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General competences of school curriculum in adventure module

for school youth worker

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ABSTRACT

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Abstract: The present study seeks to determine whether and how it is possible to integrate non-formal learning method of adventure education techniques with the national basic school curriculum general competences. A one week adventure education course named as "Experience Integrated Teaching" ("EIT") module which seeks a better output for school youth workers and creative activity teachers' curriculum in University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy was under investigation. In this inquiry the action research process principles were observed. First the problem was clarified and action was planned. Intervention of EIT module was used during the adventure education action. Students were active participants and their opinions had an important influence to research process. The problem is that the students do not know the possibilities of experiential learning and how to integrate adventure education and general competences of the basic school curriculum. Neither does the AbEE program support the students achieving their learning outcomes. The question under scrutiny was: How and which adventure based experiential education (AbEE) activities could in students' opinion help to achieve general competences of basic school curriculum? An action plan was designed including a variety of proposals and ideas of experiential education theory. Activities were carried out in Soomaa National Park, participants were 36 University students studying youth work. After the activities data was collected from the group interviews, written free form feedbacks and the questionaries. Opinion and other information was collected through observation and video. Before outdoor activities the most common opinion of the students was that the adventure education is mostly outdoor activities in order to overcome fears and to take challenge. After the course their opinion had changed into much more pedagogical approach and their learning outcomes were consistent with the school general competences. Ideas that support the general competences of the National curriculum of basic schools (2011) were mentioned most often in the reflection-questionnaries of the students. All the general competences were more or less used and touched in student opinion during the adventure activities. Exercises frequently involved self-management competence, value competence, social competence, communication competence and entrepreneurship competence, but learning to learn competence was not mentioned so often. Mathematics competence was also mentioned, but under the meaning of logical thinking. Learning took place during activities and debriefings and even in free time of relaxing. Actions and activities from module EIT were successful and contributed to the achievement of learning outcomes. AbEE cycle worked and was justified, because during discussions and debriefing participants reflected back the same goals and aims which had been planned for the activities.

Keywords active youth work method, adventure based experiential education, AbEE, adventure education, adventure integrated module, curriculum integration, experiential education, experiential learning cycle, general competences of basic school, integrated curriculum, non-formal learning, outdoor education, school youth worker and creative activity teacher.

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INTRODUCTION

In this thesis I will present arguments on the idea that adventure education contributes to formal education and is compatible with school's general competences and goals.

The first part describes the topic and explains why it is important to conduct research on it. Afterwards, the focus of the research is explained and justified, and the aim of the action research and its importance in the context in which it is carried through is explained. The expected outcomes are also envisioned as part of the justification for why this enquiry is carried through. Here, the issue causing concern, the problem, and the objectives what I hope to achieve through the program, are explained in brief.

Adventure or adventure based experiential education (AbEE) is used a lot in non-formal education but it is useable also in formal education and it is quite big recourse for educational approach. Adventure based experiential learning circle by Rehm is a combination of Deweys "learning by doing" model and Lewin`s reflection model, and shows how facilitator or leader can interrupt (Beard 2009), and affect the learning and reflection processes (Rehm 2009). In this thesis adventure education and outdoor adventurous educative exercises are called **adventure based experiential education** (or **AbEE**).

Through adventure education and adventure based experiential learning programs youth leaders and teachers can support more positive growth of youth as individuals and also as members of a group and society. As has been said and tested by Kurt Hahn in Salme School (Lehtonen 1997) we can also use adventure education principles in our school education. In adventure education "The First Law is to give youth opportunities for self discovery" (Lehtonen 1997, Thompson & White 2010). And this is the most important thing that is missing from our schools today. Play and group games, facilitated in a restorative manner, can help youth increase self-awareness, build healthier relationships, and improve interpersonal connections. By using the knowledge of "group development", that means personal and social growth through four stages: "forming, storming,

norming and performing" (Thompson & White 2010, Tuchmann 1977, 420). In these factors it is taken into account how to create circumstances for developmental activities of youth that give them possibility for self-discovery, self-awareness or self-perception (Bem 1972), and also social competences in group during AbEE program.

The reason why there are so few researches about the effectiveness or success of experiential learning processes, is trainers' and practitioners' limited time and knowledge. "All trainers and practitioners are involved with their works and also spending time with meeting organizational needs or they don't know how and what to research" (Miller, 1997). Therefore, action research is implemented in this thesis as the methodological approach by me as a practitioner and a researcher.

In my inquiry the action research process (O´Brien 1998, Löfstöm 2011) and principle is observed (pages 27), by first letters abbreviated to DATES:

1. Diagnosing a problem – identifying, clarification of the problem,
2. Action planning - find the idea for program of activities,
3. Taking action - activities, monitoring the impact (observation) and development of action if it is needed,
4. Evaluating – studying the consequences of the action,
5. Specifying learning - drawing conclusions that could be followed by another action (or changes in the plan if needed, or proposals for the changes)

The problem is that the students do not know the possibilities of experiential learning, and how to integrate adventure education and general competences of the basic school curriculum. And also AbEE program does not support students' achieving their learning outcomes.

The problem arose from my everyday work as a lecturer at the University of Tartu in Viljandi Culture Academy. It grew out of my teaching sessions and enlarged with leaders team's reflections and discussions. During the university school youthworker student studies I have observed my activities of teaching and analyzed with interest how to prepare school youth worker better for everyday working life. I tried to combine theoretical knowledge about experiential and adventure education, and to synchronize it with the

actual needs of basic school general competences, and to integrate it with school curriculum.

In AbEE I have used Dewey and Lewin "learning and feedback process" and Kolb´s "experiential learning cycle" (Beard 2009, 32-33, Priest & Gass 2005) during outdoor courses but with my action research, I want to improve students' learning about general competences of basic school curriculum through specially designed Adventure based experiential education course further called "Experience Integrated Teaching" program module ie. EIT module

This study aims synchronize the AbEE methods and EIT module with the actual needs of school general competences

Preliminary research question was: How and which adventure based experiential education (AbEE) activities could in students' opinion help to achieve general competences of basic school curriculum (during one week outdoor course)?

To answer the question main **tasks were**:

- The theoretical framework was established to research and **identify problems** and opportunities to integrate adventure education into basic school curriculum considering general competences.
- **Action plan** was composed by using adventure based experiential education method. It consist one week program with outdoor adventure focused to integration curriculum general competences with adventure exercises. In this written work I will call this action "Experience Integrated Teaching" program module ie "EIT" module.
- **The activities** of the EIT module were **described**. Every day activities were done as experiential learning circle Action- Syntes - Plan (ie "ASP") and in each new exercise it was taken into account what the students had learned in the previous case. The last day of the week was planned for feedback and discussing what activities they could transfer to their daily lives.
- **Action** was taking place during one-week adventure activities in the program module "EIT", which reckons with basic school general competences and AbEE principles of experiential learning circle.

- **Observation** of the participants' learning, participation in the A-S-P process of activities with the principles of AbEE - and – if it is possible to achieve the knowledge and skills required in the basic school curriculum of general competences.

- **Reflection and questioning** of participants regarding how to arise awareness of participants about the general competence of the school curriculum. It is necessary to identify with AbEE principles, and to prepare student to use these principles in school or youth work. I will try to adjust adventure education integrated learning program module, observe participants and go through some reflection models during the activities, and let them do self-reflection and also answer to questions.

In future, this inquiry helps to study this method in schools, consider the situation and changes, and integrate more into everyday life.

Therefore, I tried to research practical course of "one week adventure based experiential education". One goal of my work was to let me improve my theoretical and practical knowledge in specific one week course and learn how to teach youth worker and creative activity teachers to use adventure education in integration to basic school curriculum even more effectively.

My thesis consists of following topics:

1. Theoretical background

2. Introducing research methods and task

3. Analysis of the results

4. Conclusions

After the introduction is chapter 1. In this part, mainly **theoretical background** is given to the experiential education, experiential learning model, most important authors and how they supplement each other's theories. Also Estonian school system integration and integrated curriculum are written about. In this chapter theory is structured by sub-headings which are important for understanding the two main issues: 1.1 experiential learning and adventure education; 1.2 integrated curriculum and general competences of basic school.

In chapter 2 **action research methods and task** are explained; principles and practices of my own preparation and conduct of the study are described. The program with adventure activities was held during one week. 36 university students participated in the study. There are also described program design and activities, action process and method of collecting data´s.

The third part includes the **analysis of the results**, students' reflection-feedback to the activities, their conclusions and achievements.

In the fourth section are the main **conclusions** about the enquiry and what changes have been done. Also, changes which should be reintroduced into the adventure education program module are suggested.

1. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Main topic of this chapter is to describe the experiential and adventure education context and use of terminology, to explain expanded experiential learning models and most important authors between whom have seen connections and how different authors had been supplemented each other theories. Also is written about Estonian school system integration and integrated curriculum and how general competences could be achieved. In this chapter theory is structured by sub-headings which are important to understand above mentioned two main issues.

Estonian youth work has made lot of changes and development during last years. Camping and outdoor activities had been well known and lot used already during the soviet time when scouts replaced to pioneers. Adventure based experiential education in Estonia is quite young method. It consist outdoor activities, camping and similar activities as scouting. "It is more and less well-known since 1996 when it has come to Estonia from Finland through the Child Protection Projects" (Pihlakas 2003, 5).

> Adventure education as an educational and recreational discipline for young people, especially for at risk youth is based on principles of experiential education. Adventure activities (using all kinds of recreational possibilities) are used as the main tool mainly in outdoor settings but also in artificial adventure settings (Tuula 2005, 6).

First it was something more for children with social problems (Tuula 2005) but now it is quite well known in youth work centres, camps and used as preventive youth work method in youth clubs. The main principle in adventure education is learning by doing and it supports individual growth through group works and non-formal learning. Adventure education is quite a lot used in youth work and non-formal education but not so much in wider field of education.

It seems that little has changed during last 100 years. A nowadays traditional school are still relied on subjects, at least in Estonia, and, as Dewey has said: only "progressive educational schools are exalted the learner's impulse and interest" (Dewey 1997, 10).

John Dewey interprets education as the scientific method by means of which man studies the world. This kind of scientific study leads to and enlarges experience, but this experience is educative only with knowledge and when this knowledge modifies learner's outlook, attitude and skill (ibid).

In university teaching experiential learning principles also are used (Rutiku et al. 2009, 18) "In experiential theories of learning are holistic incorporating cognition and behaviour with conscious perceptions and reflection on experience" (Priest & Gass 2005, 15).

1.1 Experiential learning and adventure education

Experiential education is "learning by doing with reflection and facilitation". This philosophy about learning "based on the belief that people learn best by direct and purposeful contact with their learning experiences" (ibid, 17). For reflection is also needed other people and it is good when they know what and how do do this learning.

In Estonia adventure education as youth work method is quite new and nowadays it is used a lot but not so much as educational tool and more as exiting thing and something new. Very often youth workers don't know or have been forgotten about the educational background of the field (Tuula, 2005) and therefore there are not effective outcomes of non-formal learning.

According to Priest & Gass (2005) the adventure education and outdoor activities will include learner participation, unfamiliar learning environment, and presence of risk factors, leaders and unpredictable situations (Priest & Gass 2005, 20-25).

Adventure education is a process in "which the learner is placed into a unique physical environment and into a unique social environment, then given a characteristic set of problem-solving task creating a state of adaptive dissonance to which reorganizes the meaning and direction of the learner´s experience" (ibid, 20)

Adventure education (AE) as Tuula (2005) describes "theoretically belong to the social science field as one form of pedagogy - experiential education". AE are learning coping skills through physical activities as various games, sports activities, high and low rope

exercises but also mainly through practical exercises that require mental action as problem solving and social responsibilities, thinking games, role plays, etc. "While in the adventure education engaged, both in human relations and human inner world ie. personality development. Adventure education main principles are the targeted actions (active physical function and teamwork), positive experience accumulation, reflection and analysis of the experience" (Tuula 2005).

Adventure education includes experiential learning principles; however, it can't be just called experiential learning (Priest & Gass 2005, 23-25).

Adventure education as part of the experiential education (Kuurme 2000, 185) has risen high on the agenda of modern pedagogy. Adventure education is largely based on the direct acquisition of experience and is included in the social sciences thanks the discipline of social-pedagogical and adventure education pedagogic purposes and principles are matched. "According to Inger Kraav for life integration youth need to avoid social exclusion and for social integration in acquiring self-reliance skills (self-enhancement, setting goals, decision making, problem solving, stress management, etc.) and in general social skills such as communication skills "(Tuula 2005, 13; Kraav 2001).

As Inger Kraav has said about social pedagogy and Tuula about adventure educational both are dealing with referral of children and students life-educational interventions focused on problems with education, the essence of personality, personal development, attitude change, improving adaptability and awareness of own responsebility.

There are used parallel terms in adventure education in English languages speaking communities and professional literature. There is also a "big mess in Estonian language" (Tuula 2005, 14) for example here is written in English and in parentheses into Estonian:
- experiential education (elamus- ehk kogemuspedagoogika)
- experiential learning (kogemusõpe),
- outdoor education (välipedagoogika),
- outdoor recreation (väline rekreatsioon),
- outdoor pursuits (väline otsiskelu)
- adventure recreation (seiklusrekreatsioon),
- adventure education (seikluskasvatus).

Into diversified terminological confusion is added also contents diversity. Adventure has used as recreation and educational tool or developmental and therapeutic purposes (Priest & Gass 2005, 23). Facilitated adventure experiences are purposefully structured adventures that aim to empower an individual or group.

Gillis has revealed a series of terms used in the field of adventure education (Tuula 2005, 14 according Gillis 1992)

- *outdoor-adventure pursuits* (väliseikluse otsiskelu)
- *therapeutic adventure program (*teraapiline seiklusprogramm),
- *therapeutic camping* (teraapiline telkimine)
- *wilderness therapy* (metsiku looduse teraapia)
- *wilderness-adventure therapy* (metsiku looduse seiklusteraapia)
- *adventure therapy* (seiklusteraapia)
- *adventure-based councelling* - (seiklusel baseeruv nõustamine)
- *experiential-challenge* (kogemuslik väljakutse) (Tuula 2005, 14)

In present research work the term "adventure based experiential education" (AbEE) (Rehm 2009) has been used in order to specify that experiential learning has been leaded specifically by adventure education because the learner has been put into a changing situation where there was a risk, excitement and unpredictability used with experiential learning circle.

As in Kurt Hahn principles are very important in the adventure education program module then it is written here and these principles come later in the module activities. In further described adventure based experiential education program have been use Kurt Hahn as "the father of adventure education" prinsiples of Shalem school (Lehtonen 1997, Students explore their *grande passion,* 2007, Van Oord 2010). There are seven of them:

1. Give children the **opportunity for self-discovery**.
2. Make children meet with triumph and defeat.
3. Give the children the opportunity of self-effacement in the common cause.
4. Provide periods of silence [Hahn's equivalent of 'reflection'].
5. Train the imagination.
6. Make games important but not predominant.
7. Free the sons of the wealthy and powerful from the enervating sense of privilege. (ibid)

According experiential educator's Confucius quote from around 450 BC said "*Tell me, and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand*". There is clear that action is very important for learning but simply that experience alone is not sufficient for learning (Neill 2010).

Learning process should be also as experience-reflection model. That means experiences followed by periods of reflection. And this could be quite effective way to structure and facilitate experiential education and this is our first think about how to do it. This gives connection and relationship for practice and theory (Beard ed 2009, 18).

The simplest Dewey´s model (black and small letters in figure 1. "Observation – Knowledge - Judgement".
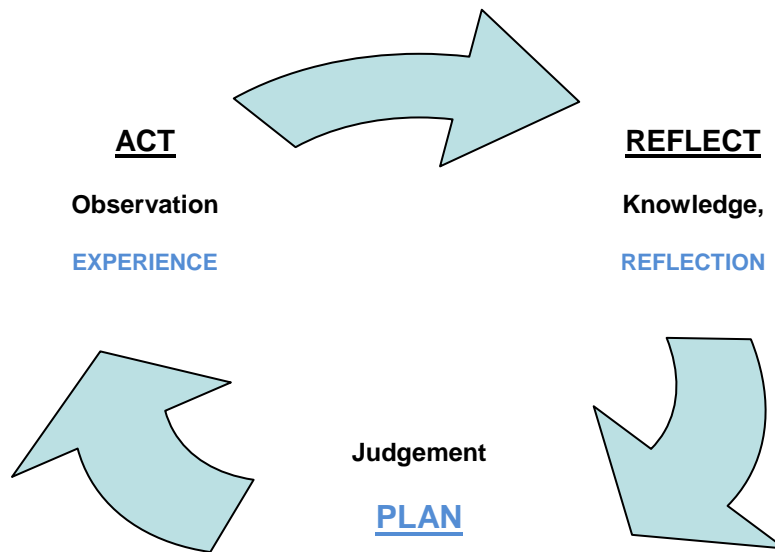

Figure 1. AbEE Learning cycle according Deweys learning process (Beard 2009) combined with other ideas.

This learning cycle is also modified by others (Beard 2009, Neill 2008, Greenaway 2007, Korthagen 2001 etc). It is also "experience-reflection-plan" (BIG blue letters in figure 1), which suggests that after an experience is following a reflection, and it is helpful to de-

velop a plan for future experience. (Neill 2008, 2010). Simply "learning by doing" model can draw as "ACT-REFLECT-PLAN" (<u>BIG underline</u> letters in figure 1) learning cycle.

This model is illustrating also easier way to understand adventure education (Priest & Gass 2005, 16) as it is "learning from action through reflection and planning".

David Kolb articulated to the process. "His model is cornerstone of experiential learning whether in classroom academic way or in outdoor" (Frank 2001, 8). His 4 stage model is as circle where stages are 1. Experiencing - action, 2. Reviewing - reflecting, 3. Concluding - generalizing learning experience, 4. Planning - applying new learning. And the circle doesn't close but goes to the next level and start again with new input – this is transfer of learning.
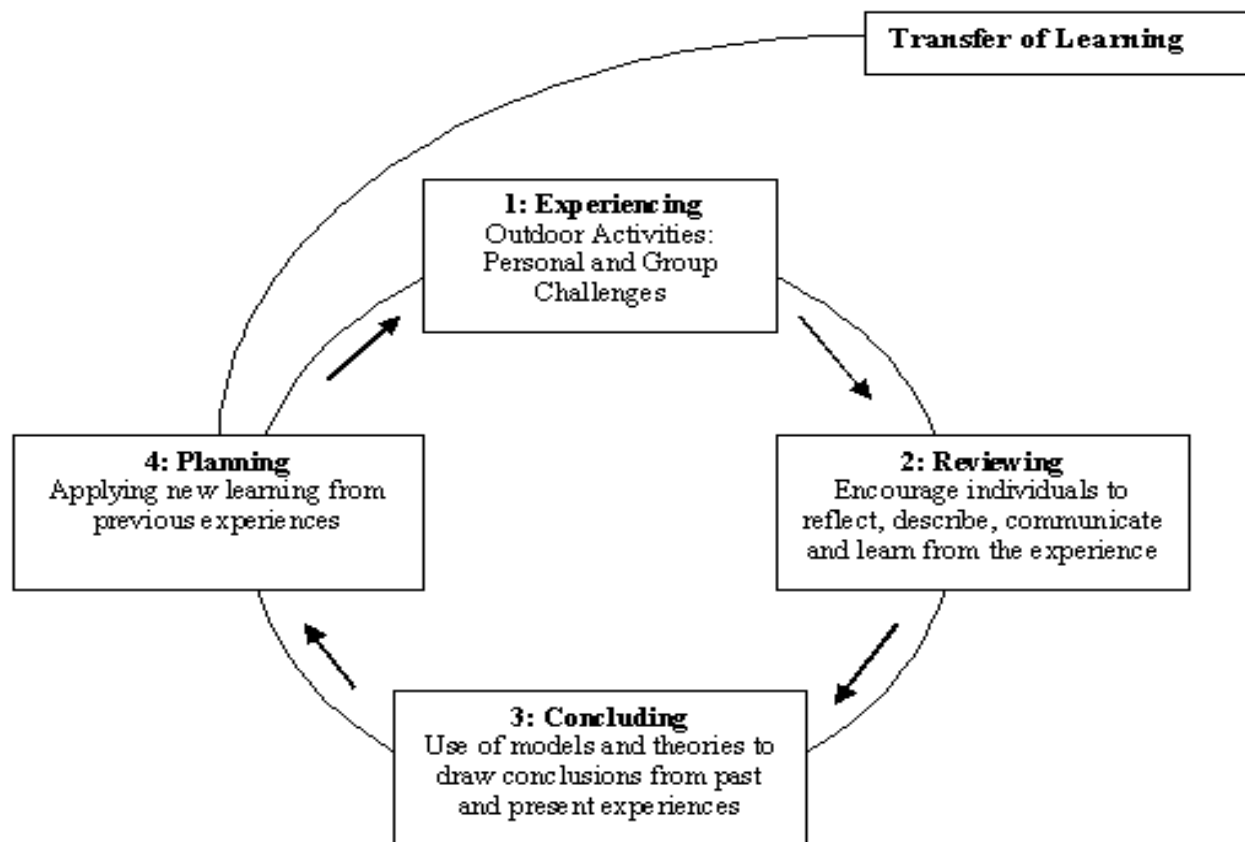
Figure 2. Kolb and Fry (1975) experiential learning model (Kolb 1999).

According to **Roger Greenaway,** an experiential learning cycle is "a structured learning sequence which is guided by a cyclical model." The primary model in adventure educa-

tion is a 4-stage cycle derived from *David Kolb's learning styles model*: Act, Reflect, Conceptualize, Apply. (Greenaway 2007.)

Experiential learning and rewieving according to Greenaway (Greenaway 2007) is similar to Kolb with some expansion:

> **ACT:** Do something--anything, in fact. One of the most valuable aspects of this model is the way in which it allows us to turn every experience into a learning opportunity. The challenge, of course, is that we rarely complete the cycle and leave most potential learning untapped.
> **REFLECT:** Look back on your experience and assess the results. Determine what happened, what went well and what didn't.
> **CONCEPTUALIZE:** Make sense of your experience. Seek to understand *why* things turned out as they did. Draw some conclusions and make some hypotheses.
> **APPLY:** Put those hypotheses to the test. Don't simply *re-act.* Instead, have a conscious plan to do things differently to be more effective. And begin the cycle again. (ibid)

Korthagen (1985) distinguishes similar in the learning process and shared it into five phases:

(1) action, (2) looking back on the action, (3) awareness of essential aspects, (4) creating alternative methods of action, and (5) trial, which itself is a new action and therefore the starting point of a new cycle. "This five phase model is called the *ALACT model* after the first letters of the five phases" (Korthagen 2001) The 5-th stages is same as transfer of learning in Kolb model (as in Figure 2) - new action can take place and from learning cycle is becoming in spiral process.

The teacher or student can use and actualized specific part of experiential education philosophy (Itin 1999). It is not important from what part to start it is important keep going and it is also easier to keep it simple.

1.1.1 Experiential learning skills and reflecting models

According David A. Kolb (Kolb 1999) the Learning Skills Profile person can develop in all four different areas and it is related to the four learning modes:

> "Interpersonal Skills (Concrete Experience),
>
> Information Skills (Reflective Observation),
>
> Analytical Skills (Abstract Conceptualization) and
>
> Behavioral Skills (Active Experimentation)" (Kolb 1999, 26).

Peter Honey and Alan Mumford (Beard ed al 2009) developed their learning styles system H&M as a variation on the Kolb model. A brief descriptions of the four H&M key stages/styles in which the learning styles are a product of combinations of the learning cycle stages. (Beard 2009.)

1. **'Having an Experience'** (stage 1), and **Activists** (style 1): 'here and now', gregarious, seek challenge and immediate experience, open-minded, bored with implementation.
2. **'Reviewing the Experience'** (stage 2) and **Reflectors** (style 2): 'stand back', gather data, ponder and analyse, delay reaching conclusions, listen before speaking, thoughtful.
3. **'Concluding from the Experience'** (stage 3) and **Theorists** (style 3): think things through in logical steps, assimilate disparate facts into coherent theories, rationally objective, reject subjectivity and flippancy.
4. **'Planning the next steps'** (stage 4) and **Pragmatists** (style 4): seek and try out new ideas, practical, down-to-earth, enjoy problem solving and decision-making quickly, bored with long discussions.

There is arguably a strong similarity between the Honey and Mumford styles/stages and the corresponding Kolb learning styles:

- Activist = Accommodating
- Reflector = Diverging
- Theorist = Assimilating
- Pragmatist = Converging.

By Greenaway reviewing after action have fundamental importance in adventure education. For active reviewing is also important to follow experiential learning theories four stage cycle. (Greenaway 1990, 52.)

THE FOUR STAGE REVIEWING CYCLE

stage 1		stage 2		stage 3		stage 4
DOING	$\rightarrow$	SENSING	$\rightarrow$	THINKING	$\rightarrow$	PLANNING
FACTS	$\rightarrow$	FEELINGS	$\rightarrow$	FINDINGS	$\rightarrow$	FANTASIES!*
EXPERIENCE	$\rightarrow$	EXPRESS	$\rightarrow$	EXAMINE	$\rightarrow$	EXPLORE
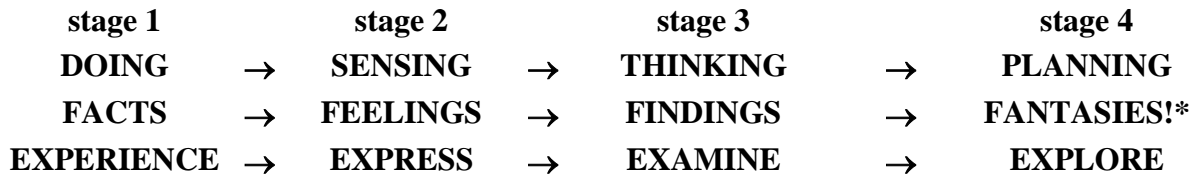
Figure 3. Greenaway model for 'active' reviewing (Greenaway 2010).

It is an extensive and varied 'toolkit' of active reviewing techniques by this we try increase the chances of finding a suitable and effective learning method.

1.1.2 Learning environment and facilitating

In the formal classroom changes can and does obviously occur as the result of such educational interventions as the lecture, laboratory, discussion, recitation, and testing. (Kraft 2006). "There have been developed standards and rules. Moral training consists in forming habits of actions" (Dewey 1997, 17-19). The ordinary classroom and school system support this kind of cognitive learning. Information is most important in our schools.

Dewey's view was that the meaning of a given experience is the result of the interaction between what the learner brings to the given situation and what happens there. His argument was that learners work on a new experience to understand it based on knowledge and understanding derived from earlier experiences.

Adventure based experiential learning circle by Rehm is combination of Deweys "learning by doing" model and Lewin`s reflection model (Beard 2009), how facilitator or leader can intervene and affect the learning and reflection possesses (Rehm 2009).

Therefore by "experience integrated model" we try to integrate learning and social skills through the adventure based experiential learning outside from classroom and plan the learning process where we accept participant's earlier knowledge and want to improve knowledge and social skills after actions.

There have been many examples where experience alone like Confucius quote said was not sufficient for meeting particular learning goals. Therefore in the process adventure the experience was packaged together with facilitated exercises which involved thinking, discussing, or creatively processing cognitions and emotions related to the concrete experience.

Social work education research frequently has suggested an interaction between teaching techniques and learning environments. Huerta-Wong and Schoecii (2009) have made an interesting research about "experiential learning and learning environments". "Learning is not just a combination of inputs and outputs; it also involves the process or learning environment as a key factor. That is why evaluating the role of learning environments has recently become an issue in measuring learning" (ibid).

According to Priest & Gass (2005) the adventure programming and others experiential learning literature the most important things in creating AbEE environment are above mentioned:

Followed learning circle as described above (pages 14 figure 1) and making mistakes is opportunity for changes as said "learning involves the detection and correction of error" (Smith 2001.b).

There are **group dynamics** with different facilitation and leadership styles and with two key ideas that are crucial to an appreciation of group process: interdependence of fate and task interdependence (Lewin 1939).

Group processes are considered like "forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning" (Tuchmann 1977). During adventure activities as Tuchman had been summarised the four-five processes are followed, which are differently to the relationship and task oriented 1) <u>forming</u>: testing and dependence – orientation to task acceptance and independence; 2) <u>storming</u>: intragroup conflict – emotional response to task demands, resistance and conformation; 3) <u>norming</u>: development of group cohesion – open ex-

changes of relavant interpretation and compliance, involvement; 4) <u>performing</u>: functional role relatedness – emergence of solutions and productivity, competence 5) adjourning: transformation and satisfaction and termination, separation. (Tuchmann 1977, 420; Priest & Gass 2005, 67.)

Debriefing and feedback were into the process are involved participant, group members and facilitator. Debriefing follow experiential learning and reviewing cycles (pages 18) model.

> Lewin had borrowed the term feedback from electrical engineering and applied it to the behavioural sciences. Here it was broadly used to describe the adjustment of a process informed by information about its results or effects. An important element here is the difference between the desired and actual result. There was a concern that organizations, groups and relationships generally suffered from a lack of accurate information about what was happening around their performance. Feedback became a key ingredient of T-groups and was found to 'be most effective when it stemmed from here-and-now observations, when it followed the generating event as closely as possible, and when the recipient ch with other group members to establish its validity and reduce perceptual distortion' (Smith 2001.a).

Unstructured form of debriefing could be discussion that permits particinant to analyse past experience and to transfer learning. Discussions typically arranged in a circle because to allow more easily to heard each other in supportive atmosphere.

Most common form of debriefing is verbal but also nonverbal as art, drama, music, writing, photography are used and combined with verbal. Art also can be in many form for example drawin or painting. (Priest & Gass 2005, 198-201.)

Facilitator sought to create an environment in which values and beliefs could be challenged (ibid). Facilitation is "those techniques that are used to argument the qualities of the adventure experience bases on assessment of the person´s needs" (Priest & Gass 2005, 184). Transfer is very important and participant may be couldn´t apply what they learne from adventure because real life situations seems so different from adventure enviroment. Different leadership styles (ibid, 68-73) and teaching models (ibid, 173) are followed during adventure activities. There are at least ten fundamental rules (ibid, 188) for better facilitation to remembered what helps even professional leaders.

Participant observation as Lewin had described is very important. "Members of the group had to participate emotionally in the group as well as observe themselves and the group objectively" (Lewin 1946).

Connecting concrete (emotional) experience and analytical detachment is not an easy task, and is liable to be resisted by many participants, but it was seen as an essential if people were to learn and develop.

1.2 Integrated curriculum

For the first time notion integration was mentioned 1996 year when Estonian went over curriculum based school system. "Integration as synonymous with the keyword has been used for a long time" (Jaani et al. 2010). Curriculum integration as the new concept of the national basic school curriculum has been used also 2002 year curriculum (Kuusk 2010, 7), but in new (2010) national curriculum we can see the greatest attention of curriculum integration for last years. After long expert team work also helpful materials for school teachers have been published (Jaani et al. 2010).

Curriculum integration has faced sympathy and opposition or criticisms. Curriculum integration has to be used for keeping up education with the changing world and struggling with nowadays problems. As the world becomes more complex and researchers find out more about learning, it is evident that forming connections between curriculums is important.

How to develop integrated curriculum? "... educators must decide to begin the process, leave behind traditional curriculum planning, struggle, find reward, and share experiences. Overcoming resistance, planning, and identifying interested parties are important steps in curriculum integration. These steps are followed by deciding what form the integration should take, and how, where, and over how much time it should be done" (Dark 1993).

Three frameworks are used to create integrated curriculum (Jaani et al. 2010). One subject with one other, lot of topics is integrated and learned same time and whole curriculum is combined.

1.2.1 Principles of teaching and innovation for the Estonian school

There are emphasizes the need for changing the curriculum and the organization of learning provision in Estonia's new Education Strategic Plan (2011). Education does not meet the expectations of today's society and economy. Based on the number of the PISA studies from 2006 and 2009 (Eesti hariduse viis väljakutset 2011, 10) which show that Estonian students have a good level of knowledge, but they are more modest or low-keyed in creativity, entrepreneurship, problem solving skills. "It is still common to concentrated to fact central learning and too little attention is paid to self-expression, problem solving, critical thinking" (ibid).

> Teaching is no longer simply the transfer of knowledge or expertise of gained facts, but making competences to obtain information, analysis, critical assessment and rehabilitation. However, the aim of the teacher is to support the development of learner's personality and feedback. In the central position become student himself – being the starting point of awareness for decision-making and learning activities in teaching process. (Eesti hariduse viis väljakutset 2011, 7.)

Gradually from the beginning of independence time there have been desired to introduce educational innovations into Estonian school systems. (Tanker 2005.) Subject is both the community level and the parent's wishes up to Ministries decision and laws. One good example is the adoption of new curricula.

1.2.2 Curriculum integration

"General education is the knowledge, skills, experience, values and behavioural norms which allows a person to evolve continuously developing personality who is able to live

with dignity, respect yourself, your family, other people and nature, choosing and acquiring a suitable profession, acting creatively, and being a responsible citizen" (Põhikooli- ja gümnaasiumiseadus 2011).

There are law of new curriculum for basic schools and upper secondary school (2010), where are expected the closer linking between subjects and general educational objectives are more recognition and binding of materials from school curriculum in Estonia. (Põhikooli riiklik õppekava 2010, Põhikooli- ja gümnaasiumiseadus 2011.)

There are many examples of different efforts to use experiential learning, outdoor or adventure education integrated to different curriculums of secondary school (Horwood 1992; Williams & Reisberg 2003; Laurien 2004, Etim 2005) or high school (Jones 2009) and university level (Wurdingen & Carlson 2009).

Williams and Reisberg (2003) presented a model for teaching social and behavioural skills in the context of the general curriculum. They also said that there have been "a plethora of social skill instructional programs" available for use primarily by special educators for "serving the specific and unique learning needs of exceptional students in general education classrooms" (Williams & Reisberg 2003, 206).

Even a typical curriculum will list a number of social skills that can be targeted for instruction.

There is ample evidence that marketing educators value and integrate problem-based learning and realism in varying degrees in their courses. "Decision making and critical thinking can be integrated into a curriculum through a range of problem-based learning formats: problem solving, exercises, simulation, case analysis, and applied and real-world business projects." (Malhotra, Tashchian & Jain 1989).

In Estonia "More generally, the curriculum integration is integrity of the application the organization of learning content and to integrate comprehensive picture of the world according to the student development of teaching and education purposes" (Kuusk 2010, 6).

1.2.3 General competences and the objectives of education of national curriculum for basic schools

In this chapter, is written out the basic school curriculum in the general competences that basic school students should learn at school and the reasons for how they need (in the various subjects) skills and knowledge can be integrated into the teaching learning process in adventure education methods.

There have been long educational practices and theories of the investigation what have been led to the belief that "only with verbal teaching is difficult to ensure that the learner's consciousness to your own beliefs and experiences and to teach the conflicts between and understand the need for their own interpretations of change" (Hannust 2010, 64). Estonian school system diligently looks for new method, techniques or tricks and tips to help how to make learning more efficient.

"In the sense of the national curriculum, competence is the aggregate relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes that ensure the ability to operate productively in a particular area of activity or field. Competence can be categorized as general competences or subject field competences" (National curriculum for basic schools 2011).

> **General competences** are subject field and subject-specific competences that are very important in the development of person into a human being and good citizen. General competences are shaped through all subjects as well as in extra-curricular and out-of-school activity and their development is monitored and directed by teachers as well as in cooperation between school and home. (ibid.)

There are seven general competences according to National curriculum for basic schools, (2011) and they are followed by schools independently. All school have to reorganize their studies according to new laws (Lukas 2009) but they are quite capacity independent decision-making.

General competences:

1) **value competence** – ability to evaluate human relations and activities from the standpoint of generally accepted moral norms; to sense and value one's ties with other people, nature, the cultural heritage of one's own country and nation and those of others, and events in contemporary culture; to value art and to shape the sense of aesthetics;

2) **social competence** – the ability to become self-actualized, to function as an aware and conscientious citizen and to support the democratic development of society; to know and follow values and standards in society and the rules of various environments; to engage in cooperation with other people; to accept interpersonal differences and take them into account in interacting with people;

3) **self-management competence** – the ability to understand and evaluate oneself, one's weaknesses and strengths; to adhere to healthful lifestyles; to find solutions to problems related to oneself, one's mental and physical health as well as to problems arising in human relations;

4) **learning to learn competence** – ability to organize the learning environment and procure the information they need for learning; to plan studies and follow the plan; to use the outcome of the learning, including learning skills and strategies, in different contexts and for solving problems; to analyze one's knowledge and skills, strengths and weaknesses and on that basis, the need for further learning;

5) **communication competence** – ability to clearly and relevantly express oneself, taking into account situations and partners in communication; to present and justify their positions; to read and understand information and literature; to write different types of texts, using appropriate linguistic devices and a suitable style; to prioritize correct use of language and rich expressive language;

6) **mathematics competence** – the ability to use the language, symbols and methods characteristic of mathematical applications, to solve various situations in all walks of life and spheres of activity

7) **entrepreneurship competence** – ability to create ideas and implement them, using the acquired knowledge and skills in different walks of life; to see problems and the opportunities that lie within them; to set goals and carry them out; to organize joint activities, show initiative and take responsibility for results; to react flexibly to changes and to take judicious risks. (National curriculum for basic schools 2011.)

Concept of learning in the national curriculum for basic schools (2011) treats learning on the basis of output. "More specifically, this means the acquisition of knowledge, skills, experiences, values and attitudes that are necessary for coping in everyday life. The

psychological basis for learning is the experience that the pupil acquires in combination with physical, mental and social environment" (National curriculum for basic schools 2011).

"The pupil is an active participant in the learning process who takes part according to his or abilities in setting goals for his or her studies, studies independently and with companions, learns to value his or her companions and him or herself and to analyze and manage his or her studies" (Ibid).

"In acquiring new knowledge, the pupil shall proceed from previously acquired knowledge and shall construct his or her knowledge on the basis of the new information. The acquired knowledge shall be implemented in new situations, for resolving problems, making choices, discussing the correctness of arguments, providing supporting evidence for his or her arguments and in the course of further studies" (Ibid).

"Studying is a lifelong process for which the necessary skills and work habits shall be shaped in the course of acquiring basic education" (Ibid).

Modern theories of learning claim the construction of knowledge occurs as students build understanding in light of experiences occurring in the world. "Experience can occur within the context of various pedagogic modes within a classroom setting; moreover, the development of deep conceptual understanding of content and the processes of science – as informed by constructivist models of learning – stress the active participation of students in the process of constructing knowledge" (Geer et al.).

Karppinen (2005) have studied how to develop and to enhance "outdoor adventure education in formal education in Finland", how to implement adventure-based education outdoor course and experiential learning as an alternative teaching method in formal school culture. One of the his conclusion was: „ … and that outdoor adventure education can be included in the public school curriculum as a supportive and holistic pedagogic and teaching method, which maintains motivation and well-being in the school day" (Karppinen 2012).

2. INTRODUCING RESEARCH METHODS AND TASK

In this chapter I describe the action research principles including the elements of the process of qualitative research design, take review from read literature about basis of the action research. Principles are shortle introduced here and used in this thesis. More detail is written about action and participant observation, given examples about documentary (structured interview - debriefings, unstructured written feedback and field notes). Finally, chaper ends with conclusions about inquiry, inductive analysis of documents and material. This chapter is structured by sub-headings.

The author of this thesis agrees with the constructivist research point of view where the knowledge is fluid, not static, and knowledge as the truth has to be created, not discovered. The constructivist paradigm asserts that perceptions of reality are located in time and place, and are constructed by the individual or individuals.

Action research is an academic inquiry and "has been defined as the study of social situations carried out by practitioners with the aim to improve quality of action, activities or praxis" (Löfström 2011, 4).

Action research is a cover term for several approaches. From other constructivist types of research, it is also known by many other names, such as: action science, participatory research, educative or teacher research, collaborative and cooperative inquiry, emancipator praxis or community-based participatory research. (Herr 2005, 9-23.)

> The distinguishing features of action research can be coined in the following four points:
> - Action research arises from practical questions and is aimed at improving practice
> - Action research is cyclical in nature

- Action research requires engagement in reflective practice
- Action research is participative and community-focused. (Löfström 2011, 4.)

Action research suits for my inquiry because it seeks to bring together action and reflection, theory and practice, and in participation the pursuit is to find practical solutions to issues concerning the student and other people. Also, I liked the idea that action research seeks an explanation of a particular setting as a result of an interactive process between the researcher and participants.

> Action research is a collaborative activity among colleagues searching for solutions to everyday, real problems experienced in schools, or looking for ways to improve instruction and increase student achievement. Rather than dealing with the theoretical, action research allows practitioners to address those concerns that are closest to them, ones over which they can exhibit some influence and make change. (Ferrance 2000, 6.)

Action research was choosen, because it is in accordance with author interest and it suits to the understanding of adventure and experiential education concept. "There are strong elements of action research in the work of John Dewey, both in his philosophical work and in his studies and experiments in education" (Brydon-Miller et al. 2003, 11).

Action research is using "learning by doing" when a group of people identify a problem, do something to resolve it, see how successful their efforts were, and if not satisfied, try again (O´Brien 1998). Action research is used in real situations, rather than in contrived, experimental studies, since its primary focus is on solving real problems. Here the researcher does not control the hypothesis but does a practical survey, and the author is looking for answers to what they personally use.

In my inquiry the action research process (figure 1) and principle is observed:

1. Diagnosing a problem – identifying a problem that I start to solve. Study of social situation. Clarification of the problem and formulation.

2. Action planning – the idea of intervention, a program of activities and finding the idea of the impact

3. Taking action - the launch and conducting of activities, monitoring the impact (observation, determination). And development of action if it is needed.

4. Evaluating – studying the consequences of an action, evaluation and findings.

5. Specifying learning - drawing conclusions that could be followed by another action (or changes if needed in the plan or proposals for the changes)
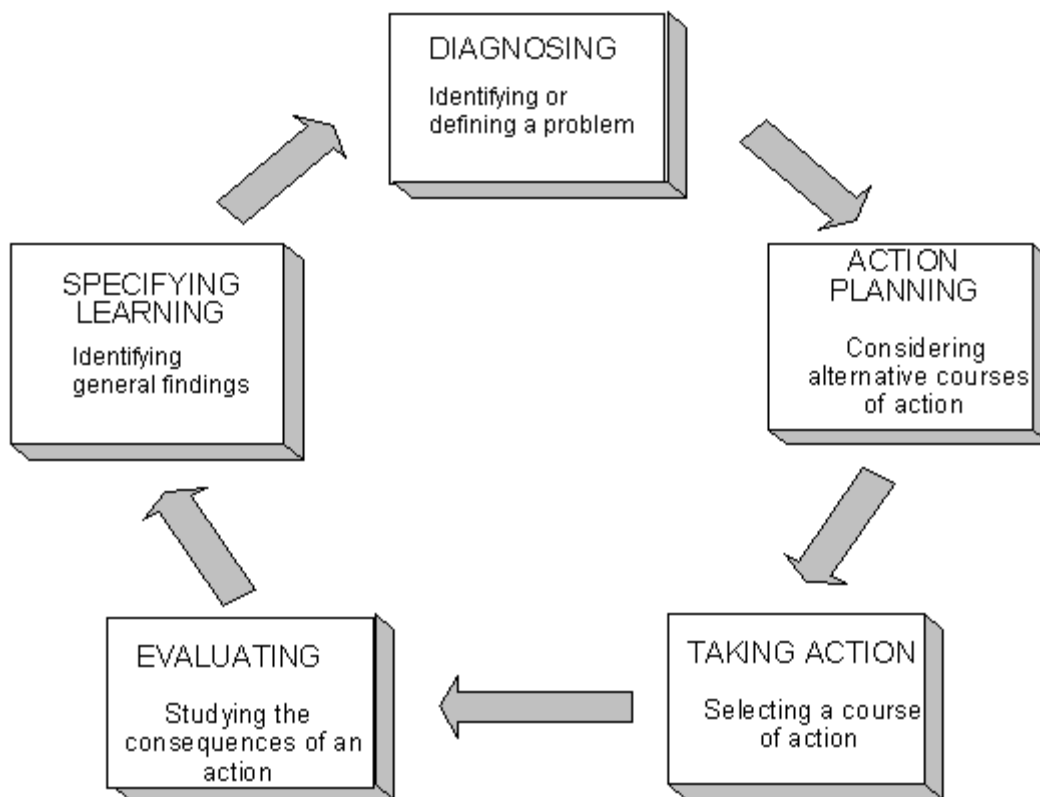
Figure 1. Detailed Action Research Model (O`Brien 1998, adapted from Susman 1983).

At this point, the problem is re-assessed and the process begins another cycle. The process continues until the problem is resolved.

The framework of action research is based on three central questions: 1) what is happening in this educational situation of our own? 2) what changes are we going to introduce? 3) what happens when we make changes? (Costello 2003, 9.)

2.1 Identifying a problem and preliminary research question

The general purpose of the study is to introduce an applied qualitative action-research approach and methodology concerning adventure based experiential education in university. The research was designed, conducted, and implemented by myself, as a teacher and a researcher, to improve my teaching methods and module in my own teaching context.

Co-operation and assistance for the course design, and during outdoor activities was rendered by my team - an adventure assistant and four outdoor leaders, AbEE older course students who had completed a similar training in the first year of university, and received additional adventure leader training. I am very grateful to our AbEE teaching team for their help.

Study of social situation contains examination of studied literature (chapter 1.1) from previous AbEE courses and last activities (from my memos), discussion with colleges from our AbEE team and other related teachers, older students' opinion, and the study of literature about school curriculum (chapter 1.2) and reports about changes in previous years (Lukas 2009).

The main problem is related to my teaching in University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy ie UTVCA.

The problem is that the students do not know the possibilities of experiential learning, and how to integrate adventure education and general competences of the basic school curriculum. And also AbEE program does not support students' achieving their learning outcomes.

The problem arose from my everyday work as a lecturer at the University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy (ie UTVCA), and grew out of my teaching sessions and became clearer with leaders team's reflections.

Situation description: school youth worker and creative activity teachers' studies take place on the first level of applied higher education, as full-time studies 4 study years, 240 ECTS or part-time studies (Culture Education Department 2012). Curriculum consists of different educational modules, such as culture and philosophy, education, school youth work, research and specialisation. Students can choose between two optional creative studies: drama and creativity, or action based experiential education (AbEE). The graduates find work within general or special education, at youth centres, and in the local authorities. "The graduates of this subject field have opportunities to organise cultural activities and speak for the development of creative activities or working as leisure time managers/teachers, organising extra-curricular activities or as youth workers or circle leaders" (ibid).

This AbEE module is divided for adventure education and gaming and simulation modules. The AbEE ie "learning by doing" module is directed by two lectures, one assistant and some teachers outside of the school faculty.

Adventure education and experiential learning principles that we use in University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy (ie UTVCA) are described in chapter 1.

Adventure education in University study is starting with introduction AbEE course where the aim of the subject is to: "Review principles of active learning; introduce characteristics and requirements for activity-based learning environments. Provide information on how to plan learning objectives and how to choose activities. Preparing the learning process, evaluating results and safety insurance" (Syllabus of adventure based experiential education. 2011).

> GENERAL OBJECTIVES OF THE SUBJECT AbEE
> - To prepare and encourage students to work with groups using adventure education method;
> - To introduce non-formal educational / youth work method which is based on principles of experiential education;
> - To give an overview of adventure activities in nature- social- and cultural environment;
> - To give necessary knowledge and skills about nature and observing the nature environment.

LEARNING OUTCOMES OF THE SUBJECT (speciality related skills and knowledge to be acquired; generic skills)

•   Student how follow this subject is able to describes pros and cons of activity based learning,
- knows the ideas behind experiential learning theory,
- is aware of basic safety-requirements,
- recognises most common methods of active learning
- knows how active learning method is connected with school curriculum (Syllabus of adventure based experiential education 2011).

Preliminary research question was: How and which adventure based experiential education (AbEE) activities could in students' opinion help to achieve general competences of basic school curriculum (during one week outdoor course)?

For solving this task I had follow activities:

-   to create a one week non-formal learning program with AbEE activities. "Learning by doing" method which is more useful for learning and is also important from social aspects.

-   to use activities and action research method for practising AbEE activities in school youth workers and creative activity teachers' university studies

-   and observe how it can be more effective during activities, taking into account the general competences of national curriculum for basic schools (2011)

This study aims synchronize the AbEE methods and EIT module with the actual needs of school general competences

-   First task was, to design an "EIT"module course for implementing adventure-based experiential education outdoor course and integrate the basic school general competences,

-   and, second, to describe connection of school general competences and learning experiences of students during one week outdoor AbEE introduction and "learning by doing" course.

2.2 Action planning

With the idea of action research I first started with reading the literature to compare my understanding with other authors'. In Estonia there are three well-known researcher-practitioners: Pihlakas M.-T. (2003) has done diploma work in Viljandi Culture Academy, Soidra-Zujeva K. (2005) and Tuula, R (2005) have done their master theses in Tallinn University. For planning this research I studied background of adventure education, adventure programing and experiential learning (Greenaway 2007; Laurien 2004; Lewin 1935; Mortloc 1987; Neill 2008; Priest & Gass 2005) and websites information (Greenaway 2010; Neill 2010) and analysed different visited adventure courses (Outdoors as a tool for personal development 2006; Rehm 2009 ie). The list of works has been done:

1. The theoretical framework was established to considering the problems research the opportunities to integrate adventure education into basic school curriculum considering general competences.

2. **Action Plan** was composed by **designing** an "experience integrated teaching" ("EIT") module course by using adventure based experiential education method for teaching university students as a model of working with school students, and how to integrate adventure education exercises with curriculum general competences. In this written work I will call it "experience integrated teaching" program module ie "EIT" module.

3. **The activities** of the "EIT" module were **described**. Everyday activities were done as experiential learning circle Plan-Action-Syntes (ie "PAS") and in each new exercise it was taken into account what the students had learned in the previous case. The last day of the week was planned for feedback and discussing what activities they could transfer to their daily lives

4. **Action** was taking place during one-week adventure activities. There was used experience integrated teaching - "EIT" program module which reckons with basic school general competences and AbEE principles of experiential learning circle. Adventure education was integrated into learning program module, participants went

through some reflection models during the activities, and there was time to let them do self-reflection, and also answer to questions of leaders (leaded debriefing).

5. **Observation** of the participants' learning, participation in the PAS process of activities with the principles of AbEE - and – if it is possible to achieve the knowledge and skills learned according to the basic school curriculum of general competences.

6. **Reflection and questioning** of participants regarding how to raise awareness about general competence of the school curriculum with AbEE principles. It is necessary to identify with AbEE principles, and to prepare student to use these principles in school or youth work.

2.2.1 Considering the problem

Identifying the social situation started from finding the problem in my teaching and course design. We (me and our AbEE teaching team) started from analysing and reviewing what we had done and what the goal was.

The goal of the course was directed by participants – as the main important point in youth work (Youth work act 2010) is participation and initiative, or in non-formal learning learner-centered, same in adventure (Priest & Gass 2005; Rehm 2009). And the question was what we could do differently to improve their outcomes of learning, and how to connect this learning to basic school general competence.

The first important input **in planning** process was our colleges critic that: *"your outdoor course is pointless if we/you can do same thing in school environment"* and "*why to teach adventure education tool if student can´t use it in their future working life ie. to support school curriculum (somehow) general aims or competences*" and "*why these student have to go outdoor if they don´t like hiking and adventure and they never will specialise to these topics, they like dancing and singing and other indoor activities*" (Fieldnotes and my memos).

The second impulse for a problem was older students' opinions about what is the problem in university youth workers studies. They assume that *" first-year students don´t*

know absolutely what adventure education is and they do not know how to make a choice that they would like to do in the future " and other opinion that "*some courses should provides life- and social skills - how to deal with real-world situations, these do not like the games*" and other opinion "*Coming out of the comfort zone is teaching you better to know yourselves in some unexpected situations and with group*" (Fieldnotes). Also to meet the students' complaints *"that university education does not meet the practical situations"* supported the idea of monitoring the learning process and to introduce changes.

And **the third** input was my own observation of the activities and learning outcomes (during the studies of the first course: experiential education, adventure education and organizing action learning training activities) and after analyzing it grew the interest how to prepare youth worker and creative activity teachers better for working life.

The fourth input into the problem was theoretical material (in chapter 1) and discussion with Finnish colleagues from youth centers because they were also designing a one week adventure activity (for school children for summer camp), and we would like to do some co-operation now and in the future. During these discussions I recognised that we (in UTVCA) are using the same principles and the ideas are based on the same authors.

To summarize these above mentioned proposals into designing process I added these:

- Curriculum integration of basic school general competences and how AbEE could support this;

- What can be useful about being outside from the school building in unfamiliar surroundings and out from the *comfort zone;*

- outdoor and indoor exercises were mixed because adventure is not only risk about being outside but it is also following AbEE circle (figure 1), and it is also game and fun, creativity and co-operation, creative thinking and social skills, as K.Hahn has said in the seven laws (Lehtonen 1997; Students explore their *grande passion* 2007; Van Oord 2010)

2.2.2 Designing the course plan

In this chapter I write about the ideas and process of adventure program designing, connections with theoretical and literary background, and main inputs, as well as changes that were made to this program module.

Designing started in early autumn, two months before the action. Me and my college discussed details of the one week program taking into account the feedback from students in previous courses and from the team's discussions.

The program follows the principles of adventure education (Priest & Gass 2005), outdoor courses (Outdoors as a tool for personal development 2006), group dynamics (Lewin 1939), group processes (Tuchmann 1977, 420) and group development (Laurien 2004, 18-24), experiential education circle (figure 1) and AbEE model Act-Reflect-Plan (explained above in theory, page 14) or Plan-Act-Reflect circle.

Previously, the program modules for AbEE in UTVCA had been three days long. It had been done totally four times in different settings from 2007 to 2010 but we did not study the impact of the module as much detail as we did it this time. Ab-EE program as EIT module with adventurous activities were tested before hand. The module of one week adventure course was done by experienced pilot project that has been used during MISA language learning project in Kääriku, Otepää district 2009 year. We added our reflected experience about "adventure and language integration curriculum" course (MISA 2009). And, the main changes that were made into the program were based on our teaching experiences, students' and staff's debriefings-reflections, feedback and process observation of the one week outdoor course. Effectiveness of learning and emotional height gave reasonable assumption that this adventure based experiential education method works with modifications for meaningful learning process. We tested the modified program of "experience integrated teaching" ie EIT module as one-week course of adult education (Täiendkoolitusprogramm 2011) at 8.-11.11. 2011 in Kloogaranna youth camp in Harjumaa. There were participants of multicultural group of youth workers (8+10

persons) from Estonia and Finland but language wasn´t topic and we used interpreter. The participants were active players in the procces and there was some possibility for flexibility, such as change some exercises when it was needed due to mood of group or group development.

The basic principles of the program (based on Priest & Gass 2005) was the same as is described in EIT module ie an unknown external physical and social environment, including particularly not familiar people, the action needed individual challenge and co-operation and the apparent risk (Aktiivse puhkuse riskikäsitluse juhendmaterjal 2007), the minimum comfort living conditions, indoor activities was alternate with outdoor activities, including camping activities and self-service coping skills.

For program analysis and designing we take into consideration the feedback from colleagues, students and reflection-analysis-team discussions. Several changes were introduced in order to design an even better program for the course.

Considering past experience the most important changes for "experience integrated teaching" ie EIT module are:

- We decided to implement a longer **five-day course** instead of three days' course. The reasons for this is based on practice connected by theory of hiking (Hints 2008) and outdoor exercises programming (Outdoors as a tool for personal development 2006). Depending from a person after 2-3 day they feel like a "dead point" after which they are opportunity to achieve greater satisfaction.

- Adventure education and experiential learning cycle **Act-Reflect-Plan** (explained above chapter 1, page 14 figure 1)

AbEE learning cycle Act-Reflect-Plan or Plan-Act-Reflect cycle was followed – it was not so important where to start the circle, it is important to have the whole circle. We, as the leaders of outdoor course started from action planning but on the first day participants started from action and by the end of day with reached after reflection to the planning face. They got knowledge about experiential learning cycle and experienced how important is to take the plan into account on the second day.

- The other point of view is about **group processes** (Tuchmann 1977).

Following the group processes (pages 19) it was also more practical to have a five-day program because there was more time and space to have four different group stages in different days. The activities were divided so that one stage fit into each day "forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning" (appendix 1). Finally, 5th day was for transfer of learning (as figure 2). During reflection facilitation helps discussing and wrapping up received valuable lessons

- The **group dynamics** (pages 20) are taken into consideration when selecting the outdoor exercises (appendix 1)

Relied on Tuchmanns (1977) group stages theory, outdoor exercises and activities are divided into the week (Outdoors as a tool for personal development 2006, 29-33, 48). It is possible in view of the real processes to arrange exchanges according to the group stages (Pihlakas 2003). For example, the first day was testing the group and dependence from leaders but already in the second day conflicts arose.

- The **outdoor activities and indoor activities** were varied (Priest & Gass 2005; Tuula & Soidra-Zujeva 2003; Pihlakas 2003).

We have been take into consideration that there should be balance between activities and we tried to maintain a daily and week rhythm (Young et al. 2008, 159-171). Nature rhythm provides comfort and takes into account better periods for enthusiasm, attention, concentration and sharing (ibid). This change was made according to colleagues' criticism that our program does not meet participants' expectations.

- The principles of **security** are taken into account.

According to Mortloc (1987) and outdoor activities programming (Outdoors as a tool for personal development 2006) the security is important as in psychological meaning - the participant's and group's safety, as well as physical and environmental security. The real and apparent risk (Aktiivse puhkuse riskikäsitluse juhendmaterjal 2007, 9-12) and also support leaning in comfort or discomfort zones.

- **Hiking** proportion was minimized.

Mainly based on feedback from students their physical and mental preparation is low. Based also K. Hahn's theory (Students explore their *grande passion* 2007), which has called the seven social declines (Priest & Gass 2005, 29) including fitness and physical resistance decrease. But alos from previous times we had positive feedback from stu-

dents about hiking. It also takes into account the personal and group development opportunities by providing efficient and versatile outdoor activities.

- **<u>Modification</u>** based on the needs of the target group and the goal.

In order to create a course, we have adapted the existing courses experience and at the same time we leave open the opportunity of modification for previous planning.

Each program of adventure activities can be regarded as a game with rules, and then it can be modified. Also, there should be possible to achieve change and modify the exercises or change their order. The facilitator interacts with participants and receives feedback from the group about processes. Activities which are based on the purposes of the course is suitable the main structure will stay same.

- Activities are guided by the **<u>facilitator.</u>**

The facilitator will give direct orders before activities, then participants can ask questions after they start the action the facilitator will intervene only in high risk or when there is a need to adjust (to teach or lead). Leader has to take into account relevant activities of the leadership characteristics (Priest & Gass 2005, 3-7, 21; Outdoors as a tool for personal development 2006, 7), management styles (Priest & Gass 2005, 245; Lewin 1935; Outdoors as a tool for personal development 2006, 42-47). The facilitator monitors the dynamics of the process and intervenes only when needed to guide (Klabbers 2006, 55). No intervention when it is not needed, only process monitoring and observation. During transfer facilitator help is needed.

- **<u>Reflection</u>** follows the same stages as Greenaway described (pages 18).

After every activity reflection - sharing of feelings and facts, and outlining of the findings - will take place. The same pattern is repeated as a spiral (Figure 2, page 15) and in last day final transfer into everyday life will take place.

- **<u>Debriefing</u>** allow feedback- reflection-synthesis

Problems are arising during conversation in debriefing. AbEE style "learning through reflection" enable discover learning after experience. If during the feedback the participants said the same answers that was the goal of exercise, then the setting is right (Greenaway 2010). Goal of the activities is well set when in the discussion after the players said the same thing that was planned (Klabbers 2006).

2.2.3 The objectives of activities

Here I write how was designed of EIT program module for day by days. Description of the action plan has been added (appendix 1). Each day followed AbEE learning cycle Act - Reflect - Plan and the stages of group development.

The objectives of the first day was a) the adaptation to the rules of life, inconvenience, operation principles, principles of guidance, b) become acquainted with - each other, the regions, rules and daily schedule. Daily plans are firmly established awakening and meal times - meanwhile there was time for inside or outside activities. Only separately in every day participants could know what action will take place.

The first action was planned immediately after the arrival without the traditional introducing learning goals was **"photo hunt".** That is, activities in mixed group. To give a starts without introduction and suddenly with mixed group action was carried of idea that so it will be our task - to learn from action through experience. The aims of the exercise were - taking into account the choice of communication and self-expression (including the courage and the will), the motivation for cooperation, generating ideas, reaching agreements and creativity.

The second exercise of first day was a "**carousel**" - aimed to dating, familiarisation, self-expression, speaking and answering questions, listening and attention.

The second day was for conflict stage: the first exercise was a "**human- computer**" aimed to a) attention, listening, self-expression, b) coping with confusion, discover solutions, communication, forcing leaders to identify confrontations and clearing of positions within the group. Second activity of second the day "**Search and rescue**" ie "**SAR**" – a) acting as the limited opportunities to develop creative solutions, b) finding agreements, listening and hearing , understanding and respect, c) act together depends on each person's contribution.

The third day was norming face during the **"hike"** - aimed to co-operation and mental and physical effort, a) thinking, discussions, transfer of learned lessons, b) agreements, consideration of past experience, and tolerance into one another.

After action the reflection was done by non-verbal and verbal "**Drama method**" - where creative self-expression, generating ideas and co-operation was expected.

The fourth day was performing stage with lot of cooperation – aimed also to attention, reflection, self-reflection,   broaden the mind, identification of the theory of AE , consideration of diversity, and good feeling. AbEE theory was explained and different opportunities for practised. The first exercise was to "**walk and talk**" on the beaver track. There were used a lot of different groups sharing techniques that force as many various people as possible to cooperate with each other. During the exercise, the group had to find and choose from four different points the "great thought", and link them to K.Hahni Salem school rules. Second activity was various "**adventure games**" as spider net, cheese ball, swamp, mini-field, hands bound, magic carpet. All small groups were with different exercise in same time and then they changed places. The fun and support of youth initiative had the objective to as it was last evening together.

The fifth day was self-reflection and transfer of learning experience. Exercises were supporting to review personaly and with group individual learning experiences and express to yourself and to the others chared opinions, and observations of changes and how to talk about it. First there were a moment for silent of self-reflection with drawing emotions, feelings or thoughts and then was time for debriefing in big circle aimed to expression of your view to the other, invitation to talk about comments and your changes what had been taken palce or planned.

2.3 Description of the action process

In this chapter I describe the EIT module's background and describe the places, choice of participants, how they were informed and how we followed the program and what really happened.

EIT module program followed usual non-formal learning, adventure education and experiential learning exercises by principle to get from easer level to more difficult from outside knowledge to inside review. According to Priest and Gass (2005) adventure education should be in unfamiliar surroundings and unpredictable situations.

Program background: The program has been developed by using the principles of experiential education and experiential learning circles as described above. Firstly activities were carried out and then was looked back on (debriefed, reflected and analysed) by the participants and instructors, and changes were made before going on with next activities.

The action research EIT module program was conducted in Soomaa National Park at 28.11-02.12.2011 with university students.

Participants were Estonian- (21 persons) and Russian-speaking (15 persons) students. Estonian-speaking students were from University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy, they are studying first year to become school youth workers and creative activity teachers. Russian-speaking participants were second-year students from University of Tartu Narva College, studying to become youth workers. Participation was obligatory for them because it was part of their academic study but it was also possible to not attend the course due to illness or some other personal reasons. Some of the students were absent and therefore the sizes of the groups were different from what was planned.

Program information was short. Program called "experience integrated teaching" ie EIT module (appendix 1) described above, was five days long and it took place outside of university buildings in unfamiliar surroundings and unpredictable situations. Program information (appendix 3) was prepared by the author and sent to the students both from Viljandi and Narva Colledz via e-mail.

Place description – "wild as desert" (Soomaa National Park 2012) and unknown for participant. According to the idea of adventure education – actions will take place in unknown surrounding (Priest & Gass 2005, 25). As little comforts as possible were provided. Program information was quite short and participants did not know what to expect and what kind of conditions there would be. They could use kitchen and WC. There was only one shower. The main cooking was done outside in the camp fire. There were only one big room for sleeping all together with sleeping bags on the floor. There was also the opportunity to spend the night in tents, but it was not used and people preferred to stay inside the house despite the huge overcrowding and lack of privacy.

Actions follow each other based on the principle of adventure education and experiential learning theory (chapter 2.1), and my practise, and activities' descriptions combined from different handbooks. (Pihlakas 2003; Priest & Gass 2005; Tuula et al. 2005, 13-35; Salumaa 2006, 9)

Action description (appendix 1) Activities were described in part 2.2.3 and they were divided by days in accordance with the principles of adventure education: first day becoming acquainted (and trust formation), second day problem-solving (conflict) exercises, third day hike was aimed to teamwork and problem-solving, fourth day was full of co-operation exercises, and fifth day was for wrapping up and closing off the week.

Activities began with the participants becoming familiar to each other (exercise 1.1 -1.2 in appendix 1) and with increasing the security of the group, and knowledge of the region. After each exercise a debriefing session was carried out. According to the principle of active learning course design, activities were increasingly intractable and group processes were taken into account, so that the phase of conflict was planned for second day (exercise 2.2 -2.3 in appendix 1).

Feedback-reflection-analysis: After one week activities students got questionnaires (appendix 4) about their attitude to learning, and what they thought about adventure education before and after activities. Structured questionnaires that contained six open-ended questions were used. Other questions were about their opinion how adventure education could be used as a tool of self-development as part of school curriculum (4), what are the competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) contributed to the development of various activities based on the method of Adventure Education? (5), and which learning goals (from the secondary curriculum) would they put into action teaching outdoor course for young people (6). During one month they have to write their reflection-analysis feedback.

2.4 The methods for collecting data

In this chapter I describe action research data collecting methods. In action research, as in others qualitative researches, triangulation is important. Keeping that in mind, the participant observation was documented as field notes. Video recording and leaders' team experiences feedback was also part of documentation. After activities, there was debriefing and later participants answered structured questionnaire and gave unstructured written feedback. Finally, I did inductive analysis of fieldnotes material, answered questionnaires and feedback materials.

In the action research as usually in social sciences also triangulation is often used to indicate that more than two methods are used in a study with a view to double or triple checking results. "One of the most common forms of triangulation is to combine interviews with observation. Observation will test and fill out accounts given in interviews, and vice versa" (Löfstrom 2011, 7).

In the present study I used a combination of (a) a field notebook, (b) observation and video, and (c) interviews. There was alos three kind of interviews – debriefing after activities, questionnaires and free form written feedback. Participants were coded in questionnaire as **concrete answers** got code from one of letter name and free written **feedback answers** were coded as number and letter of first name. Because of confidentiality all names are changed and only women's names were chosen because the gender does not matter in the answers. There were fewer boys than girls and it's important to not recognise person behind the name.

During the action research different methods were used:

1. **observation** of participants during activities was documented as field notes and video recorded,

2. **video recording** was used as observation and reflection method during activities and also for reviews was used in debriefing later for deeper analysis,

3. **field notes –** about the observation of activities, reflection and analyzing processes,

4. **group interviews during debriefing** was like group interview as part of activities observed and also video recorded, discussion was for reviewing and analysing activities

5. **questionnaires** for participants after activities (appendix 4) for mapping their opinion about general competences and how it was supported by adventure exercises was answered after one week

6. **individual** free written **feedback answers** were collected one month after activities. Student could write about their learning opportunities and what they thought important to share about program, competences and their own learning experience.

During action and reflection **observation** was used and field notes were taken, also videos were recorded and participants interviewed (debriefing and written feedback). Video recording began on the second day from SAR blind-folded exercise and was continued up to the last day. Student feedback-reflection was important after each exercise. These discussions were written down and/or record to video, and they were also expatiated as sources of data. After activities debriefings were also used as group reflection discussions. The debriefing questions were preferred beforehand and they were semi-structured and open-ended, usually also interactive discussions which were led by the facilitator.

It was possible to give written and also oral feedback in Estonian or Russian language. Participant's language skills were not important and Russian-speakers could express their opinion in Russian, in group interviews they had opportunity of translation and the majority of students had done their free form written feedback also in Russian. Their opinions about learning and reviewing process, skills and knowledge were picked up by free form written feedback. In interviews during debriefing was important group knowledge, and the main task of reviewing the exercises was point out what they had learned and get input to next planning cycle. In individual written work the participants were free for their own opinion and because it was collected by the passing of time it should be free from emotsional or other student infuense.

3. ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

In this chapter I share my findings about observation and analyze students' views about their learned skills from the course of "EIT" module and how their learning experience is compatible with the basic school general competences. In action research participants are also designers of the process. "Action research allows the researcher to reflect on the research process as well as the findings, which seldom can be easily formulated as propositional knowledge" (Herr & Anderson 2005). My researcher's views are influenced by my previous knowledge and understandings, but analyzing I try as much as possible to describe the views of participants and bring out their opinion on what they learned as learning outcome of AE course and statements about the competences that were included.

3.1 Analysis of written feedback

Here is the analysis of the written feedback. After the activities there was one week to write free form feedback sheet and three weeks or four (if they needed more time) to answer reflection-questions (appendix 4). Reflection-questionnaires were analyzed by coding (appendix 5). Codes were based on the general competence of a basic school curriculum. Codes were attempted to be found to all utterances of participants from all questions and also from free form written feedback. All written reflection sheets were analyzed.

Before the outdoor activities the students generally thought (according to question 1, appendix 4) that the adventure education is: *outdoor activities with obstacle course, hiking, climbing ropes* or *rappelling*, *physical activities* to *overcome fears* and *take challenges (*Reflection-questionnaires). After the activities the students' attitude changed substantively due to their experience and reflection. The idea of the activities was a

much more pedagogical approach, as student H2 put it "*In adventure education it is definitely important that nothing is done just for any reason - all activities have the purpose and meaning*". Participants acquired new meanings of adventure: getting to know betterthemselves getting to know their your peers and build trust in teams, *"how to put other's interests ahead during the teamwork"* , (according to the answers to question 2, appendix 4).

Ideas that support the general competences of The National Curriculum for Basic Schools (2011) were mentioned most often in the reflection-questionnaris of the students. All the general competences were more or less used and touched in students' opinions during the adventure activities. Self-management competence, value competence, social competence, communication competence and entrepreneurship competence were mentioned most often. Learning to learn competence and mathematics competence were also mentioned, but less frequently and under a different wording. For example as follows:

<u>Value competence</u>

- ability to evaluate human relations and activities from the standpoint of generally accepted moral norms; *"Children learn tolerance, and reckon with each other's opinions and, figure on if someone is trying to make something clear to them*" A

- to sense and value one's ties with other people, nature, the cultural heritage of one's own country and nation and those of others, and events in contemporary culture; *"To develop the knowledge and the need for nature preservation"* and *"Able to express themselves creatively, the story of art and cultural heritage"* or they said this program helps children *"to value the nation, have lack of prejudice against other people and nations, to recognize the views of people and understanding of situations"*

- to value art and to shape the sense of aesthetics; *"To Value and follow a healthy lifestyle and be physically active"*

Students very often find value competences integrated into the program and activities.

Also very usual were sayings about social competences. All types of social competences were mentioned. **<u>Social competence</u>** as:

- the ability to become self-actualized, to function as an aware and conscientious citizen and to support the democratic development of society; B. "*Development of communication skills and self-expression, giving a chance to express for yourself and for your companions*"

U *"group has found a compromise that is not based on one idea but on ideas of everyone and always need to hear, debate and discuss about "*

K *"A young person is able to take responsibility for their own costs and the group or team triumphant and successfully to complete ..."*

- to know and follow values and standards in society and the rules of various environments; *F 'to work with other people in different situations, people accept differences, and communicate with them. "*

 L *"But in some situations can not choose with whom to work with or any life stage there is a great moment to go through" and yet "the past few weeks I've encountered a lot of bullying and public harassment, both in primary school and basic school. Set as an objective that no matter what a person can live for moments to come you just to need to work with such person who is not exactly has been your favorite or you didn`t like him/her. "*

E *"take responsibility for the consequences of acts "*

- to engage in cooperation with other people; D "*To do a lot of group work, so they can realize how much good to give for one work, if at a time there are 5 people not only one so that Young people could learn how to take into account each other.'*

- to accept interpersonal differences and take them into account in interacting with people; A *"to treat everybody the same way all the time, there is no preference, and bullying or discrimination."*

The most important was self-management competence and this was mentioned most often. As **self-management competence** are:

- the ability to understand and evaluate oneself, one's weaknesses and strengths; B. *"Self-evaluation individually and as a team member"* E *"students are growing as multifaceted personalities, who can perform various roles preciously in the family, at work and in public life"*

- to adhere to healthy lifestyles;

- to find solutions to problems related to oneself, one's mental and physical health as well as to problems arising in human relations;

I *"Participants are able to express their ideas and to solve the task in team" or "help students to ascertain their interests, inclinations and abilities. " and " will ensure willingness to pursue further studies in the next level of education and lifelong learning. "*

Fifth competence in basic school curriculum is **communication competence.** It was often mentioned by different students but not in all under mentioned subdivisions. For example:

- ability to clearly and relevantly express oneself, taking into account situations and partners in communication; F *"ability to express yourself clearly and appropriately, given the circumstances and the social partners"*

- to prioritize correct use of language and rich expressive language; O *"student is able to express lightly in speech and writing appropriately clearly according the situation and could understand the social partners and interpret a variety of texts, to know and apply spelling rules"*

- to present and justify their positions;

F *"is able to present their views and justify"* or other 13A *"There was a good example of how to agree even if not possible to talk"*

But some of these competence subdivisions were difficult to find but there were some like these:

- to read and understand information and literature; 6M *"I realized that it is important not only to listen but also hear and it is also important to try and not be afraid to talk about"*

- to write different types of texts, using appropriate linguistic devices and a suitable style; or it was more rare 4S *"it was positive Estonians were not trying to improve us (Russians) but in the contrary to the situation it was pleasant that they helped us finish sentences and put correct case form where needed"*

Not very often but here and there many students mentioned learning to learn competence and mathematics competence. For example about **learning to learn competence** there are about

- ability to organize the learning environment and procure the information they need for learning; was *"*Children know who to turn to with their problems and they are willing to do so" mentioned by C or *"create a learning environment that supports student's desire to learn and study skills, and critical thinking skills of self, knowledge and the will of the characteristics of the development"* mentioned by E

- to plan studies and follow the plan; to use the outcome of the learning, including learning skills and strategies, in different contexts and for solving problems; mentioned by C *"Wants to learn and feel the joy of new knowledge."* or *"is able to work both alone and in teams, dividing evenly between the time of learning and leisure"* . Mentioned by K was that *"Young people are able to learn and take hold of new knowledge from activities and are able to use them when necessary."* K

- to analyze one's knowledge and skills, strengths and weaknesses and on that basis, the need for further learning; mentioned by Y *"to share general knowledge, which, never in my life do not harm"* and other mentioned by A-P ...

Also the seventh competence **entrepreneurship competence** was mentioned

- ability to create ideas and implement them, using the acquired knowledge and skills in different walks of life; F "the ability to create ideas and put them into practice, using knowledge and skills acquired in various residential and business areas" C

- to see problems and the opportunities that lie within them; B. *"Creativity and spontaneity on the different problem solving"* F *"see the problems and realize its potential, set goals and implement them."*

- to set goals and carry them out; to organize joint activities, show initiative and take responsibility for results; S *"the ability to create ideas and put them into practice, using the acquired knowledge and skills in various fields of life"* or *"those who are enterprising, believes in themselves, shaping their ideals, goals and sets them to act on their behalf, manage and adjust their behaviour and take responsibility for their actions"*

- to react flexibly to changes and to take judicious risks.

7M *"I realized it is important to not only to listen but to hear and not panic. If everyone thinks then it is going to work and if you do not understand you must specifiy"*

The rarest was the sixth form of competence - **<u>mathematics competence</u>**. It consists of
- the ability to use the language, symbols and methods characteristic of mathematical applications, and
- to solve various situations in all walks of life and spheres of activity
It was mentioned only within the meaning of logical thinking. It was mentioned by some students (H, I and C) that games on the fourth day helped them "*develop logical thinking and thinking about different strategies*"

3.2 Analysis of the field-notes

Here I describe how I conducted the observation and took field notes and what were the findings.

The adventure education activities took place mostly outdoors and the teacher-researcher was also involved, therefore, the observation of participants and action as well as taking notes at the same time caused problems (in recording or taking notes). In practice it is not possible to write everything down when you are leading the process and lots of things are going on. Our team was not very well prepared for observation and taking notes and it was recorded from time to time. So the next time I have to give clearer instructions to my team. I took some field notes straight after the activities in order to write things down as soon as possible.

Experiential learning cycle worked well, and after repeating it for a while the participants remembered some exercises. PAS cycle could start from each point and we started with action. At the beginning we did not erxplain the theory to the students. During the debriefing after the first action, the model was introduced and students together prepared the plan what to improve in the next activity. It was even more effective after the second (so called – Conflict) day. After the second day, experiential learning cycle worked best

and participants but a lot effort into the planning of the third day. The learning outcomes were written on the white board and the students copied them into their notebooks. The group's ideas for the rules and exercises learned were followed (remembered) the next day.

A lot of detailed findings were **about participants:**

a) the motivation of some people in the group was very low and it disturbed others and increased opposition. This caused prejudices and aggravated the creation of a positive and tolerant learning environment for working together.

b) the large group was divided into smaller sub-groups. Voluntarily they would have been together with only their friends. Many group mixing methods (random or planned) were used, thus the participants havesaid "*I learned interesting methods for my work* " (free form written feedback). At the same time some of the participants liked this, and recognised it as a youth work method that they could use in the future.

c) unfamiliar environment caused more stress but it was also important, because it helped to increase participants' tolerance "*all these days I felt a lack of good food, soft bed, myr room and shower* " (free form written feedback)

d) different angry reactions in different situations caused the following reacyions:" *It was a pointless game* " or "*I'm not going to talk to you*" (reflection from video)

e) It was very often mentioned that mostly everyone likes positive people. But the person who said that didn´t understand that he/she also could be nice and positive. Even if the person recognised it and tried, he/she very often couldn´t handle it. *"I tried to be friendly but there were so many negative feelings and I was not even able to smile."*

f) some participants were very self-centred - "*We could not sleep, you disturbed us and you may not stay here, we want to throw you out of our room and you will stay without breakfast*" (team Feedback).

g) most people know how to be strict and how to stay calm or say nice things to others. They know and try not to hurt other people's feelings

h) The rules were broken and avoided - people had a selective memory (the video - it was forbidden to speak) - but the conclusionwasis "*to err is human* " (Field notes)

i) The things that concerned emotions and were repeated in debriefing for many times were learned and remembered. But from others mistakes lessons were not learned (as seen from video), for example, "SAR" - after the first operation - there was an error correction, as the game went wrong, then I repeated the rule in the kitchen again - which they misinterpreted. At the end of the game it was remembered only after debriefing the end of the ring only 2-3 person but at least 20 after the debriefing.

4. CONCLUSION

Learning took place during activities and debriefings and even in free time of relaxing and I agree with Oliver Wendell Holmes quotes "A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions."

First I was amazed that this simple model "Plan – act – reflect" was difficult to follow for the students. For example *"I didn´t like lections at all but I liked activities".* There were almost no lectures at all but only interactive discussions. The only similarity to lections could be during debriefing when we were sitting in a circle and all participants could talk. Or when the aim of the exercise was explained or something for learning transfer, or one of the leaders wrote the examples – like competences on the board. There were not many possibilities to remain passive except when a person himself/herself decided to stay away from discussions and to be excluded.

Days, as it was planned according to the group development model "forming, storming, norming and performing" (Lewin 1935, Outdoors as a tool for personal development 2009, Thompson & White 2010), were working and it was reflected back on students opinions (Klabbers 2006, 56). The group process went as it was planned and it also helped students' personal growth and inner discovery. For example *"it was so hard on second day, I was angrier ... and I said stupid things" ... "then (third day) I was ashamed and I apologised but the other girls did not forgive"*

The second important thing is that <u>setting the goal</u> worked well and also our plan about transfer worked (as in Kolb circle, figure 2 above). For example:

a) After the 2nd conflict day and summaries of the debriefing people remembered some of the main principles: they took into account the differences of the group, they listened to each other's opinions, they had consideration with the others, they were waiting for the translation and were attentive and helpful to each others.

b) the transfer took place on day 5 (field notes and video), and in the written feedback, some said „ *I could use these games in future…"* and „*… I liked dividing into the groups … "* and they wrote their wishes for the future youth work „ *… cooperation and respect to others is regardless of the young - often in real live you cannot choose who you work with* "

<u>Actions</u> and activities from module EIT were successful and contributed to the achievement of learning outcomes. Distribution of activities by days was justified by the principle of experiential learning (as written in chapter 2). The first day was good for conformity to activities and working principles. The emergence of the conflict phase on the second day helped to move on in group dynamics and get faster to the phase of cooperation and teamwork, and allowed satisfaction and joy for 4 days. AbEE cycle worked and was justified, because during discussions and debriefing participants reflected the same goals and aims which we had planned for the activities.

Other observations were that a) some complex exercises were not understood - the rules did not help because people would interpret them differently (2nd day "human computer"). In smaller teams exercises were often more rewarding. All opinions about 4th day actions were very good – they were pleased and happy.

b) Lot of people liked the hiking trip, even those who were *unwilling to go there* or those who *were afraid* (field notes). It proved once again that hiking has an important role in outdoor AbEE course; "*in order to achieve something optimal effort is required"* (written feedback).

Conclusions about observation, making notes and video recording were helpful to study design better and to put it into practice. The use of video camera was extremely beneficial, and it did not disturb the students so much as we thought beforehand. I advised my team not to be afraid of video recording in the future and surely start recording from first day on. It is also important is to keep activities in focus (aim - to be noticed), and particulary debriefing. Video feedback and discussion with student gives a deeper input into the learning.

I also found some mistakes to be avoided in the future. I noticed that I as a facilitator of activities had made mistakes - a) the timetable for the displacement of a rush - *"the leader could not close participants' eyes before explaining exercise"* (field notes). according to tacit agrement I expected that someone else had already assisted the participants in this points and ignored the things that were still left undone.

b) I didn´t specify the rules of the game to the assistant instructor. Since it was already difficult exercise of conflict and it could be easier with clear rules at the beginning. This presentation made the situation even more difficult for participants and misunderstandings were guaranteed. "*The unclear repetition of rules and does not clarify the rules*" (field notes "human computer " & SAR). It also provided an opportunity for participants not to blame themselves and as a consequence of not learning from this experience.

c) I had not forseen that unpredictability of natural elements made the already difficult exercise even more difficult. In "human computer" exercise the paper with numbers got rolled because of moisture from the ground and the numbers on the paper became less visible for participants. Fortunately, this did not change the nature of activities and natural forces were not working against the organizers but supported them.

d) There was not enough time for facilitators' team meetings, because the days were filled with very intensive program for participants. *"It is difficult to introduce unexpected changes because even in the leader team the others couldn´t read your thoughts"* (field notes „ human-computer " & SAR). Misunderstandings in the team and missed intervention may be avoided by team co-operation practice, experience and more communication. Better solution for this situation could be more instructor's bigger involvement.

There should be better solutions to share roles of observers and activities' facilitator. Observation could lead to the possibility of conducting team meetings and more free time for the instructor.

f) At the time of activities the instructor needs to quickly take urgent decisions and there is no time for discussion. Non-intervention - intervention into the processes is always question and the opportunity to act differently, which may affect the result as it happened in SAR-game. I noticed that the team members did not agree with my intervention. There was a possibility to have a team meeting and discuss mistakes - it could be better the next day.

It could be concluded that the design of this course, and synchronization with school competences certainly justifies itself because the university students got practical learning experience and the learning outcomes were designed according to the university curriculum.

In the future the author wants to continue with the topic "How to integrate AbEE course into new Estonian National Curriculum for Basic Schools general competence and the objectives of education".

More closer and touchable benefits could be to designe a teacher education program module for using adventure education as an integrated tool.

This program module could also be part of the integrated curriculum project / manual. There is an idea to add a written detail plan with used methodology about "EIT" module and provide support to teachers to integrate adventure activities into curriculum as part for some elective subject or ordinary subject.

SUMMARY

Thesis "**General competences of school curriculum in adventure module** for school youth worker" was done by **action research** method for practising adventure based experiential education ie AbEE activities in youth workers university studies and how it can be more effective taking into account general competences according to National curriculum for basic schools (2011).

The problem was that the students do not know the possibilities of experiential learning, and how to integrate adventure education and general competences of the basic school curriculum. And also AbEE program does not support students' achieving their learning outcomes.

The problem arose from my everyday work as a lecturer at the University of Tartu Viljandi Culture Academy (UTVCA), and grew out of my teaching sessions, reflections of the leaders' team and students' feedback.

Main research question: How and which adventure based experiential education (AbEE) activities could in students' opinions help achieve general competences of basic school curriculum (during one week outdoor course);

This study aims at synchronizing the AbEE methods and EIT module with the actual needs of school general competences

The first task was to design an "EIT"module course for implementing adventure-based experiential education outdoor course and integrate the basic school general competences and, second, to describe connection of school general competences and learning experiences of students who have undertaken AbEE and "learning by doing" introduction course during one week outdoor.

The inquiry was done as an action research (AR) method and consists of 1) defining and clarifying the problem 2) finding the idea and planning action, building an adventure based experiential educational program module with active learning activities (appendices 1 and 2) which are included into university teaching practical work, 3) action with

designed activities and with monitoring the impact a) observation of processes and participants, b) group discussion during and between activities, d) debriefing - reflection and analysis part after each day: 4 times of which 2 times were video recorded and e) conclusion debriefing group talk after all activities (video recorded), f) written feedback (free form reflection and self-analysis) from participants, g) questionnaires for participants after activities (appendix 4, reflection-questioner). 4) studying the consequences of an action. The main research method of data analysis was qualitative. I have coded all students' written feedback by using basic school general competences (appendix 5 is example of coding) and finaly 5) identifying general findings and conclusions.

There were 36 participants, more than half of them were Estonian (21 persons) and the rest (15 persons) were Russian-speaking. Estonian-speaking participants were first year students from University of Tartu Viljandi Cultural Academy studying to become school youth workers and creative activity teachers. Russian-speaking participants were second year students from University of Tartu Narva College, studying to become youth workers.

The main conclusion was that according to the students opinions it is possible to integrate national basic school curriculum general competences into school youth works studies. According to the students opinions the exercises were often involved with self-management competence, value competence, social competence, communication competence and entrepreneurship competence, and not so much was mentioned learning to learn competence. Mathematics competence was also mentioned, though not directly but under the meaning of logical thinking. Learning took place during activities and debriefings and even in free time of relaxing. Actions and activities of EIT module were successful and contributed to the achievement of learning outcomes. AbEE cycle worked and was justified, because during discussions and debriefing participants told back the same goals and aims which had been planned for the activities.

There are some ideas how to make EIT module better in the future and still some possibilities to modifie the course author suggest this module to other schools and universities.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1. Experience Integrated Teaching = EIT module

For Adventure baced experiential education course - AbEE one week outdoor course.

Day & activity nr	<u>Topic</u> of the day: activity	objectives
1 day (Forming) **1.1** **1.2** **1.3**	<u>Become acquainted and trust formation:</u> "Foto-hunt" "Carousel" "Anthill" , "air balloon – life" and "tele-graph". Reflection: debriefing	a) the adaptation to the rules of life, inconvenience, operation principles, principles of guidance, b) become acquainted with - each other, the regions, rules and daily schedule.
2 day (Storming) 2.1 2.2	<u>problem- and conflict solving exercises:</u> "Human-computer" Reflection: disscussion "Search and rescue" ie SAR / video Reflection: video feedback	coping of stage of conflict: a) attention, listening, self-expression, b) coping with confusion, discover solutions, communication, forcing leaders to identify confrontations and clearing of positions within the group "SAR" – a) acting as the limited opportunities to develop creative solutions, b) finding agreements, listening and hearing, understanding and respect, c) act together depends on each person's contribution.
3 day (Norming) 3.1 3.2 3.3	<u>Teamwork, supporting and problem-solving,</u> devide to the groups (with trick) hike and orienteering reflection: drama method	co-operation and mental and physical effort, a) thinking, discussions, transfer of learned lessons, b) agreements, consideration of past experience, tolerance into one another, c) creative self-expression, generating ideas and co-operation

4th day (Performing) 4.1 4.2 4.3	<u>Co-operation exercises</u> warming up – "washing machine" small "walk and talk" small team adventure games (rotation): Spiderweb, minefield, swamp, problem cheese, gypsy lock reflection folkdance and student participation exercise	cooperate with each other a) attention, reflection, self-reflection, broaden the mind, identification of the theory of AE , consideration of diversity, good feeling, fun, and support for youth initiative
5 th day (transforming)	<u>Wrapping up</u> und closing of the week: reflection: drawing (alone) reflection: group debriefing and round talk - one by one packing and cleaning	Self-reflection, expression of your views to the other, invitation to talk about comments and your changes what had been taken place or planned.

APPENDIX 2. General competences of basic school curriculum inte-grated to EIT module

ACTIVITY	COMPETENCES, how to exercise developed and influenced achievement of competence	COMPE-TENCES
Abbreviations: VC - value competence, SoC - social competence, SMC - self-management competence, LC - learning to learn competence , CC - communication competence, MC - mathematics competence, EC - entrepreneurship competence		
1. day Foto-hunt	To assess and value human relations and nature	VC
	Attention to cooperation, present and justify opinions	CC
	Teamwork, consideration for others opinions and finding the compromise,	Soc
	Self-expression and the disclosure of your behavior	SMC
	Creative thinking in generating ideas and impliment them	EC
	To plan and organize work, use previously learned skills and knowledge	MC, LC
Carousel	Communication and formation of relationships	SoC
	Adaptation of strange and new culture. To accept differences	VC
	Able for human relations, express oneself quickly and clearly	SMC
	Understand others information, able to express oneself	CC
Ant-hill ,	Consideration for others views, make compromises	SoC
	Accurate self-expression and retain inside calm	SMC
	Think about different strategies, finding new ideas	MC, EC
Air bal-loon - life	Active listening. Teamwork	SMC
	Find strategies and use previous experiences	EC
	Survive in a changing environment, stay calm	SoC
	Value standards of society and human life	VC
Telegraph	To be honest and respect to the other players	VC
	To function as an aware and conscientious person	SoC
	Ability react and evaluate oneself	SMC
2. day, Human-computer	Problem- and conflict solving	
	Attention. Listen to the task carefully.	SMC
	Teamwork. Acceptance of other's views and proposals.	SoC
	Active listening - to find compromises and solve problems	EC
	To show initiative and take responsibility for result	EC

	Coping with a shortage of information	CC
Search and rescue" e. SAR	To survive in the changing situations, follow values and standards	SoC
	To stand oneself needs and propose idea for compromise	SMC
	To react flexibly to changes and to take judicious risks	EC
	To accept differences, value persons as important for teamwork.	VC
3. day Hike	Logical thinking, expression, using the knowledge, teamwork	MC
	Map reading skills, interpretation of signs and symbols and understanding their meaning in natural environment.	LC
	Consideration of ones team mates, understand and accept differences, encouraging and supporting.	SoC
	Consistency. Coping in different situations, and changing (climate, diet) situations.	EV
	Perception and appreciation of nature and other people	VC
4-th day Washing machine	Attention to teamwork and co-operation.	SoC
	To react adequate to changes	SMC
	personal mental and physical abilities of cooperation	SMC
	Teamwork and listening skills	SoC
	The accuracy and compliance the rules	MC
Walk and talk	Attention. Perception and appreciate value of nature	VC
	self-analysis, self-expression, finding the role, organization of thoughts	SMC
	Creativity. Finding compromises. Making the summary	EC, SoC
	Read and understand, use appropriat written expression style	LC, CC
Small team AE	Teamwork. Attention. Calculation with team members.	SoC
	Finding new ideas and implement them	EC
5-th day, Reflection Drawing (alone), Everyday reflection	Creativity. Finding and understanding oneself mistakes.	SMC
	To value others opinons. Consideration and compromise.	VC
	The desire to develop team work, understanding others	SoC
	To be able evaluate oneself, weaknesses and strenghts	SMC
	Active listening. Acceptance. One speaks at a time.	VC
	Ability to clearly and relevantly express oneself	CC
	To produce the information what is needed for learning	LC
	To show initiative and take responsibility	EC
	To accept differences and understand the behavior of others	SoC

APPENDIX 3. Program information

TARTU ÜLIKOOL
viljandi kultuuriakadeemia

Personal information letter for adventure education outdoor course in Soomaa 28.11-02.12.2011

Going to have outdoor activities wear comfortable outdoor (sport) clothes and use comfortable and weather appropriate footwear; (preferably hiking boots)

Backpack is a necessary (or other big bag where fit all things - sleeping supplies, vahetusri-ided drink). During the camp one-day hiking will take place, and for this backpack and drinking water bottle is needed.

Hiking and outdoor activities will definitely need **equipment** as ..
➢ Sleeping bag.
➢ Sleeping mat - Lebo
➢ Rain and windproof jacket (plastic cape or coat, etc.)
➢ shoes for exchange: like sport shoes, or other shoes like mocassins (or rubber boots may be useful)
➢ non-breakable dishes - a bowl, spoon, cup
➢ non-breakable drinking water bottle
➢ Toiletries (soap, towel, toothpaste and brush)
➢ Personal medications (Get to know your body and take the necessary drugs - headache tablets, allergy medicine + patches)
➢ Hat, scarf and gloves

Recommended exchanges clothes list:
• Athletic clothing such as joggers, sweatshirt or sweater / fleece and trousers
• Long and short sleeved T-shirt,
• Wool sweater or fleece
• Cotton socks (2-3 pair), and wool socks (2 pair)
• Rain-resistant clothing (rubber boots)

Food that everyone takes to prepare and share with the group

One bread and one white bread;
2 canned food (such as: 1 fish and 1 meat or 2 canned meat and chicken);
onion / garlic (for health maintenance);
something to make a salad (especially if you're a vegetarian - provide healthy food for themselves);
something sweet yourself, and something good to share with everyone (who is at home can take the jam, breakfast porridge).

Sample of schedule:
7.00 - 8.15 kitchen crew prepares breakfast (in kitchen range or campfire)
8.30 – 9.30 BREAKFAST – *Menu: oat flake porridge, jam, tea, coffee, bread*,
Cleaning the kitchen (everyone washes their dishes, the kitchen team wash pots and pans), and backing bedstead (put things together)
10.00-13.00 indoor and outdoor AbEE **study activities**
13.00-14.00 kitchen crew prepares breakfast (the fire)
14.00 LUNCH. Menu: Bread and soup. Every day different, such as the Russian salmon soup, borsch, pea soup

15.00 – 18.00 Adventure and reflection **activities,** i.e. activities outside / inside 1.5 h and feedback and analysis (1.5 h)

17.00 kitchen crew start to prepares dinner (in campfire)

18.00-19.00 DINNER Macaroni, pasta or porridge, meat, bread, tea

19.00-21.00 Social Activities - student offered activities , something for students to teach and learn from each other

23.00 Silent of night and sleeping

Activities is divided by days in accordance with the principles of adventure education:

First day the adaptation and trust formation,

Second day problem solving and conflict exercises

The third day HIKE and co-working, the fourth day co-operation exercises, the Fifth day summarising and closing of the week

APPENDIX 4. Reflection-questionnaire for participant

Questionnaire for participant after activities: in Estonian language

Küsimuse välitegevustega laagris osalejale:

1. Mida teadsid (arvasid teadvat)seikluskasvatuse (edaspidi SK) kohta enne väljasõitu?
2. Kuidas ja mida tead seikluskasvatusmeetodi kohta nüüd?
3. Mille poolest need kaks arvamust erinevad?
4. Mida arvad, kuidas võib seikluskasvatust kasutada lapse/noore arengu toetamiseks kooli õppekava osana?
5. Milliste pädevuste (teadmiste, oskuste ja hoiakute) arendamisele aitasid /aitavad kaasa erinevad SK meetodil põhinevad tegevused? (Vasta päevade ja harjutuste kohta eraldi)
6. Kui hakkaksid planeerima praegu samasugust tegevusõppe väljasõitu noortele (näiteks 6-9kl), millised õpieesmärgid seaksid neile? (vt põhikooli õppekava)

Questionnaire for participant after activities translated into English language

1. What did you knew (thought to know) about Adventure Education (hereafter AE) before the departure to outdoor activities?

2. How and what do you know about the method of adventure education now?

3. On what are differences about these two opinions?

4. What do you think of how adventure education can be used as a tool of a child / youth development as part of school curriculum?

5. What are the competences (knowledge, skills and attitudes) contributed to the development to various activities based on the method of Adventure Education? (Answer on separate days, and exercises)

6. If you start now planning a similar action learning outdoor course for young people (for example such as for grade 6-9), which learning goals would you put in it? (as in basic school curriculum).

APPENDIX 5. Examples of Coded answers

1. Examples of answers of questionare used in text

The abbreviations are: VC - value competence, SoC - social competence, SMC - self-management competence, LC - learning to learn competence , CC – communication competence, MC - mathematics competence, EC - entrepreneurship competence

Per-son code	Question nr 6: If you start now planning a similar action learning outdoor course for young people (for example such as for grade 6-9), which learning goals would you put in it? (as in basic school curriculum).	Comp-etence Code
B	Eneseanalüüs nii individuaalselt kui meeskonna liikmena *"Self-evaluation individually and as a team member"*	SMC
E	õpilaste kasvamine loovateks, mitmekülgseteks isiksusteks, kes suudavad ennast täisväärtuslikult teostada erinevates rollides: perekonnas, tööl ja avalikus elus *"students are growing as multi-faceted personalities, who can perform various roles preciously in the family, at work and in public life"*	SMC
I	osalejad suudavad esitada ja väljendada oma ideid ülesande lahendamiseks meeskonnas; I *"Participants are able to express their ideas and to solve the task in team" or "help students to ascertain their interests, inclinations and abilities. " and " will ensure willingness to pursue further studies in the next level of education and lifelong learning. "*	SMC
B	Loovus ja spontaansus erinevate olukordade lahendamisel *"Creativity and spontaneity on the different problem solving"*	EC
F	suutlikkus ideid luua ja neid ellu viia, kasutades omandatud teadmisi ja oskusi erinevates elu- ja tegevusvaldkondades; *"the ability to create ideas and put them into practice, using knowledge and skills acquired in various residential and business areas"*	EC
F	näha probleeme ja neis peituvaid võimalusi; seada eesmärke ja neid ellu viia. *"see the problems and realize its potential, set goals and implement them."*	EC
S	suutlikkus ideid luua ja neid ellu viia, kasutades omandatud teadmisi ja oskusi erinevates elu- ja tegevusvaldkondades *"the ability to create ideas and put them into practice, using the acquired knowledge and skills in various fields of life"*	EC
S	on ettevõtlik, usub iseendasse, kujundab oma ideaale, seab endale eesmärke ja tegutseb nende nimel, juhib ja korrigeerib oma käitumist ning võtab endale vastutuse oma tegude eest *"those who are enterprising, believes in themselves, shaping their ideals, goals and sets them to act on their behalf, manage and adjust their behaviour and take responsibility for their actions"*	EC
A	Kujundada loogilist mõtlemist ja mõtlemist erinevate strateegiate peale *"develop logical thinking and thinking about different strategies"*	MC
B	Arendada loovat mõtlemist *"develop creative thinking"*	MC

C	Oskab vaadelda kaarti, leida erinevusi ja sarnasusi. *"Can considered map, find the differences and similarities"*	MC
I	osalejad oskavad kaarti lugeda ja kaardi järgi loodusrajal orienteeruda. *"Participants are able to read the map and chart-orientated nature trail"*	MC
A	kogu laagris koheldakse kõiki ühtemoodi, puudub igasugune eelistamine ning kiusamine. *"to treat to all in the same way all the time, there is no preference, and bullying or discrimination."*	SoC
B	Suhtlusoskuse arendamine ja eneseväljenduse võimaluse andmine nii endale kui ka kaaslastele "*Development of communication skills and self-expression, giving a chance to express yourself and for companions"*	SoC
D	Teha väga palju rühmatöid, et nad saaksid aru, kui palju annab ühele heale tööle juurde see, kui korraga on tegutsemishood näiteks 5 pead, mitte ainult 1. Noored õpiksid, kuidas üksteiseda arvestada *To do a lot of group work, so they can realize how much good to give for one work, if at a time there are 5 people not only one so that Young people could learn how to take into account each other.'*	SoC
E	vastutus tegude tagajärgede eest *"take responsibility for the consequences of acts "*	SoC
F	teha koostööd teiste inimestega erinevates situatsioonides; aktsepteerida inimeste erinevusi ning arvestada neid suhtlemisel. *'to work with other people in different situations, people accept differences, and communicate with them. "*	SoC
K	Noor on võimeline võtma vastutuse enda kanda ning grupi/rühma võidukalt(edukalt) lõpule viima *"A young person is able to take responsibility for their own costs and the group or team triumphant and successfully to complete ..."*	SoC
L	Olen viimastel nädalatel puutunud palju kokku narrimise, mõnitamisega ja seda nii algklasside osas kui ka põhikoolis. Seaksin eesmärgiks, et ükskõik milline on inimene, võib elus tulla ette hetki, kus lihtsalt tuleb teha koostööd ka sellise inimesega, kes pole just olnud lemmik vms. *"the past few weeks I've encountered a lot of bullying and public harassment, both in primary school and basic school. Set as an objective that no matter what a person can live for moments to come you just to need to work with such person who is not exactly has been your favorite or you didn`t like him/her. "*	SoC
L	Samas teatud olukordades ei saa valida, kellega koos tuleb miski eluetapp või mõni tähtis hetk läbida *"But in some situations can not choose with whom to work with or any life stage there is a great moment to go through"*	SoC
U	kompromiss grupis ei leita kunagi ühe idee baasil alati peaks arutlema, arutama, *"group has found a compromise what has not based one idea but ideas of everyone and always need to hear, debate and discuss about "*	SoC
F	suutlikkus ennast selgelt ja asjakohaselt väljendada, arvestades olukordi ja suhtluspartnereid, *"ability to express yourself clearly and appropriately, given the circumstances and the social partners"*	CC
F	oma seisukohti esitada ja põhjendada *"is able to present their views and justify"*	CC
O	suudab end olukorda ja suhtluspartnereid arvestades kõnes ja kirjas selgelt ja	CC

	asjakohaselt väljendada, mõista ja tõlgendada erinevaid tekste, tunneb ja järgib õigekirjareegleid*"student is able to express lightly in speech and writing appropriately clearly according the situation and could understand the social partners and interpret a variety of texts, to know and apply spelling rules"*	
A	lapsed õpiksid sallivust ning üksteisega arvestamist ning kui keegi midagi neile selgeks üritab teha, *"Children learn tolerance, and reckon with each other opinions and, figure on if someone is trying to make something clear to them"*	VC
E	sotsiaalse ning kultuurilise identiteedi kujundamine *Able to express themselves creatively, the story of art and cultural heritage*	VC
I	osalejad teadvustavad loodushoidliku eluviisi vajalikkust ja oskavad seda väärtustada *To develop the knowledge and the need for nature preservation*	VC
O	Oma rahvuse väärtustamine, kuid samas eelarvamuse puudumine teiste inimeste ja rahvuste vastu, inimeste tunnistamine, vaadete ja olukordade erinevuste mõistmine *to value the nation, have lack of prejudice against other people and nations, to recognize the views of people and understanding of situations*	VC
O	suudab väljendada ennast loominguliselt, peab lugu kunstist ja kultuuripärandist *"Able to express themselves creatively, the story of art and cultural heritage"*	VC
S	väärtustab ja järgib tervislikku eluviisi ning on füüsiliselt aktiivne *To Value and follow a healthy lifestyle and are physically active"*	VC
C	Laps teab, kelle poole oma probleemidega pöörduda ja on valmis ka seda tegema. *"Children know who to turn to with their problems and they are willing to do so"*	LC
C	Tahab õppida ning tunneb rõõmu uutest teadmisest. *"Wants to learn and feel the joy of new knowledge."*	LC
C	Oskab töötada nii meeskonnad kui ka üksinda, jaotades ühtlaselt aega õppimise ja vaba aja vahelor *"is able to work both alone and in teams, dividing evenly between the time of learning and leisure"*	LC
E	loob õpikeskkonda, mis toetab õpilase õpihimu ja õpioskuste, enesereflektsiooni ja kriitilise mõtlemisvõime, teadmiste ja tahteliste omaduste arengut *"create a learning environment that supports student's desire to learn and study skills, and critical thinking skills of self, knowledge and the will of the characteristics of the development"*	LC
K	Noor on suuteline õppima ja läbi tegevuse haarama kinni uutest teadmistest ning on võimeline neid vajaduse korral kasutama. *"Young people are able to learn and take hold of new knowledge from activities and are able to use them when necessary."*	LC
Y	jagada üldteadmisi, mis kunagi elus kahjuks ei tule *"to share general knowledge, which, never in my life do not harm"*	LC