

Expeditions & Teaching



Doing both and
staying sane



FREE EXPEDITION RESOURCES

To receive a free email bulletin of ideas and resources, enquire about help in running your expedition programme, or **request more free copies of this minibook**, visit:

www.outspark.co.uk

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Introduction

One of my teaching colleagues was known as “The Teflon Queen”, because any work that came her way, she would slide off onto the rest of us.

Teachers who end up running DofE are often the opposite of The Teflon Queen. Usually, they are work magnets - they care about pupils’ overall development as well as their own subject, and they have a reputation for getting things done. So whenever a new initiative comes up, it gets sent their way.

It can get overwhelming. In my last year teaching full-time, I had 89 DofE participants, 51 Year 8 campers, 28 classes, 20 Year 9 canoeists and 18 teaching rooms. Al Gore’s “An Inconvenient Truth” got watched a lot in citizenship that year!

Things would have been less hectic if I’d already collected all the ideas in this book. It contains many of the “hacks” I have found to make expeditions easier to combine with teaching. They’ve been learned over the 120 or so expeditions I’ve run personally, and the experience of my colleagues at Outspark, the DofE Approved Activity Provider I set up after leaving teaching.

What this book isn’t

It’s not a technical guide to teaching navigation etcetera, as that ground is well covered already. Instead, it focuses on problems that are specific to expeditions in school: ensuring the pupils who benefit the most get to do it, motivating them, communicating

with parents and the powers-that-be. The last section focuses on the “Teams of Doom” that can absorb much of your energy on expeditions.

Because of that, this book might seem negative. But if you’re reading it, you know what a refreshing break DofE is from an increasingly pressured school culture. Expeditions create some of the best memories of school, for both participants and leaders. So I’m assuming you are as enthusiastic as I am, and that I can focus on troubleshooting without putting you off.

I hope you find the ideas in this book useful. There are lots more resources and advice available if you sign up for the free Expedition Leader bulletin at www.outspark.co.uk. Each issue is a bite-size article, about the size of a page in this book. Over the year we’ll look at teaching navigation, team dynamics, expedition reces, expedition aims and more.

You are also welcome to get in touch by phone or email for free expedition advice, whether you do everything in-house or are seeking an AAP to provide extra staff or run your programme.

Best wishes,
Jason Buckley

Managing Director
Outspark Ltd

Forget-It Planning

In most families that celebrate it, the last few days before Christmas are a mayhem of shopping, present-wrapping, cooking, card-writing and sprucing up. So if your mother-in-law visits during the making of the Christmas cake and breezily says, "Oh. I always make mine the year before," the brandy may be needed early in the recipe...

As a teacher, you already have far more detail to carry around in your head than the vast majority of people. How many other jobs require you to directly manage a team of 30, let alone a dozen teams of 30, and to know their names and give them *weekly* appraisals?

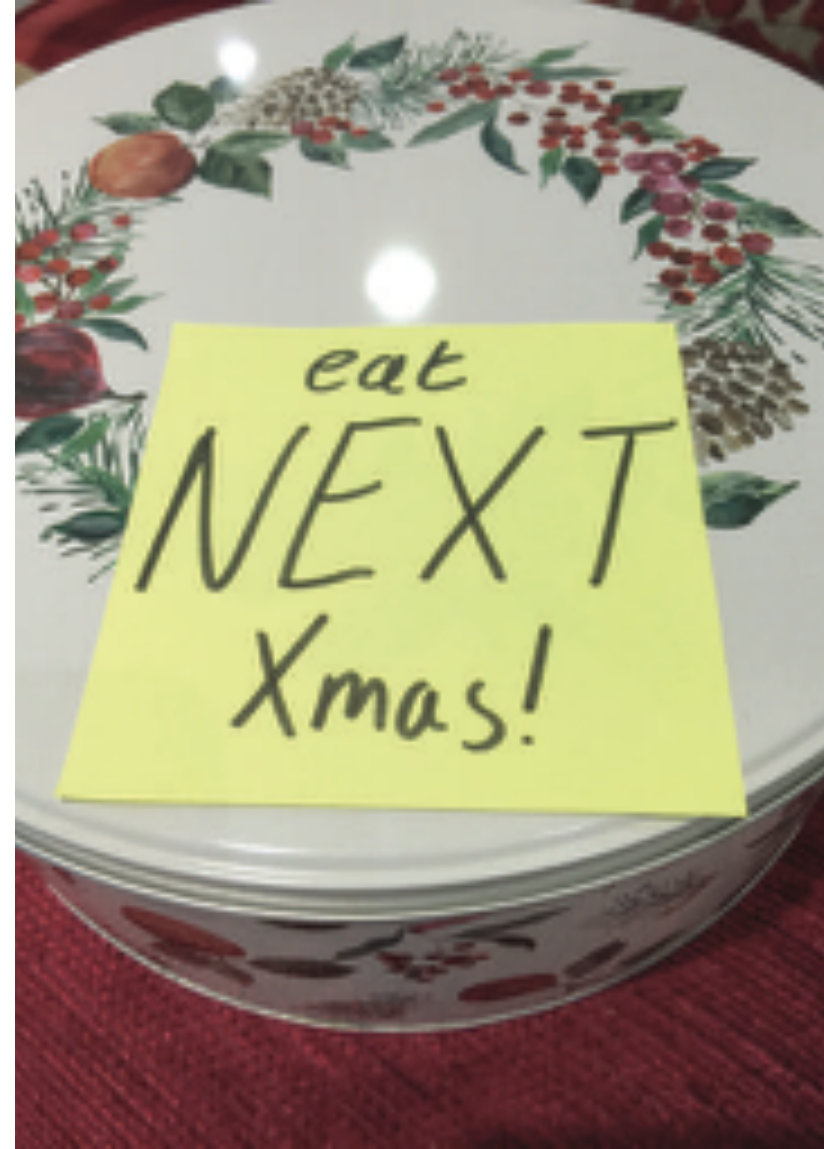
So what you need when juggling DoFE expeditions and teaching is to do each thing so far in advance that it seems almost ridiculous, and then forget about it. When the stages of recruitment, forming teams and training are spaced out and separate, it's simple. When they are rushed or overlapping, everything becomes much harder.

In this section, we'll look at how to make each of these three stages easier:

Timely recruitment - **Start Before You Finish**

Forming teams - **Start with Sevens**

Structuring training - **Slabs, not Slices**



eat
NEXT
Xmas!

5 **Start Before you Finish**

Imagine your school offers its Year 11s a brilliant course on “How To Motivate Yourself”. To sign up for it, all you have to do is get to school an hour early and be first in the queue...

It's pretty obvious that the people who showed up first would be those least in need of the course. Yet with some schools that have to ration places on expeditions, that's more or less what happens. There's an invite to join this great programme that helps you develop independence and organisation. Who gets their parents to sign the forms and pay the deposit first? The kids who are already independent and organised.

Running a large Bronze programme, I often find it's the very last participants to sign up who gain the most. They may well end up being “The Team of Doom”, but they have more to learn. It's very satisfying to see their pride in their final achievement.

Ideally, you wouldn't have to ration places and everyone would get to do it, but something that will always help more of those less likely participants to get involved is to start the whole DofE cycle a long way in advance.

In fact, start before you finish

Before one year's expeditions even begin, you should already be alerting the next cohort to the opportunity they're going to have. Run a quick video in an assembly, send out a preliminary message to parents with the dates, and encourage form tutors to mention it to particular pupils they think will benefit.

That way, you warm them up to DofE before they're asked to sign up for it. Then get them signed up at the earliest opportunity, before your current expedition cycle has finished. It gives them time to complete their other sections and to save up if necessary for kit and expedition costs. It allows you to book venues and arrange staff way in advance, rebooking venues as you visit each one. Nothing is rushed and recruitment, forming teams and training are separate stages rather than being mixed up together.

Here's one example annual cycle

SEP	Bronze team formation. Chivvy on other sections.
JAN	Next year's: Teaser Assembly
MAR	Reminder Briefing about Bronze Training Next year's: recruitment
APR	Bronze Training Weekend
MAY	Bronze Practice
JUN	Bronze Qualifying Next year's: final deadline for recruitment, select priority applicants, draw for remaining places.
JULY	Bronze Presentations Next year's: participants confirm and are registered.

Start with Sevens

Do you remember the old-school way of “picking up teams” in games? You’d have two captains, who would alternate choosing players, starting with the athletes and leaving a shrinking pool of weeds and fatties to last. As a fatty myself for my teenage years, I can remember the ignominy and suspense as I waited to find out if I’d be the very last person to be picked.

But then, once the teams have been picked, the uncertainty is over and you get on with the game. That’s the point at which the arbitrary collection of people that have been picked begin to work as a team, and the game becomes real.

Expeditions only become real once you’re part of a team

Until then, it’s just another thing you’re doing at school. It lacks urgency, and participants have the unsettling uncertainty about who they will be with. As soon as they are in teams, they have an identity, and all the training becomes something “we” are doing towards “our” expedition, and not just something else to learn about after a day at school. So form teams at the very first meeting, and as far as possible make them teams of seven.

Why sevens?

I once had a Gold team of mainly “CV hunters” who appeared never to have seen a tree in the wild. As they flaked off after their UCAS forms had been sent, their team shrank. Unfortunately, as they were a team of six at the start, they ended up with only

three members. A fourth had to transfer in for their qualifying expedition, disrupting another team. So one good reason for sevens is to guard against dropping below the minimum of 4.

It also speeds up the process of team formation and ensures that everyone finds a place. With the constraint that a team is of seven people, it's no longer possible for four people to say, "we don't want her" and leave someone teamless. And of course, teams of seven means fewer groups to remotely supervise.

When you have fewer than 25 participants, it can sometimes be better to have a different default number for a team:

6 is best for: 11, 12, 17, 18, 23, 24 or 25

5 is best for 10,15,16, 22

In each case the maths works out so that either one or two teams are short, or there are one or two left at the end who have a free choice of which teams to join - ideal to give the less popular participants a choice of where to fit. But you'll always avoid teams of four, which are vulnerable if someone drops out.

To confirm the teams, get each participant to write their name on a sheet of A4 using a marker pen. Then get a team photo rather like a communal mugshot, with all of them holding up their names. It gives a feeling of finality and will be useful later for assessors or leaders who don't know the team. And in your next session, you'll be training teams, not individuals.

Slabs Not Slices

A teaching guru visited a friend's school. One of his bright ideas was that every lesson, every ten minutes, the teacher should sound a musical instrument she had chosen, and all the kids should get up and move around. After the first day of being gonged, triangled and football-rattled every ten minutes, Year 11 arrived in my friend's classroom.

"I like you miss, but blow that vuvuzela and I'll kick off."

The guru was coming at it from the idea that children can't sustain concentration and need to constantly channel-hop from one activity to another. I'm not sure that's true anywhere, but the wisdom of breaking everything up into small slices is certainly questionable in expedition training.

When I started out, I followed the model I'd inherited from the previous DofE leader, of a long series of short after-school sessions. But the kids were tired and often had conflicting commitments, which made it hard to ensure consistent training.

Then we shifted to a smaller number of longer after-school sessions.

Then we shifted to two full training Saturdays on different weekends.

Then to a single training weekend.

That's when it became much, much easier. Being with your friends is a big part of the appeal of DofE, so an after-school chore was replaced by a weekend away. Teaching anything about navigation in a classroom is artificial, and even route planning is easier away, when you have a captive and motivated audience. Everything feels more real when it's done in the field.

Make better mistakes

The biggest difference a training weekend makes is in the usefulness of the mistakes they can make. You can cook a lousy meal or put up your tent sloppily in an after-school session, but you don't really feel the consequences, so it's all a bit "let's pretend". Being hungry or wet is a better teacher!

Make sure the training weekend includes the opportunity to walk with a full pack. They won't bring the three extra sets of spare clothes mum has packed again if they carry them on a six mile walk on the Sunday. You can tell them how heavy a rucksack will feel, and they can try one on, but they won't know how it feels until they do it for real.

Of course, a training weekend means finding staff for another occasion. But it has a knock on effect on the expedition weekends, making staff's job easier because the participants are already experienced. The general principle is, rather than slicing it thinly, do training in the smallest number of the thickest slabs you can, and the participants won't need you to blow on a vuvuzela every ten minutes to keep them engaged.

Forget-It Planning

By planning way in advance, you can pick up your expedition work and put it down again without having to constantly worry about details.

Start Before You Finish

The kids who should be first in the queue will be the last to apply, so give them lots of time and prioritise their applications if you have to ration places.

Recruit next year's cohort before this year's expeditions finish.

Then you won't have recruits joining after you've formed groups, or need to start training before the groups have settled.

Start with Sevens

Don't keep people in suspense waiting to be "picked".

It's not real until you're in a team. So form teams early.

Sevens if you can - fewer groups, and everyone finds a place.

Get team mugshots to make it official and for reference later.

Slabs not Slices

Use the smallest number of the longest sessions you can.

That way, you'll get better attendance and motivation.

Have a training weekend if you can. It's all more real in the field.

Mistakes have bigger consequences in the field, so create better learning.

Yes it's another weekend - but it makes the others much easier.

¹³ Compass Communications

When you teach use of the compass at Bronze, a lot of the focus is on north - "get the norths lined up", "put red Fred in his shed" or whatever language you use. The main point is to get the map set. You can worry about bearings, general direction of travel and so on later.

In communications, the participants are the "north" of the expedition. They are where your focus is, after all they are the whole point of it.

But there are also parents and staff to worry about, and the powers-that-be back at school, who have the potential to make the whole thing go south. For each of them, different information is important, and it's easy to neglect them while you concentrate on the participants' experience.

In this section, we'll look at how to communicate most effectively with each of these groups, getting them the information they need, getting responses you need and making sure everyone feels noticed, involved and valued - including you.

Idiotprove Communications - pre-trip paperwork for parents.

Fifth Person Briefings - with participants and leaders together.

Thank You and Please - it pays (maybe in cash!) to be polite.

PARTICIPANTS

PARENTS

STAFF



"THE POWERS THAT BE"

15 **Idiotprove Paperwork**

In architectural drawing, if you need to update something on the plans, you use a 'revision' symbol. The symbol is a cloud bubble that sits on the design and has text inside it detailing the revision. Unfortunately, if someone doesn't understand the symbol, this is what happens.



It shows that no communication is idiot proof against mistakes. But you can communicate so that someone who makes a mistake proves he's an idiot!

It also draws attention to an important principle. Telling people how to do it right is one thing; telling them a way they can't get wrong is another. Relying on people to have common sense works most of the time, but that gives you a false confidence that can trip you up when it comes to the exceptions.

There are two documents to parents and participants where this is especially important: kit lists and consent/medical forms

“I didn't bring a roll mat because I'm hard”

You generally want to encourage initiative and independence. But not when it comes to essential items of kit. It's particularly frustrating when you have spares of something, but someone takes it into his head that he doesn't need it and so doesn't ask.

But a kit list is quite long, and for a novice expeditioner it isn't obvious which things are essential and which he can do without. You can't make everything equally important, so pick out your top eight or so, and allow them to occupy half the space on the kit list. For us, it's boots, head torch, roll mat, water, waterproof jacket, waterproof leggings, rucksack, sleeping bag.

“If what he was doing was dangerous, why wasn't he supervised? If it wasn't dangerous, why did he fail?”

It's very rare that a group has to be deferred. It's even rarer for parents to complain. But very occasionally, those two things happen together.

So it's useful if your consent form covers such problems in advance. School forms are usually generic, designed to cover everything from a theatre visit to a French trip to a camembert factory. They aren't specific to DofE. So we now use our own consent form, including these statements:

I understand that during DofE expeditions, my child's team will often be remotely supervised. This means that, while the Organisers will have a plan in place to checkpoint the team, the team will often be self-sufficient and unaccompanied.

If the Organisers on the qualifying expedition decide that his/her team have not reached the standards required, the whole team may be deferred to another qualifying expedition. In this unlikely event, I will respect the Organisers' judgment.

"I didn't put "diabetic" on the form as it's not a problem."

A straightforward "Please give details of any medical conditions," won't always prompt full disclosure. The peril here is parents making their own judgment about what you need to know. So rather than a general catch-all request, have a comprehensive checklist where they have to actively say "no" to each key area.

It's only when people are telling you things you really don't need to know that you can be confident you're getting the full information. I knew we'd got the medical form right at last when someone said, "hospitalised age one for swallowing a button".

Editable word copies of all documents mentioned are in the first issue of the bulletin. Sign up for it free at www.outspark.co.uk.

MEDICAL INFORMATION

Please answer all questions. Please include any long-term conditions such as asthma or diabetes, even if they are currently well managed and cause you no problems.

Have you in the last 5 years had:

YES/NO Asthma/shortness of breath

YES/NO Diabetes

YES/NO Epilepsy, convulsions, fits or blackouts

YES/NO Mental health problems or anxiety

YES/NO Back problems

YES/NO High blood pressure/ heart problems

YES/NO Any other medical condition requiring a doctor's care

YES/NO Are you currently undergoing any medical investigations or suffering from any currently undiagnosed symptoms?

YES/NO Have you ever been admitted to hospital or suffered any major accident or illness?

YES/NO Do you take any medicines regularly?

ALLERGIES

YES/NO Penicillin or any other antibiotic

YES/NO Plaster/ elastoplast etc

YES/NO Any immunizations / other drugs

YES/NO Food (especially peanuts)

DIETARY INFORMATION

Does your diet require you to avoid

YES/NO Beef

YES/NO Pork

YES/NO All meat

YES/NO Anything else

YES/NO Fish

YES/NO Other? (Please give details)

19 Fifth Person Briefings

“Now we’re going to do 10 minutes silent writing.”

Are *we* really? You’re not, unless you’re working on your novel in school time. But the reason we use a “teacher’s we” is to soften commands and sound more inclusive and less bossy.

The problem that can easily develop on expeditions is one of inclusion too. Very often, the lead teacher is the one who knows everyone and everything: the participants, the leaders, the full supervision plan. Other leaders may have strong links to their own specific team, but not to the other participants.

Add to this that most expedition leaders will do two briefings, one to staff and one to participants, and you have a recipe for participants and staff being very separate with you in the middle.

It leads to you being doing more and the staff doing less, which makes you feel stretched and staff feel redundant. The focus of staff members easily shifts to one another rather than the participants, which can make helping out a very social experience but isn’t good for the quality of the expedition.

Instead, get all staff and participants together morning and evening for “Fifth Person” briefings. Address your briefing to the participants, but also say what staff are doing, in the third person:

“These are your times for leaving the site... Mr Denton will be at the first checkpoint for the teams going east, Miss Winter will be at the first checkpoint for teams going west. I’ll see you at ...”

You can cover the finer points of the supervision plan with the staff afterwards, but by bringing everyone together you create an inclusive feel. Everyone knows what's going on, and the participants are reminded of the contribution of all the staff that make the expedition possible, because as we'll see in the next section, thank yous are important.

What's the best time?

"Right, time for briefing? Where's Janelle's team?"

"Washing up. They want to go early."

"What about Mr Mundy?"

"Looking for newts."

"Alright, we'll do it when they get back..."

As soon as everyone is up, they each have their own things to get on with which are much more important to them than listening to your briefing. Nobody, staff or participants, wants to leave off cooking bacon to listen to you. So you're best to give your briefings as early as you can.

In the evening, do it just after the last team comes in and before they set up tents and start cooking. In the morning, start getting everyone together before the last people are out of tents. Then you can have a bit of chit chat while you wait for the stragglers to arrive, and when they do you can launch straight in without seeming abrupt.

Then you can finish, and people can get back to their bacon.

Thank You and Please

It's sometimes surprising at the end of an expedition, when participants have had an enjoyable weekend and parents some peace or the chance for some nookie, that you get so few thank-yous. You're not in it for compliments, but it seems bad manners.

But think about the timing at the end of the expedition: parents have a tired teenager whose reserves of sociability have been exhausted. Everyone's focus is on getting home.

So it's important to create a proper opportunity for people to say thanks, even if you're not bothered. It gives a clear, crisp finish to the experience rather than it just petering out.

Make sure nobody goes until kit has been collected/put back and any vehicles unloaded. Then do a final Fifth Person Briefing with everyone there, and parents in the background. Include anything parents need to know, such as, "Make sure your mum doesn't pack your bag next time," and finish by thanking the participants for being easy to work with, and the staff who made it possible.

Usually you'll get applause or a chorus of thanks. It tells staff they're appreciated and reminds parents they are volunteers.

But that's not the end of the thank yous

Establish a routine where you always send an end-of-trip email to the headteacher/SLT. Always mention the whole staff team and make a particular point of praising any participants who are

normally difficult customers at school. Ostensibly this is to let them know all is well, but it's also a chance to remind them of the extracurricular work that you and other staff are doing and its value for the wider work of the school.

Then if you have a staff briefing on Monday morning, ask for tolerance of any tired Year 10s etc. and name check your staff again. If there's a newsletter, be in it, and if you have an annual magazine, make sure your pictures grab a prime spot.

The “Thank You’s” help with the “Pleases”

When you are asking for new staff, you'll be more likely to get support if the expeditions are high profile. And then there's the issue of how the school recognises the time and energy you put into DofE. Some schools pay or give DofE leaders a lighter timetable. But even when that's not something you can negotiate, there are other ways the school can reward you.

- Ringfence your frees if exam classes are on study leave.
- Let you off from tutoring or giving you a co-tutor.
- Release you from any duties.
- Let you skive when there's INSET (unless I'm doing it!).
- Put your PPA on a Friday afternoon so you can go home.

DofE leaders are “can do” people - but just because you can, doesn't mean you should always have to. Remember the Teflon Queen from the introduction, and use the profile you've established for DofE through those public “thank you's” to lighten your load.

Compass Communications

Your attention naturally points to the participants. But clear and tailored communications with parents, leaders and “the powers that be” is important too.

Idiotproof Paperwork

Don't just produce paperwork people can get right: make it so it's (almost) impossible for tm to get it wrong.

Pick out your top eight from the kit list for special emphasis: what do they sometimes forget or bring taht is inadequate and causes hassle?

Does your consent form guard against whingeing parents?

Does your medical declaration make people disclose even the things you don't need to know? That's when it's working.

Fifth Person Briefings

Avoid being the go-between between staff and participants.

Get everyone together - participants and staff - morning and evening, as early as you can.

Speak to the participants, but detail what staff are doing in the third person. "Miss Winter will be at..."

Thank You and Please

Don't let expeditions peter out - thank everyone and give others the opportunity to do so.

Thank staff in an email to SLT/the head after every expedition, praising any "difficult" kids that deserve it too.

Thanks staff again in briefing, in newsletters, on noticeboards, in the yearbook... anywhere you can.

Don't be shy in saying "please" - there are more ways your effort can be recognised than pay or free periods.

The Team of Doom

“Oh no! I’ve got 8 Green next!”

Out of four form groups in each year, there’s usually one that everybody knows is the short straw for last period on a Friday. It’s amazing how groups of thirty in the same year at the same school, thrown together randomly or even carefully chosen for balance, can be so different to one another.

Sometimes a few strong characters lead a form team astray; sometimes because there are no strong characters no pecking order arises, and the team are unsettled as everyone continues to jostle for social position.

Teams are even more varied on expeditions. If you have four teams, the chances are that three of them will sail through, making mistakes they learn from but not causing undue concern.

And then there’s the Team of Doom. Late to leave, and later to arrive, managing to get lost in places where it’s impossible to get lost, and sometimes making slower progress than a milestone carried by the wind.

In this section, we look at an easy way to identify if you might have a Team of Doom on your hands, and to get some clues as to where their difficulties will lie. Then there’s a spotter’s guide to some of the Teams of Doom you might come across, with suggestions for helping them.

Diagknotstic

This builds on the popular Human Knot team activity. The team members start in a circle, shaking hands with someone else across the circle. They then do the same with the other hand, connecting to two different people at the same time, until they form a human knot, with arms tangled together. The challenge is to untangle without breaking contact.



It takes patience and communication. Depending on how they've connected, they may finish up in two circles, which may be linked in a chain, or with some people facing outwards, all of which are fine. Most teams will manage OK. But this is only round one.

From the second round, start adding in complications, such as:

- One person faces out
- One person is blindfolded, or wears a hoodie back to front.
- Only one person can speak.
- Someone's right foot takes the place of his right hand.
- Two feet from different people are tied together.

After a couple of rounds of escalating difficulty, get them to choose their own challenge, making it as difficult for themselves as they dare. This is the most informative part of the activity. You can learn a lot from their decisions and reactions to how it goes.

Groups that cheerfully get themselves into an immense tangle and persist with trying to resolve it will probably breeze through their expeditions. It's not important if they succeed or not. What is telling is how they respond as a group to difficulty, whether they relish it, or whether they want to do the minimum and give up easily or lack focus.

If a group are a disaster at it, or are easily demoralised, you may have identified your Team of Doom. Of course, a single activity can't tell you the whole story, but listed opposite are some of the types you'll encounter if you run expeditions long enough, and their typical patterns of behaviour during the Diagnostic. More details of each type and how to help them are given in the rest of this section.

Time Liner - Bossy but people may not listen; frustrated by others larking around; wants to complete the task you set but not keen to complicate it and fail.

Time Dotter - Has a lot of fun, not very bothered about completing the task, easily distracted from it

The Leftovers - Poor communication, give up easily, blame each other, no appetite for challenging themselves -

The Besties - Either all lark around together, or if they scent a competition work together to do better than the other teams.

The Odd Man Out - may not want to participate at all, or is more interested in what another group are doing. May try to connect with the people either side to make his job easier.

The Ghosts - very quiet, little communication, very tentative. Certainly don't pull each other about or break the rules, but lack initiative and seem to be waiting for someone else to tell them what to do.

Dictator and Followers - one overbearing person issues commands. Others reluctant to dispute his ideas even if they are not working. If you add the complication that he can't speak, he fumes silently.

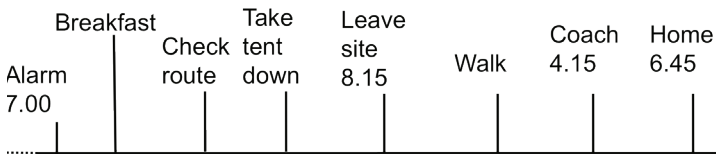
29 Time Line vs. Time Dot

For some teens, time stretches out ahead of them into the future. For others there's the present moment, and that's about it. The graphic below is how time appears on the Saturday morning of an expedition to a Time Liner vs. a Time Dotter.

Time Liners are the kids who ask you what time they will get back before you've even left the school. On the training, they'll want to know what assessors will be looking for before they've even put up a tent. They always have one eye on the future, and don't like wasting time.

Time Dotters are the kids who have no sense of urgency. Why should they? There's no time except the present, and right now they're kicking a football around. Yes, it's getting dark and they haven't eaten but... Look, a frisbee!

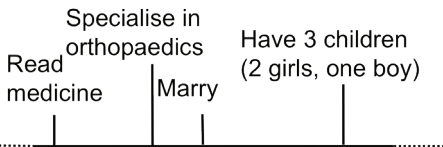
There are advantages and disadvantages to either attitude to time. Time Dotters can be disorganised, have to panic at the last minute, and seem unreliable; but they can be fun to be around, and know how to relax. Time Liners can be old before their time, rather joyless and anxious, but also dependable and efficient.



The real difficulty is when you have opposite attitudes within the same team. From a Time Liner's perspective, a Time Dotter will appear lazy, and a hindrance on completing the project. To a Time Dotter, a Time Liner acts like a teacher, bossing him around and killing the fun.

The best way to address such tensions is to help them to get insight into their own character and one another's. If they are aware that they have different attitudes to time, they can meet one another in the middle. The Time Liner can accept that it isn't essential for their team to be first out and first to finish - that it isn't a race or a military mission. The most important thing for him to recognise is, "I'm not the adult in charge here."

The Time Dotter can recognise how frustrating he is for someone with a greater sense of urgency, and agree to switch into "machine mode" when something really needs doing. As with most problem teams, it's also good for them to make things explicit that would just happen in other teams - who's doing what, when. Otherwise Time Liners, wanting a faster pace than Time Dotters, will end up doing most of the work and resent it.



It's nice
and warm
in here



The Leftovers

When you take the team photos, most people will be smiling. But if you see a team with miserable expressions as though they've just been arrested, you may be looking at The Leftovers.

Often, they're the last team to form: either they didn't quite squeeze in to a team with their friendship team, or they don't have friends doing expeditions in the first place. Coupled with not knowing, or perhaps knowing and not liking one another, is the depressing thought that they weren't popular enough to push their way into a team they wanted to be in.

This team may not naturally have much conversation with another, which won't help them develop as a team. They may walk strung out, as there's no shared chit chat to keep them together. Ten minutes into a training walk with one team, I realised they hadn't exchange a single word. So I introduced them to a game ideal for getting people talking.

The Log of Shame

Picking up a sizeable lump of wood, I explained, "Whoever has the log of shame has to keep carrying it until he can get someone else to say yes, no, black or white. Do you understand the rules?"

Usually someone replies, "Yes," and the game is afoot. People adopt increasingly sophisticated strategies to trick people into saying one of the forbidden words. Of course, you have to have

an additional rule that you can't stay silent, and to play the game with sportsmanship you need to answer quickly and take risks.

Some teams change very quickly with this game: banter revolves around a shared language, and you are kick-starting the process by giving them a game to play.

Give them a structure

Something else they'll be missing out on is an established way of talking with one another to organise things. In natural friendship teams, there's usually a leader or at least people are comfortable enough with one another that they'll cheerfully boss one another around, ask for help, and voice any resentments about someone being lazy before it becomes an issue.

With *The Leftovers*, there's no established pattern of talk which they can adapt to the demanding purposes of navigation decisions and organising themselves. So it can be helpful to work a little more closely with them, establishing more formal processes for taking decisions and allocating roles. Make more of a thing of people in pairs taking charge of legs of the journey, and encourage them to set up a rota for cooking etc.

After a while, these things may start to happen more automatically as they would with an established team of friends, but having a structure at the beginning will accelerate that, and avoid early disagreements which are hard to repair.

The Besties

The besties are the opposite of the Leftovers. This a team, probably with lots of extrovert characters, who are delighted to be in each other's company and are having a great time together. The banter keeps on going and because of that...

...so do they, straight past the footpath they were meant to take. They get so wrapped up in each other that they lack awareness of what's around them and the passage of time, and have much more interesting things to talk about than navigation.

Often quite sporty and physically capable, these teams can be helped by giving them a more competitive focus. If they struggle on the first day because they're not paying attention, challenge them to overtake another team on the second day. The togetherness that makes them oblivious to navigational cues can be harnessed to give them a united purpose.

Another tactic is to make sure they are very formal about having a pair of navigators for each leg, and for those two to be "pilots" walking slightly ahead of the team and concentrating on the navigation. Because they'll still want to be talking and communicating, they'll share their thinking and make considered decisions.

The next team don't have a problem with being too connected to each other. Quite the opposite!

The Odd Man Out

Sometimes a team works well, except for one person - the Odd Man Out. Often it's because they really wanted to be with another team, but seven is the most you can have. So they spend all three weekends rather wishing they were in their first choice team, and will gravitate back to it at every opportunity.

Sometimes they've joined a team of six friends to make up the numbers, or because they couldn't find a team of their own, so they can feel somewhat excluded. Or they might be rather eccentric or socially inept and tend to exclude themselves. Whatever the cause, instead of a team of 7 the team is 6 +1.

The first tactic here is to emphasise separation between teams. As you should anyway, make sure that teams are well-staggered if they share similar routes, and if your odd man out wanted to be in a different team, make sure they are well apart. In camp, make sure the tents for each team are closer to each other than they are to the tents of any other team.

The second tactic is to encourage togetherness within the team: if possible, get them to camp in a couple of larger tents rather than being split up too much. Get them to share food rather than being "every man for himself", even if your odd man out is also hard to please with communal food. And ensure the purpose of their expedition is something that either requires all seven at once, or where your odd man out has a particular role that puts him at the centre of things.

The Ghosts

Some people are quiet. Just as well, as a world full of loudmouths would be intolerable. But when a whole team are very quiet, it can be like dealing with a visitation of silent spectres, who haunt the expedition rather than being an active part of it.

Sometimes they won't talk enough to take decisions. They can be shy about asking for help when they don't understand something, which leads to uneven learning. They can also end up falling out with one another, because they seethe quietly instead of speaking up. And as nobody is inclined to take the lead, they can lack direction - literally.

If you stick to teams of seven where possible, you're unlikely to have a whole team of Ghosts. The most extreme team I've had like this was a team of four, before I started enforcing the sevens rule. The general approach is to encourage the team to be more communicative. Use the prompt repeatedly, "Say what you're thinking," during navigation training and campcraft.

But with this particular team, I resorted to getting them to stand at long intervals in a field, with the person closest tasked with shouting an imaginative insult at the person furthest away, to be relayed by those in between, and the same in reverse. They enjoyed it, got to use their lungs for a change, it gave them something to laugh about, and it marked a turning point for them. They passed their qualifying expedition very successfully, having improved their communication, and took a bit of extra confidence back to school with them.

Dictators and Followers

Some people have such strong personalities, others will follow them anywhere. Even the wrong way.

You might spot The Dictator during the Diagnostic. They'll be issuing commands, and people will probably follow them. Other people's strategies, even if better thought out, will be pushed aside.

If a team is under the influence of a Dictator, you need to help them stage a revolution. Go so far as to get them to have a rota for the "captain" of the team, or encourage them to take decisions by vote rather than just following one person's ideas.

If you can encourage them to distribute leadership more evenly across the team, you'll be doing the Dictator a favour as well: overbearing people rarely enjoy true popularity, and relaxing into being a follower some of the time will extend his or her social range.

If that still isn't working, ask the Dictator to spend half a day being a "puppet": only doing as he's asked, taking no part in decisions and just following the crowd.

With the opposite problem, if a team contains Followers who never take responsibility, you can ask all the more proactive members of the team to be puppets for half a day, so that it falls to the Followers to take the initiative.

The Team of Doom

Good teachers know their classes, and make adjustments for them.

Good expedition leaders do the same for their teams.

Use an activity such as Diagknotstic to get to know your teams.

- Start simple
- Make it complicated.
- Let them choose their challenge.

It will help you identify which teams might need some extra support.

There's especial satisfaction in seeing the Team of Doom gain in confidence, and they will take enormous pride in no longer being the weakest team.

Oh, and one thing - don't let them know they're "The Team of Doom", at least until they're not!

Time Liner - "I'm not the adult in charge here."

Time Dotter - I can turn on machine mode when my team need me.

The Leftovers - The "Log of Shame" and formalised communication.

The Besties - Harness their team spirit - overtake a group tomorrow.

The Odd Man Out - Be closer to each other than any other team, and always eat together.

The Ghosts - "Say what you're thinking", and long-distance insults for tough cases!

Dictator and Followers - captains, voting and "puppets".

About the Author

After a philosophy degree and running various businesses, I became a secondary teacher of English and Citizenship. As I'd been a keen Scout in my youth and enjoyed hillwalking, I took on running DofE and continued to do so through Outspark after I left teaching.

My role at Outspark is to build relationships with new schools so that we can help them establish a tradition of high quality outdoor education. The other two directors of the company are both old boys of our flagship school, and we are very keen on developing young people into future leaders. I also write content for our free bulletin of expedition resources and ideas for teachers. You can sign up for it at **www.outspark.co.uk**

When I'm not doing outdoor stuff, including caving which is a particular passion, I run two other education businesses. As The Philosophyman, I run pupil workshops and INSET in P4C (Philosophy for Children) - see **www.thephilosophyman.com**

I'm also Director of Studies at GIFT, Europe's leading provider of residential and day courses for gifted children of primary and secondary age (Gold residential,. See **www.giftcourses.co.uk**

Thanks for reading and do get in touch for free advice on your expedition programme, or if you would like help from an AAP in delivering your expeditions My mobile is **07843 555355** or email **jason@outspark.co.uk**


About Outspark

We are an Approved Activity Provider for the Expedition section of the Duke of Edinburgh's Award at Bronze, Silver and Gold levels. We also run camping multi-activity trips for KS3 and leadership development programmes for Year 11 and 6th Form.

At our flagship school, over 250 pupils each year take part in our programme. We work with single sex and mixed, state and private schools and are looking for new schools to work with.

- 10 years DofE experience.
- Highly experienced trip leaders. Many work internationally.
- Instructors chosen for their rapport with young people as well as technical skills.
- Emphasis on challenge and quality, not just getting through.
- Particular attention to groups that are struggling, drawing on wide range of personal development approaches.





Written from first-hand experience of juggling the hectic jobs of teacher and expedition leader, this minibook is packed with practical ideas to make your life easier.