



THE LEADING EDGE

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT & ADVENTURE AT THE HIGH MOUNTAIN INSTITUTE

CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

INTRODUCTION

The Leading Edge is a leadership development program for young adults ages 16-19 created at the High Mountain Institute in 2003. The program is founded on the belief that the primary function of leadership is to facilitate the achievement of communal goals. To give students a toolbox for becoming effective leaders, the Leading Edge includes the development of interpersonal skills such as basic communication, feedback, conflict resolution and decision-making. The Leading Edge also challenges students to participate in and take an ethical responsibility for the formation of group goals. We push students to consider and begin to answer the question, “What am I leading for?” The Leading Edge is designed to achieve the following three outcomes:

- 1. Increase self-awareness (50%):** We use “Leaders of the Day,” group exercises and well-tested instruments (such as the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator) to help illuminate students’ leadership talents and assets—their “home base” or “comfort zone.” While we spend time analyzing the strengths and challenges of each student’s home base, we also emphasize that each student must develop the capacity to operate successfully outside of his or her comfort zone, as well as the need for a wide range of personality types in a group for it to function optimally.
- 2. Increase influence (30%):** We use classes and group exercises that focus on interpersonal skills such as communication, feedback, conflict resolution, and decision-making to help students hone their ability to influence individuals and groups while in a leadership role. We provide concrete mechanisms for students to experiment with and practice these skills in a safe learning environment.
- 3. Inspire a willingness to lead and an ethical compass to lead by (20%):** Beginning with the belief that the purpose of leadership is to facilitate the achievement of communal goals, we address two important questions: (1) Are you willing to be a leader?; and (2) To what end will you lead? Through this process, students leave The Leading Edge with both a set of improved interpersonal skills and an ethical commitment to apply them to worthy ends of their choosing.

Through these learning outcomes, the Leading Edge helps young adults develop an understanding of what leadership really means. In many cases, the “leadership opportunities” that are offered to young adults in conventional settings would be better defined as “management opportunities.” By encouraging young adults to understand, carefully consider—and, wherever possible, play a role in shaping—the community’s goals, the Leading Edge develops thoughtful future leaders who can affect meaningful positive change in society.

LEADERSHIP CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

INTEGRATED		
Leader of the Day Evaluation & Debriefing Grand Unified Theory of Leadership Wilderness Travel & Small Group Living	Theories & Perspectives on Leadership Circle & Full Circle Initiatives & Group Problem-Solving	Student-taught Classes 14,000-foot Peak Ascent Independent Student Travel

SELF-AWARENESS
Myers-Briggs Type Indicator Student Leadership Practices Inventory Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument The Learning Leader Johari Window Internal / External Journey Collages Solo / Self-Reflection

INFLUENCE
Student Leadership Practices Inventory Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument Feedback Decision-Making Communication Goal Setting Stages of Group Development Ladder of Inference

ETHICAL COMPASS
Introduction to Ethics Circle & Full Circle Goal Setting