ROYAL CANADIAN ARMY CADETS

SILVER STAR

INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDE

SECTION 3

EO M325.03 – DISCUSS SELF-AWARENESS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT AS A COMPETENCY OF AN OUTDOOR LEADER (OL)

Total Time: 30 min

PREPARATION

PRE-LESSON INSTRUCTIONS

Resources needed for the delivery of this lesson are listed in the lesson specification located in A-CR-CCP-703/PG-001, Chapter 4. Specific uses for said resources are identified throughout the instructional guide within the TP for which they are required.

Review the lesson content and become familiar with the material prior to delivering the lesson.

Photocopy the scenario located at Annex H for each cadet.

PRE-LESSON ASSIGNMENT

N/A.

APPROACH

A group discussion was chosen for TP 1 as it allows the cadet to interact with their peers and share their knowledge, opinions and feelings about self-awareness.

An interactive lecture was chosen for TP 2 to orient the cadet to professional conduct as a competency of an OL.

INTRODUCTION

REVIEW

The review for this lesson is from EO M325.02 (List the Competencies of an Outdoor Leader [OL], Section 2):

QUESTIONS

Q1. What is an OL?

Q2. What are the eight competencies of an OL?

ANTICIPATED ANSWERS

A1. An OL is an individual who leads groups and individuals into natural settings using a variety of modes of transportation such as hiking, mountain biking, canoeing, kayaking, mountaineering, etc. OLs must combine their technical skill competencies with personal and interpersonal skills in order to provide groups and individuals with a positive, safe and challenging outdoor adventure activity (OAA). It is the

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responsibility of an OL to ensure the protection and preservation of the natural environments into which they bring people for an OAA.

A2. The eight competencies of an OL are:

- self-awareness and professional conduct,
- conflict management,
- decision making and judgment,
- facilitation of the expedition experience,
- technical abilities,
- instructional techniques,
- environmental stewardship, and
- program management.

OBJECTIVES

By the end of this lesson the cadet shall have discussed self-awareness and professional conduct as a competency of an OL.

IMPORTANCE

It is important for cadets to further investigate the OL competency of self-awareness and professional conduct because as a new OL this competency shapes their daily experiences as an OL. Being cognizant of personal behaviour and how an individual presents themselves to others is an important aspect of being a leader. The inherent risk associated with outdoor activities adds to the importance of an OL acting appropriately while leading groups.

Teaching point 1 **Conduct a Group Discussion on Self-Awareness**

Time: 15 min Method: Group Discussion

BACKGROUND KNOWLEDGE



The point of the group discussion is to draw the following information from the group using the tips for answering/facilitating discussion and the suggested questions provided.

DEFINING WHAT IT MEANS TO BE SELF-AWARE

To be self-aware is to be conscious of one's character, feelings and motives. As an OL, who is responsible for the safety, well-being and organization of a group of people, being self-aware helps to ensure a high quality experience for all group members. Being aware of individual feelings and motives will help the OL relate to their group members.

Being Mindful of All Actions

Good OLs are always mindful of their actions and deliberate in their intent. They act with regard to the ultimate goals of the group, which is a balance between being attentive to the needs of the group members and being attentive to the tasks that must be accomplished.

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Being Aware of One's Personal Abilities and Limitations

Self-awareness starts with a clear understanding of one's personal abilities and limitations. Without a clear sense of their own abilities and limitations, OLs will have difficulty setting challenges appropriate to the abilities and limitations of group members. As well, there may be a tendency to set the bar too high, which may jeopardize the emotional and physical safety of the members of the group they are leading. This can result in the OL becoming a possible danger to the group and diminishing the quality of the experience for all.

Knowing How One Influences Others

An OL is considered the expert when they lead a group of people on an OAA. They have been chosen because of their experience and knowledge in the specific activity being conducted. This is an enormous responsibility. This position provides them the opportunity to influence the decisions and actions of the people they are leading. Being aware of this is a very important step in OLs developing their own self-awareness. Once they understand how their actions and comments can influence those around them, they will be able to judge what is appropriate and what is not.

Understanding the Importance of Demonstrating Commitment to the Activity

An OL is committed when they participate fully in all aspects of the activity they are leading. The OL must commit their "mind, body and soul" to themselves, the people they are leading, the OAA they are completing and the environment they are using.

If an OL is not committed to the activity which they are leading, then the activity is doomed to fail. This commitment can be demonstrated verbally, through the actions of the OL and/or by their overall behaviour and presence. The OL who chooses to sit around the campfire after a long day of hiking to discuss the day's events, demonstrates a commitment to the activity by continuing the learning experience of the group. Likewise, the OL who displays excitement for the day of rock climbing shows a strong commitment to the activity. When the OL is committed to the activity, the group members will be committed to the activity.

Knowing How One Reacts to Different Situations

An OL must always be prepared to react to the unexpected. To do this, it is important for OLs to know how they will react when faced with different situations. In most cases, this understanding will come from experience. However, developing strategies to implement when faced with an unlikely or challenging situation will assist the OL in facing the situation head-on with strength and confidence.

Examples of these different challenges the OL may face are:

- danger,
- hardship,
- stress,
- conflict, and
- fatigue.

Understanding the Importance and Benefits of Personal Reflection

A good OL will take the time to learn from their successes and their mistakes. This process is called experiential learning, and can be described as the change in a person that results from reflection on a direct experience resulting in new understandings and applications. In practical terms, this process involves taking the time to sit down after an experience and think about how it went. The OL should ask themselves the following questions:

- What did I do well?
- What can I improve upon?

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- How did people react to my leadership style?
- What can I learn from the way other OLs did things?

By thinking about past experiences, the OL can learn by experience and can start to think about ways they will do things in the future. When the next opportunity to confront a similar situation arises, the lessons learned – from taking the time to reflect on the past—will be drawn on to improve the way the OL deals with the new, but similar, experience. In many ways this is the same process as learning to ride a bicycle; from every success and every mistake the cadet learns something new, eventually allowing the training wheels to be removed.

GROUP DISCUSSION



TIPS FOR ANSWERING/FACILITATING DISCUSSION:

- Establish ground rules for discussion, eg, everyone should listen respectfully; don't interrupt; only one person speaks at a time; no one's ideas should be made fun of; you can disagree with ideas but not with the person; try to understand others as much as you hope they understand you; etc.
- Sit the group in a circle, making sure all cadets can be seen by everyone else.
- Ask questions that will provoke thought; in other words avoid questions with yes or no answers.
- Manage time by ensuring the cadets stay on topic.
- Listen and respond in a way that indicates you have heard and understood the cadet. This can be done by paraphrasing their ideas.
- Give the cadets time to respond to your questions.
- Ensure every cadet has an opportunity to participate. One option is to go around the group and have each cadet answer the question with a short answer. Cadets must also have the option to pass if they wish.
- Additional questions should be prepared ahead of time.

SCENARIO

Consider the following scenario:

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It's your third time out as a trip leader [OL] and you're taking a bunch of beginners up an easy trail to Mosquito Lake. Your group is moving a little slower than you'd like, but the weather is fair and the wildflowers are out; you figure it'll be OK to cook dinner in the dark if you have to.

Suddenly, black clouds begin to pour over a ridge to the west, and within minutes a summer storm is bearing down on you. The first drops of rain are so big they kick up dust on the trail. Lightning forks behind the peaks above and the crash of thunder is so loud and near, you know the storm center will be on top of you in minutes.

You've just started up a long exposed ridge. If you continue up, the danger of being hit by lightning could be significant, and even if it isn't, the chance that someone will panic in a storm this big is very real. But if you head down into the forest below, you'll never make it to the lake before dark; you'll have to camp lower, and you're not sure of the water supply there.

Up until now there has been no need for anyone to 'lead' on this easy, well-travelled trail. But now things have changed. This is Ben's first trip into the mountains. He is clearly getting more worried with each flash of lightning (Graham 1997, 15–16).

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS

Q1. What does it mean to be self-aware?

Q2. What are the abilities and limitations of the OL in the scenario?

Q3. What are some examples of how the OL in the scenario demonstrates commitment to the hike?

Q4. How will knowing how one reacts to situations of danger and stress benefit the OL in the scenario?

Q5. In the scenario Ben, an inexperienced hiker, is getting very nervous about the situation facing the hikers. What can the OL do to alleviate some these fears?

Q6. Upon completion of the hike, why is it important that the OL, and group members, complete a personal reflection?

Q7. What is the relationship between being self-aware and being an effective OL?



Other questions and answers will develop throughout the group discussion. The group discussion should not be limited to only those suggested.



Reinforce those answers given and comments made during the group discussion, ensuring the teaching point has been covered.

CONFIRMATION OF TEACHING POINT 1

The cadets' participation in the group discussion will serve as the confirmation of this TP.

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Teaching point 2 **Discuss Professional Conduct**

Time: 10 min Method: Interactive Lecture



This TP provides cadets an opportunity to further develop their understanding of professional conduct which is a component of the OL competency of self-awareness and professional conduct.

PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

OLs are placed in a position of responsibility and as such must conduct themselves accordingly in all situations. A lack of professional conduct could result in an injury during a paddling activity or a breakdown in group dynamics while on an expedition, etc. The risks associated with an OAA demand professional conduct of an OL.

An OL who demonstrates professional conduct is typically viewed as being:

- flexible,
- responsible,
- trustworthy,
- courageous,
- hardworking,
- selfless,
- approachable,
- committed, and
- tolerant.

USING THE POSITION RESPONSIBLY

Cadets are placed in the position of an OL because of their experience. This position does not permit them to use their authority in unethical ways. In the environment of an OAA, OLs who abuse their position of authority have a negative impact on group morale and effectiveness, and can make dangerous situations even more dangerous.

The experience that OLs have is what makes them such a valuable asset to the group. However, it is important that OLs understand that in most cases the individuals they are leading do not have as much experience as they do. It is one thing to encourage an individual to try something new, such as a slightly more difficult rock climbing ascent, but an OL should never force an individual to do something they are not comfortable doing; it is extremely unprofessional and risky. Forcing an individual to abseil down a cliff by telling them they will not get their supper meal is a form of coercion. If that individual hurts themselves or another group member, the consequences in an outdoor setting could be dramatic. Coercion shall never be an option.



Coercion is the process of persuading an unwilling person by force.

MODELLING ACTIONS WHICH THE TEAM SHOULD EMULATE

An OL should always model the behaviour which they want their team/group to emulate.

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Committing Personally

If an OL is not personally committed to being an OL it will be obvious to the individuals they are leading. Being an OL is more than just about taking individuals into the outdoors; it is about providing them an experience and the opportunity to learn from that experience. An OL who is not personally committed to the activity and the people involved in the activity will be an ineffective leader. The hazardous nature of activities led by OLs requires their complete attention and commitment. To not give an activity their full attention and commitment OLs are putting themselves and the people they are leading at risk.

Complying With Safety Regulations and Precautions

Safety regulations and precautions are established by subject matter experts to ensure the safety of individuals completing the specific OAA. While many OLs are very experienced, it is not their prerogative to change/alter predetermined safety regulations and precautions. Failing to abide by safety regulations and precautions could result in injuries which are compounded when in an isolated wilderness setting. Although it may seem redundant to hang food in a food hang every night, even if the group has not seen one bear, not doing so is a risk that should not be taken. Likewise, wearing a PFD while paddling on a flatwater lake may seem unnecessary, however, accidents can happen and wearing that PFD could save a life.

CONFIRMATION OF TEACHING POINT 2

QUESTIONS

Q1. An OL who demonstrates professional conduct typically displays what qualities?

Q2. What are two examples of ways in which an OL can abuse their position of authority?

Q3. Why is it important for OLs to comply with safety regulations and precautions?

ANTICIPATED ANSWERS

A1. The following qualities are typically displayed by an OL who demonstrates professional conduct:

- flexible,
- responsible,
- trustworthy,
- courageous,
- hardworking,
- selfless,
- approachable,
- committed, and
- tolerant.

A2. The following is a list of three possible examples of ways in which an OL has abused their position of authority are:

- have group members set up and tear down their tent;
- have group members cook meals for the OL; or
- have group member pump water for the OL each night.

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A3. Failing to abide by safety regulations and precautions could result in injuries which are compounded when in an isolated wilderness setting.

END OF LESSON CONFIRMATION

QUESTIONS

Q1. What does it mean to be self-aware?

Q2. Why is it important for an OL to be aware of their own abilities and limitations?

Q3. What are the consequences of an OL not being personally committed to the activity being completed?

ANTICIPATED ANSWERS

A1. To be self-aware is:

- being conscious of one's character, feelings and motives;
- ensuring a high quality experience for all group members; and
- being aware of individual feelings and motives in order to relate to group members.

A2. Without a clear sense of their own abilities and limitations, OLs will have difficulty setting challenges appropriate to the abilities and limitations of the program participants. As well, there may be a tendency to set the bar too high, which may jeopardize the emotional and physical safety of the members of the group they are leading. This can result in the OL becoming a possible danger to the group and diminishing the quality of the experience for all.

A3. An OL who is not personally committed to the activity and the people involved in the activity will be an ineffective leader and will put themselves and the people they are leading at risk.

CONCLUSION

HOMEWORK/READING/PRACTICE

N/A.

METHOD OF EVALUATION

N/A.

CLOSING STATEMENT

Self-awareness and professional conduct is a fundamental competency of an OL. This competency deals with the OL's ability to interact and develop relationships with the people they are leading. While technical, instructional and facilitation skills are all competencies of an OL, without a personal understanding of oneself and the ability to act in a professional manner, these skills are useless. An OL must develop the whole package of competencies, beginning with self-awareness and professional conduct.

INSTRUCTOR NOTES/REMARKS

N/A.

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