

Laws of Expeditionary Learning

by [Amy Frykholm](#) in the [April 15, 2015](#) issue

Read the main article on [the Expeditionary Learning model](#).

Seven Laws of Salem

These educational principles, influential in the development of Expeditionary Learning in the United States, were developed by Kurt Hahn at the Salem Castle School in Germany in about 1930.

1. Provide young people the chance to discover themselves and face challenges.
2. Provide young people with the experience of both victory and defeat.
3. Teach them to put pursuit of the common good before personal ambition.
4. Make time for silence, make space for contemplation.
5. Train imagination and the ability to look ahead and plan.
6. Take sports and games seriously, but do not let them dominate.
7. Liberate the children of the rich and the powerful from the paralyzing awareness of their privilege.

Principles of Expeditionary Learning

Outward Bound and other Expeditionary Learning programs have developed these principles, based on Kurt Hahn's original "laws."

1. Primacy of Self-Discovery

Learning happens best with emotion, challenge, and the requisite support. People discover their abilities, values, passions, and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. In Expeditionary Learning schools, students undertake tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement. A teacher's primary task is to help students

overcome their fears and discover that they can do more than they think they can.

2. The Having of Wonderful Ideas

Teaching fosters curiosity about the world by creating situations that provide something important to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed.

3. The Responsibility for Learning

Learning is both a personal process of discovery and a social activity.

4. Empathy and Caring

Learning is fostered best in communities where students' and teachers' ideas are respected and where there is mutual trust, where older students mentor younger ones, and students feel physically and emotionally safe.

5. Success and Failure

All students need to be successful if they are to build the confidence and capacity to take risks and meet increasingly difficult challenges. But it is also important for students to learn from their failures, to persevere when things are hard, and to learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.

6. Collaboration and Competition

Individual development and group development are integrated so that the value of friendship, trust, and group action is clear. Students are encouraged to compete not against each other, but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.

7. Diversity and Inclusion

Both diversity and inclusion increase the richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and respect for others.

8. The Natural World

A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and teaches the important ideas of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards of the earth and of future generations.

9. Solitude and Reflection

Students and teachers need time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections, and create their own ideas. They also need to exchange their reflections with other students and with adults.

10. Service and Compassion

We are crew, not passengers. Students and teachers are strengthened by acts of service to others.