

Hi Bill,

Feb 18th

Though I'm sending this in February, it's my Dec '15 letter. I just got super busy towards the end of the term, and then I was at home relaxing with you and Fran there.




The first term was okay. It was a interesting experience, not without it's difficulties. I find I am feeling much better

this time around,

I know what to expect school wise and how to organize myself and my time.

What I'm sending is a reflection on my camping trip. I got 100% on this project so that was super exciting for me.

Love

Samantha  
 

This camping trip was not my first one, as I have been on many other group hiking camping trips. One was even in Garibaldi but it was a little bit different since we were snow camping and making snow shelters. Overall, it was a learning experience for many of the students and after the trip, reflecting on it, I discovered it was one for me as well. Though it seemed for many they had a self-discovery during the trip and on the silent walk, I found I learned more about my leadership preferences and skills.

I am not a fast person when it comes to walking. Whenever I would go hiking with a group or alone, or even just for a walk down the street I would almost always fall behind. Usually I start at the front of the group and slowly fall behind, or there would be a gap between the person in front of me, and me. It used to frustrate me, not being in on any of the conversation and having no one to walk with. However this kept happening on hikes and I learned to like it. It gave me time to think about my life and what was going on and what needed to be done. I thought for sure it would happen on this hiking trip and it did but not right away.

The first day Lydia and I were the leaders. We were going to have one of us at the front and one at the back. I ended up at the front, thinking for sure I would end up at the back but that did not happen. For a first day, though my pace was slow, it was a good pace for all. A couple of times someone else took the lead and ended up speeding up but the group decided it was too fast so I went up front again. When I was in front I was sometimes by myself, just walking to the beat of my drum. I did not mind being a silent leader. The group chose to have me up there, and when things were too fast they voted to have my back and I went along with it because I didn't mind at all. There was something calming about being the leader, but also not really having to lead because there was a path we were following and we were making good time

I know I am more of a directive leader than a silent one. Trying to get people moving in the cold morning is not an easy feat and in this case a more strict leadership style is more effective than a laissez-faire one. There are backpacks to pack and then re-pack with the group's gear, but who wants to add extra weight to their already heavy backpack? I often found that in the morning when it was time to depart there was a still a lot of group gear and lunches lying around while a lot of us were standing and doing nothing. Knowing we couldn't leave until we had everything packed, I took charge and took some gear while directing the others on what still needed to be packed and picked up. I'm not sure how it made the others in the group feel being told what to do so early in the morning, but sometimes you have to take charge.

Another example is with group projects such as Assignment 2. I took a little bit of leadership because I thought we should start planning and I wrote a Facebook message to the other members in my group wondering what they had in mind for the project. At my summer camp job I was also directive. When I noticed the kids were losing interest I changed the activity.

Our leaders Arnaud and Tensley were absolutely amazing on the trip. They were each knowledgeable in their own way and both experienced in what we were doing. They were a constant rock for those who were new to backpacking. And though each day we had rotating student leaders they were always there as a backup. However, they are very laid back leaders. Often times, we were trying to get in a circle, or were in one and they wanted to speak, or they were in the middle of speaking and we students got off track and started joking around. They would patiently wait for us to calm down and come back to the topic. Often times when we were having our talks it was in the morning before we had to leave, or at night before bed, but it was almost always cold. I would get annoyed at the interruptions, thinking that maybe Arnaud and Tensley should ask people to calm down so we could continue. I would have taken a more strict

approach if I needed to get everyone's attention, asking them to calm down and listen up as opposed to sitting and waiting. I did try to shush the group politely but there is only so much you can do with a group of rowdy adults.

However, I learned that the laissez-faire type of leadership is not always bad. I am grateful we had the leaders we did since I heard some of the other group's leaders weren't helpful at times. Our leaders gave us the tools and advice we needed to succeed by being quieter. We learned because they sat back and let us try it ourselves, whether or not we failed. The field school showed me when and how different leadership skills were most effective, and why some are more effective than others.

Leadership during this trip was a group of people working together in different ways, taking charge at different time, but in the end we all had one common goal. There was a time when some people were walking faster and when asked to slow down a bit they said the slower people should walk faster. That would be an example of ineffective and non-inclusive leadership. At the end of the trip though, when there were some slower hikers, we stayed with them keeping them company so they were not all alone. Deciding to stay back was a leadership decision because you decided to slow your pace for the need of others. I believe that even though we had "leaders of the day" everyone was a leader at some point every day in their own personal way. But in the end we had one common goal during this trip: to make it to the parking lot, and we did.

This trip taught me a lot about my skills as a leader and which leadership styles work and which don't. Though on the trip there were a couple of clashes of the leadership styles when are there not? We formed, had some tiny storms, normed and I would say we performed. I didn't find the trip very challenging but it was something new to me, having more responsibility than

on my other hiking trips. Though I think at times Arnaud and Tensley should have been more directive, more on top of getting things done and moving, their style worked well in many situations. Every hiking day they stayed at the back of the hiking line, letting us decide when to stop and take break and when to continue. I realised on this trip that there are many more ways leadership manifests itself than I originally thought. This trip showed me there are no wrong ways of leadership, only more effective leadership strategies for different situations.