



## LESSON 11 • Perspectives on Leadership

### Objectives:

Students will:

- define leadership and judgement and what role they play in the leadership process.
- brainstorm and identify leadership traits.
- recognize and identify leadership styles in others as well as in themselves.

### Background:

A “**Leader**” is defined as “one who influences the behavior of others and helps them reach their common goals and objectives. The leader may direct or guide people into action with a resulting change or improvement in knowledge, skill, or attitude” (Ford & Blanchard, 1993).

**Leadership** can be defined as “a process that assists an individual or group to identify goals and objectives and to achieve them.” **Outdoor leadership** means that “the setting and program focus are directly related to the natural or cultural environment” (Drury and Bonney, 1992).

What would you expect of an outdoor leader? Your list might include friendly, easy to get along with, both interested and excited about the program. The person should have a good basic understanding of the terrain, the weather, and the potential hazards of the activity. The leader should be aware and concerned about environmental issues and should role model and teach “Leave No Trace” practices. The leader should understand basic psychological and physical needs. A high level of knowledge, skill, and experience in the activity is needed. Knowledge and experience with backcountry first aid and search and rescue are appropriate skills for a leader. The leader should also be able to assume responsibility for all aspects of the trip including: navigating, preparing meals, putting up the tent, personal sanitation practices, and ability to teach and guide others in mastering these responsibilities. It is the leader’s responsibility to be aware of current changes in the pursued activity. Another important consideration is the leader’s willingness and ability to control and lead (or teach) the group adequately.

The following activities provide opportunities for students to begin thinking about what qualities and traits are important for people in outdoor leadership roles. They will be given a scenario where they are engaged in learning a new and challenging sport and asked what they would expect of their leader. Activity 4 provides a post-field trip exercise in applying critical thinking and analysis skills where students are evaluating leadership traits and qualities in their group that surfaced on the field trip.



## **Activity 1: Qualities of an Outdoor Leader**

**Materials:**

- chalkboard or flip chart
- markers and tape
- student handout: “Leadership Qualities and Traits”

**Duration:** 1 class period

**Location:** classroom

**Procedure:**

1. Divide the class into small working groups. Ask each group to select a recorder and a presenter. Assign groups the following task: think of people in leadership roles locally, regionally, nationally, and/or internationally. These leaders can be contemporary or historical. Brainstorm a list of 20 leadership traits or qualities you think are important. After generating the list, number them in order of importance.
2. Reassemble for a large group discussion. Ask the presenter from each group to present the top 10 traits from their list.
3. After each group has reported the top ten traits, refine the list to reflect a 20-item master list. Now pose the question, would you select the same traits and qualities for an outdoor leader of a Wilderness expedition? Would the list change? As a large group, generate a master list of the top five traits and qualities. Now prioritize the items on the list. Post the list in the classroom.
4. Present students with the student handout “Leadership Qualities and Traits.” Generate discussion on how this list compares with the student generated list. Are the lists similar or very different? Why?

## **Activity 2: Developing GOOD Judgement**

**Materials:**

- student handout: “Developing GOOD Judgement,” pages 167-168.

**Duration:** 1 class period

**Location:** classroom

**Procedure:**

1. Ask students to read the handout “Developing GOOD Judgement.”

# SOCIAL STUDIES

## Leadership Skills



2. Conduct a group discussion after students complete the reading assignment. Ask them to assume they are expedition leaders responsible for the safety and instruction of a student group.

### Discussion Questions:

A. Leadership on a backcountry trip in wildlands involves some of the same factors as an expedition to a high peak in the Himalayas. What are the characteristics of your role as leader?

Possible responses: • teaching skills • logistics • safety • communications

B. You feel a close connection to the land and want your students to adopt a Leave No Trace ethic. How can you convey to them the desire to have a minimum impact?

### Possible response:

- affective learning—experiencing the emotion

C. You would like to encourage students to develop good judgement. You have taught them the skills they need. What can you do next?

### Possible responses:

- Have them practice skills with you observing and giving them feedback. Present them with real situations where they use their skills to make decisions.

### Examples of situations that can help develop judgement:

- Selecting a Leave No Trace campsite
- Planning a route for the day and estimating the time frame for that trip
- Finding a safe river crossing
- Dealing with a simulated first aid situation (make sure students understand it is a simulation and not real)

### Realistic situations could include:

- sprained ankle
- headache, nausea, dizziness
- cut
- approaching lightning
- unconscious person

D. You would like to develop a sense of unity and cohesion among your students. What can you do to foster this?

### Possible responses:

- Gather the group together in the morning before leaving camp and in the evening after arriving in camp.
- Play games together.
- Share stories.
- Do activities that build trust, both by sharing ideas and feelings in a noncompetitive environment and by doing activities demanding physical trust.



## **Activity 2: Developing Judgement**

### **STUDENT HANDOUT • Developing GOOD Judgement**

Sue Giller's thoughts on leading the all-women's Ama Dablam Expedition, 1982, as reflected in a series of letters to her friend Molly, published as the essay, *Post Card* in the anthology *Rock and Roses*.

"Indeed, I never really comprehended beforehand how much being the expedition leader would affect my participation in the climb. Certainly on my last two trips to the Himalaya I saw two distinctly different styles of leadership. I was often critical of how certain things were handled, and I thought of how I might handle those situations myself (better, of course). Now that I personally feel the burden of leadership, I begin to see how it changes the perspective of the leader about what is taking place on the trip. I am no longer just "one of the gang" but an embodiment of some unnamed and un-earned "authority", both within the group and to the Sherpas and the Nepalese government. I can no longer act only on my own desires. There is something here much bigger than me.

"I thought my job would largely entail logistics—all those detailed lists of equipment and food, budget projections, and timetables for the movement of people and material on the mountain. Yet I never predicted how all-consuming this attention to logistics would become. I now feel like a mobile computer whose main function is to see that the correct load is at the correct camp in proper time to be used by camps above.

"Because of my self-imposed perceptions of 'leadership' and 'the role of the leader,' I find myself experiencing this trip in a totally different way from any of my other big expeditions.

"The other day, Lucy and I were making a carry from camp I to camp II and we ended up traveling together. We talked about a lot of things, including the difficulty of the route, the best way to rig the fixed lines, how everyone was feeling about the food and each other, and what Lucy felt about the climb and the others. Normally, as a team member, I would just voice my own opinions, enjoy the time as a good gossip session, and not really think about the comments other than how they applied to me personally. This time, however, I found myself analyzing every comment, searching for insight into how team members were feeling. I kept wondering: how does this affect the group overall? Should I worry about so-and-so not liking someone else? What can I do about it? Are these comments signs of unhappiness and discontent with the operations of the trip or just normal grouching? How will all of this affect the achievement of the summit, our success as an expedition? Will Lucy take what I say as just a comment from a fellow climber, or will it be 'The Leader' speaking? We were no longer just two friends talking.

"I am extremely concerned with maintaining the elan on the team—its spirit and unity as a force helping us work together for the summit. As one of the climbers on other trips, I also worried

**(Continued on next page)**

## SOCIAL STUDIES

### Leadership Skills



**continued:**

about the sense of unity within the team, but I usually felt it was not my 'job' to try to maintain this unity, other than during my own one-to-one interactions with the other climbers. I am not the world's most communicative person, but I feel that the answer to resolving intergroup problems lies in open communications. It is the role of the leader to expedite discussions and to help relieve tensions by serving as a channel for the exchange of feelings among people."

*Sue's comments here illustrate the different demands on the leader of a group. The climb of Ama Dablam was successful—all eight women made it to the top without the help of sherpas and no one was hurt. There was relatively little conflict between climbers and the weather was threatening, but not stormy.*



### **Activity 3: Leadership Traits**

**Materials:**

- student handout: “Leadership Qualities and Traits,” page 171.

**Duration:** 1 class period

**Location:** classroom

**Procedure:**

1. This activity is best done after a field experience. If you are using lessons from the FIELD EXPERIENCE strand, this activity will compliment those lessons.
2. Before the activity, make two lists of leadership traits and personal qualities observed during the trip. Pick out at least one positive and one negative quality for each participant.
3. Divide the group in two and give each group a list of observed traits of the other group.
4. Split the groups up for a predetermined length of time (30-45 minutes) to do the next two tasks (#5 and #6).
5. Ask each group to match one of the traits with a member of the other group and give an example when the group member exhibited the quality in a positive way.
6. Ask each group to review the traits on their list and discuss which traits were exhibited during the trip.
7. Bring the groups back together to discuss what positive traits they found in the other group and what negative traits were offered within their own group.
8. Wrap up the discussion with an emphasis on:
  - a. The importance of observing leaders and working on improving ourselves
  - b. The importance of self-analysis
  - c. We all have both positive and negative traits

**Credit:**

*The Backcountry Classroom, Lesson Plans for Teaching in the Wilderness*, Jack K. Drury and Bruce F. Bonney

**Evaluation / Follow-up / Extension**

- Ask students to select an outdoor leader, either contemporary or historic to conduct research on. Prepare a research paper describing the adventure, expedition, or outdoor pursuit, the inherent risks and challenges, and traits and qualities the leader possessed. Students will also present this information to the class using props and other teaching aids.

# SOCIAL STUDIES

## Leadership Skills



### **Career Options:**

- instructor for NOLS, Outward Bound, or other outdoor experience, expedition leader, environmental educator, Wilderness ranger.

### **References:**

- *Leadership and Administration of Outdoor Pursuits*, Phyllis Ford and Jim Blanchard.
- *The Backcountry Classroom, Lesson Plans for Teaching in the Wilderness*, Jack K. Drury and Bruce F. Bonney.



### **Activity 3: Leadership Traits**

## **STUDENT HANDOUT**

## **Leadership Qualities and Traits**

**Personal Qualities:** poise, cooperative attitude, self-discipline, tolerance, patience, concern for others, neat appearance, physical fitness, dependability, willingness to learn, communication skills, integrity, promptness, self-confidence, enthusiasm and initiative.

**Leadership Traits:** Qualities recognized as desirable in a leader:

- Achieves objectives
- Understands participants' needs
- Gets along with participants
- Is resourceful
- Gains confidence of participants
- Has the ability to analyze problems
- Is adaptable to situations
- Has the ability to arouse and develop interest
- Leads without dominating
- Has the ability to handle disciplinary problems
- Has the ability to inspire others
- Has the ability to lead informally
- Encourages participant leadership
- Has the ability to plan and organize
- Observes rules and regulations
- Takes proper care of equipment and property
- Uses time effectively
- Is safety conscious, but permits freedom of adventure
- Has the ability to serve as a role model

**Credit:**

*The Backcountry Classroom, Lesson Plans for Teaching in the Wilderness*, Jack K. Drury and Bruce F. Bonney.



## **Teacher Checklist for Planning Field Experience**

### **NOTE TO THE TEACHER/OUTDOOR LEADER:**

Listed below is a series of questions you can review before teaching the lessons. Careful planning for a successful field experience is essential for student safety and a positive outcome.

- Is the special project relevant to the discipline objectives of the class/program?
- How does the project fit into the curriculum? Have the expected learner outcomes from accomplishing the project been established?
- What are the interdisciplinary connections?
- Is the project relevant to the students' personal experiences?
- Is the project student-driven?
- Will student motivation and ownership be generated by undertaking the special project?
- Do students possess the cognitive and skill levels necessary for accomplishing the project?
- Will the project include a diversity of learning techniques?
- Have the means of student evaluation been determined?
- Are there any legal considerations or potential insurance problems?
- Will students need to leave the school grounds to complete their special project?
- What special arrangements will need to be made? (Transportation, special passes, parental permission, guest lecturers, special facilities/space, use of special equipment such as computers or telephone, volunteers, chaperones, etc.)
- Has the time frame for the special project been outlined? (When will the students work on their special project? Will students need time outside of class?)
- Will any publicity need to be generated for the special project? If so, have the means to publicize the project been determined?
- In the case of long-term projects, who will be responsible for sustaining the project after the original participants have left?
- Have you contacted the appropriate administrative organization? What special restrictions apply? Are they available to make a presentation to the group?