

# Value of the Traditional Sailing Training (Tall Ship) Experience

## Talking Points

Sail training takes many of the components of other land-based, outdoor adventure activities- such as overcoming challenges to achieve goals, working as a team, being isolated from the outside world, and learning new skills- but with factors that can potentially make the impacts of that experience stronger.

### 1. Specific factors Influencing the Tall Ship Experience:

- a. **“intense/Accelerated” experience** – Because sail training is continuous and residential in the most fundamental sense, (there is limited option to walk away once you are on board), benefits of activities might be intensified or seen more quickly than,, for example a regular weekly activity.
- b. **“Real” experience** – actions are seen as having real consequences with real purpose, rather than being abstract, virtual, or invented for the point of learning. The purpose of rules and boundaries, which may be challenging for some in everyday life, are clear.
- c. **“Risky” experience** – the perception of genuine risk (thou in reality, risk is very limited) means that participants feel reliant on staff and their peers to successfully complete the voyage. Participants have no choice but to put their trust in crew, and this is reciprocated and rewarded when participants are trusted with important responsibilities for the sailing of the ship.
- d. **“Different” experience** – being in a truly new and socially diverse environment (with no prior contact with the crew and potentially as a mixed group of participants) may mean participants are more likely to lose pre-conceptions of the limits of their own abilities and address habits reinforced by their normal, everyday environment. And because crew do not already know participants, they are able to challenge their perceived limits.
- e. **“Isolated” experience** – being totally away from home, without factors (like social media) that reinforce participants’ normal, everyday behaviors or the ability to walk away, means participants are more likely to be present and reflective.
- f. **“Peak” experience** – because of the intensity of the experience, memories may be stronger and therefore potentially have a longer lasting impact than comparable activities.
- g. **Quality of Delivering/Managing the Participant Experience**
  - i. Good quality delivery of the experience is important to achieving the intended impact. It depends on effective management of the “Activities” that drive participant experience, and more broadly, the quality of crew as facilitators and role models.
  - ii. Subsequently, selection and a good “fit” of crew and other participant-facing staff who will treat participants with respect and consideration or their abilities will set the best conditions for success.

**2. Activities, reinforced by the above factors that contribute to the Tall Ship Experience fall into these categories.**

**a. Self-Knowledge and Personal development**

- i. Participants are set challenging but achievable goals requiring them to apply new skills in an environment that often takes them outside their comfort zone. (list your favorite examples)
- ii. Completing tasks they didn't want to try or felt they couldn't complete, can create increased resilience, personal discipline and boost participants' belief in what they are capable of achieving. (list your favorite examples)
- iii. In longer term, experiencing these activities can contribute to participants developing a "can-do" attitude, feeling more motivated or resourceful when they face challenges. (list your favorite examples)

**b. Knowledge and learning**

- i. **Acquiring New knowledge and Skills;** During a voyage, participants learn about a range of things including sailing skills, domestic chores, food hygiene, and the environment. Any of these tasks can require participants to employ critical thinking to solve problems. (list your favorite examples)
- ii. **Learn it and then Practice it;** Putting learning into practice can be more engaging; on a voyage, participants can immediately see the impact of the decisions they make. Consequently, participants may have a stronger sense of purpose for learning and greater motivation to learn new skills. (list your favorite examples)
- iii. Combined with personal development activities outlined above, these experiences are likely to improve young peoples' aspirations and contribute to their being more engaged in learning. (list your favorite examples)

**c. Social skills**

- i. Sharing living space in close quarters, sleeping in the same room and eating meals together is an intense social experience. The result can be the creation of lasting friendships and an increased appreciation for patience, respect and tolerance of others in order to create a positive social environment. (list your favorite examples)
- ii. Participants also have to work effectively as a team facing common challenges to complete tasks necessary for the voyage. Successful achievement to team goals helps participants to value good team work and creates a stronger sense of team/community. (list your favorite examples)

- iii. The risky environment evokes feelings of vulnerability and discomfort. It acts as a leveler, intensifying the impact of close social environment and team work. Participants are more likely to feel reliant on their peers and crew for their wellbeing and safety. (list your favorite examples)
- iv. Sharing feelings of vulnerability and mutual reliance can result in a stronger sense of equality, particularly where participants support each other through common challenges, like seasickness. Participating in a voyage with people from diverse social or ethnic backgrounds can help bridge social gaps. (list your favorite examples)
- v. Intense socialization, team work, and equality of social interaction results in a strong sense of community where social differences and reputations of “normal life’ become less important. Participants may have more respect for, and sensitivity towards their peers; social differences are more easily bridged. (list your favorite examples)
- vi. Positive social experiences may also impact participants’ sense of personal identity and promote self-awareness, as they begin to see themselves as they are seen by their peers and staff aboard, rather ` the identities they hold in “real life.” (list your favorite examples)

**3. A successful Tall Ship (Traditional Sail Training) Experience should drive some desired Outcomes for participants. Outcomes are comprised of Intermediate (include changes in attitudes, beliefs and skills), and Longer Term Outcomes. Intermediate Outcomes are the most measurable, and have been validate by a number of tools.**

**a. Intermediate Outcomes typically include:**

- i. **Pride and sense of achievement**
- ii. **Increased self-confidence and belief in one’s self**
- iii. **Self-esteem**
- iv. **Self-reliance/independence**
- v. **Resilience**
- vi. **Self-control/personal discipline**
- vii. **Appreciating value of teamwork and cooperation**
- viii. **Respect for and understand others**
- ix. **Broadened perspective**
- x. **Increased knowledge/awareness of different social groups and increased ability to bridge social differences**
- xi. **Organizational skills and Time management**

- xii. **Critical thinking skills**
  - xiii. **Knowledge of and Respect for the environment**
  - xiv. **Domestic skills, Sailing Skills, Food hygiene**
- b. Longer Term Outcomes are the sustained changes resulting from the Tall Ship Experience**
- i. **Usually no knowable way to measure for long period of time.**
  - ii. **Longer term outcomes tend to be influenced by a number of other factors over time i.e. school, family. <sup>i</sup>**
  - iii.

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Source: Extracted from “ASTO theory of Change, evidence review and measurement framework”  
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