delivering sustainable personal and social development outcomes (see Schijf, Allison & Von Wald, 2017)

A unique cultural experience forged by the challenges of ***being at sea***

- Man and Nature
- Man and Man

(after Rediker, 1993)

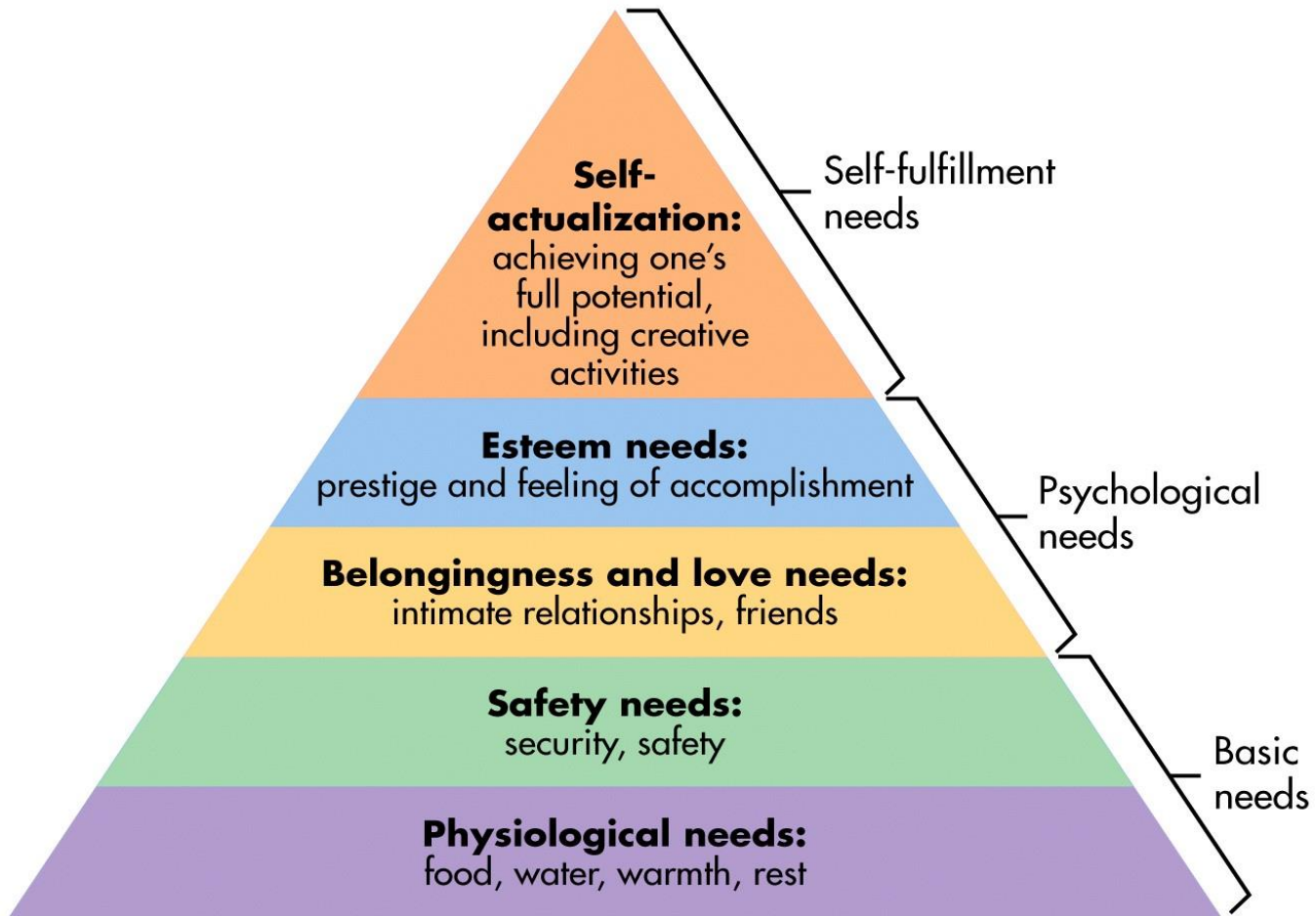
# Study 1: Activities

End-of-voyage (T <sup>1</sup> )	T <sup>1</sup> + 6 months (T <sup>2</sup> )
<p>=1<sup>st</sup> (1<sup>st</sup>)* Helming</p> <p>=1<sup>st</sup> (=4<sup>th</sup>) Initial familiarisation of vessel</p> <p>=1<sup>st</sup> (=10<sup>th</sup>) Man Over Board</p> <p>=2<sup>nd</sup>(=4<sup>th</sup>) Introduction to sea-staff</p> <p>* Value in ( ) indicates T<sup>2</sup> ranking</p>	<p>1<sup>st</sup> (=1<sup>st</sup>)* Helming</p> <p>=2<sup>nd</sup> (=2<sup>nd</sup>) Meals – eating together</p> <p>=2<sup>nd</sup> (=3<sup>rd</sup>) Night sailing</p> <p>3<sup>rd</sup> (=4<sup>th</sup>) On Watch</p> <p>* Value in ( ) indicates T<sup>1</sup> ranking</p>

Subjective 'significance' using a 5-point (0 to 4) Likert scale

- inventory of 58 voyage-based activities: *Arrival, Initial Briefings, Safety, Seamanship, Sail Handling, Living Aboard, and Training Workshops* (Fletcher & Prince, 2017)

# Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs



# What is it about helming?

It is situated aboard the vessel

- Authentic
- Mediated
- Complexity
- Power
- Agency

The helmsman needs to make ‘active compensatory movements’ of the wheel to remain on course and ‘against the boat’s movements in order to keep their balance [... as they] make active counter movements with the rudder against the yawing of the boat.’

(adapted from Stadler, 1984)

# Helming is...

an optimal experience or **Flow**

‘It is what the sailor holding a tight course feels when the wind whips through her hair, when the boat lunges through the waves like a colt – sails, hull, wind, and sea humming a harmony that vibrates in the sailor’s veins.’  
(Csikszentmihalyi, 2008: 3)

**Eudaimonia** (after Aristotle, c.400BC)

Difficult to translate ...but accepted as the feeling of

*‘being where one wants to be, doing what one wants to do’*

*‘where what is wanted is to be taken as being something worth doing’*

*‘living life in a full and deeply satisfying way’*

(see Waterman, 2008; Deci & Ryan, 2008)

# Study 2: Cultural Community

Concept emerged from studies of indigenous communities in South America (Rogoff, 1990)

Identifies roles for *participation* and *membership*

- Apprenticeship
- Guided Participation
- Participatory Appropriation

Difficult to transfer to Westernised schooling

Learning by Observing and Pitching In (LOPI)

(Rogoff, 2014; Coppens et al., 2014)

A different way of thinking about sail training?

# What is a Cultural Community?

## What does *Cultural* mean?

‘[It] is best understood historically, examining how current practices reflect past circumstances and ideas, and seeing how new generations adapt practices of those who went before.’

(Glăveanu, 2011; interview with Barbara Rogoff)

It is a ‘*way of living*’ (Rogoff, 2016)

## What is a *Community*?

‘There is more than a verbal tie between the words common, community, and communication. [People] live in a community in virtue of the things which they have in common; and communication is the way in which they come to possess things in common.’ (Dewey, 1916)



# Sail Training – a Culture?

## A SEA GRAMMAR

With the Plaine Exposition of  
Smiths Accidence for  
young Sea-men,  
enlarged.

Divided into fifteene Chapters: what they are you  
may partly conceive by the Contents.

Written by Captaine John Smith, sometimes  
Governour of Virginia, and Admirall  
of New-England.  
LONDON,

Printed by John Haviland, 1627.

### What do you make of this?

*Winds WNW. Course S 13° E. Distce  
sail'd 58 miles. Latd in South 43° 21'.  
Longd in East Greenwich 18° 10'. Hard  
gales and fair weather. At 2pm made sail  
under the Fore sails and Staysails and at  
4 set the Mainsail...*

### Extract from the Journal of Capt. James Cook for 1<sup>st</sup> December 1772

'[...] a sailing ship required the mind of a  
craftsman. Only people apprenticed to the  
sea early in life could hope to master it.  
"To catch 'em young" was a well known  
slogan of the old Navy.' (Elias, 1950)

# *Enter as Strangers* *Leave as Friends*

Approaching a different culture as a *stranger*

(Schuetz, 1944; van Gennep, 1960 [1908])

- Repertoire(s) of performance (after Goffman, 1990 [1959])
- Acculturation (see Cheung et al., 2011)
- Inability to rely upon pre-existing cultural patterns/ performances
- Requires an alternative way of thinking – **natural pedagogy?**

**Pedagogy:** ‘any conscious activity by one person designed to enhance learning in another’ (Daniels, 2001)

**Natural pedagogy** comprises ‘cognitive mechanisms that enable the transmission of cultural knowledge *by communication* between individuals [...]’ (Csibra & Gergely, 2011)



Examiners: Professor David Leat (Newcastle) &  
Associate Professor Pete Allison (Penn State, USA/ Edinburgh)

# What is the difference between school and the boat? The crew said...

Crew 13: *'On the boat, you kind of learn [...] things in everyday-life, when at school you learn like maths and English [...] and things you learn to use to get a job and stuff, so it is different.'*

Crew 7: *'At school like you learn about something, but you won't experience it; [...] while on the boat you are experiencing what we were learning, while we were learning it.'*

Crew 10: *'I think at school you don't normally get to do the things you are taught, like on the sailing trip we got to do everything. I think you learn much more by doing the stuff...'*

Crew 15: *'I think it was definitely the things we learnt it wasn't just what we learnt [...] like what all the parts of the boat were and how everything worked, it was more like (pause) we even learnt like (pause) the true meaning of friendship [...]'*

# What about the sea-staff?

*[...] feeling apart from all sides neither one thing nor another. [...] I still don't push myself too far beyond what I know, but I've done a few things that I don't feel comfortable with. [...] I don't know as much as I thought about sailing a large yacht. It's not like anything I've done previously in some ways but it is in others. [...] I am still challenging myself but can't quite make the grade with some things.'* (Teacher)

## What is it about sail training?

*'The reason that I was doing it is because I wanted to go sailing. I certainly didn't realise that sailing was just the tip of the iceberg, with all of the other things going on.'* (First Mate)

*'[...] sailing really isn't rocket-science, but managing the people is, managing them, how you are with them and how you are, and how you communicate with them affects what you get back.'* (Skipper)

# My proposition

Sail Training as a *Cultural Community* activates an earlier, more familiar mechanism found in a socio-cultural approach to learning that:

‘[envisions] the links between history, culture, language, symbols, thought, relationships, social organizations, activity, biological development, self, identity and even [...] the ‘meaning of life’!’

(Pollard, 2001)

# Other variables?



# Implications

Varied outcomes...

...each participant will **lamine** their individual voyage outcomes into their own **foundation of experience**

(after Boud & Walker, 1990)

**How have you laminated your sail training experiences?**

**How do we measure this?**



# So what?

## Practitioners:

How do you **mediate** the experience of *being at sea*?

## Providers and Researchers:

Why are we measuring outcomes?

What should we measure?

- isolated or laminated outcomes
- short-term vs. long-term
- Individual vs. Group

How do we measure them?

## Any questions?

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