

# The Solo Experience

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## Objectives

The autonomous student experience (ASE), or solo trip, gives the student more control and choice in terms of the planning and purpose for the trip. Outdoor leadership program (OLP) participants are given opportunities to face challenges to develop better non-cognitive skills. This growth and the experience proves to be very valuable in regards to long-term learning and self=confidence.

1. Students will experience a high level of self-reliance.
2. Students will be responsible for decisions in route setting, camp location and food preparation.
3. Students will be putting to practice theoretical outdoor leadership skills.

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## Materials

For overnight hikes:

- Appropriate clothes: i.e. sport clothes or clothes which allow for easy movement.
- Overnight backpack supplies, hiking shoes, food, water and [the ten essentials](#).
- OLP journal and writing utensil.

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## Introduction/Engager

1. Group or individual discussion points for the beginning lesson.
2. What is autonomy? How have you overcome or succumbed to failures, challenges and shifting perceptions to find success and happiness?
3. Video Link to: [Discovering the cheese doodle](#).
  - Why is this person traveling by himself?
  - What is the longest period you have been responsible for every decision and consequence? Did you enjoy this period or was it stressful?

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## Procedures

For the main activity students will be engaged in an overnight solo camping/hiking trip. This trip serves as the culminating experience or 'final' for the outdoor leadership program. Participants will be trained in route finding, camp site set-up and meal preparation.

1. Take two class periods to discuss and practice basic skills and equipment needs for solo overnight camping.
2. Discuss and practice the basic safety skills needed for the trip. Radio usage, first aid, hydration, emergency services and meal preparation.
3. Show the video [Free solo rock climbing](#). Discuss how she works (at min 3:25) to maintain focus (happy thoughts and being relaxed). What does she learn from this experience?
  - Please [visit this link](#) for the full discussion points on building and understanding how to develop student autonomy.
4. During a two month period students will be applying solo skills during group and solo day hikes around the surrounding mountains. Each successive trip there can be less and less instructor control, direction and decision making to further student autonomy.
  - Please be aware of instructor notes below.
5. During the ASE experience or solo, instructors must cultivate how much the participant feels they are in 'the flow' realm. In this realm the participant will be intrinsically motivated to exercise [self-discipline](#), [self-worth](#), practice [resilience](#) and set up for a [growth mindset](#)
  - This is done through proper preparation, communication during the trip and the post trip debriefing.
6. At the conclusion of the solo trip, have participants come back into the group discussion to share their applicable thoughts, concerns and what they see as valuable skills.

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### Conclusion/Reflection Discussion Questions

During the solo trip, students are mindful of their purpose of the experience and employ self-reporting activities that document their thoughts and also engage in a post trip discussion.

1. Link to the: [Touching the void](#)
2. Can you describe the autonomy of the two characters? What traits did they both have that let them continue to go on?
3. How will this trip alter your self-reliance or your self-perceptions? Why do you think this is true?

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### Instructor notes

1. Minimizing instructor involvement during the final expedition increases self-reliance and self-awareness by encouraging greater self-reliance, responsibility and cohesion.
2. Take steps to allow the participant to complete the required tasks without instructor involvement.
3. The two primary elements for a successful solo trip are the instructors' (a) preparation of students for the experience and (b) supervision during the experience.
4. Instructors supervising ASE must maintain a delicate balance between supervision, independence, and safety.

5. Allow students to contact the instructor as much as needed without judgement.

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## Extensions

### For advanced or interested students

After a participant's solo trip experience give them the opportunity to present on their trip during a school wide or community event. Then they can practice speaking about their experience in front of groups and pass on valuable lessons to others.

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## Links to resources

The ten essentials <http://www.wta.org/hiking-info/basics/ten-essentials>

Discovering the cheese doodle [http://youtu.be/vC8gJo\\_9o4M](http://youtu.be/vC8gJo_9o4M)

Free solo rock climbing <http://youtu.be/ooqTESmoxOw>

Developing autonomy <http://ethansalter.com/strategies/autonomy/>

Self-discipline <http://ethansalter.com/strategies/self-discipline/>

Self-worth <http://ethansalter.com/strategies/self-worth/>

Resilience <http://ethansalter.com/strategies/resilience/>

Growth mindset <http://ethansalter.com/strategies/activities/>

Touching the void <http://youtu.be/nWhmOwGqcMQ>

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## Suggesting readings

[West with the Night](#) by Beryl Markham

[Desert Solitaire: A Season in the Wilderness](#) by Edward Abbey

[Sailing Alone around the World \(Penguin Classics\)](#) by Joshua Slocum

[Into the Wild](#) by Jon Krakauer

[Tracks: A Woman's Solo Trek Across 1700 Miles of Australian Outback](#) by Robyn Davidson

[My Journey to Lhasa](#) by Alexandra David-Neel

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## Nevada Physical Education Standards

Outdoor Education does not currently fall under its own set of specific standards. However, there is enough cross-curriculum content and skills that the Nevada physical education standards apply to these outdoor leadership program's objectives.

**Grade level:** 9-12

**Subject area:** Outdoor education/physical education

**Standard:**

Content Standard 1.0: Students understand and apply movement concepts and principles to the learning and development of motor skills.

**Benchmarks:**

1.8.4 Recognize physiological benefits of exercise during and after physical activity.

1.12.3 Analyze personal performance and apply results for improvement (i.e. lower target heart rate).

1.12.4 Analyze and compare health and fitness benefits derived from various physical activities.

**Standard:**

Content Standard 2.0: Students demonstrate competency in many movement forms and proficiency in a few movement forms.

**Benchmarks:**

2.12.3 Apply scientific principles to weight transfer and balance movements.

**Standard:**

Content Standard 4.0: Students achieve and maintain a health-enhancing level of individual fitness for an active lifestyle.

**Benchmarks:**

4.12.3 Analyze a personal healthy lifestyle independent of teacher intervention.

4.12.4 Evaluate physical activity for injury potential.

**Standard:**

Content Standard 5.0: Students demonstrate personal responsibility, positive social interaction, and respect for diversity in physical activity settings.

**Benchmarks:**

5.8.1 Analyze potential consequences when confronted with a behavior choice.

5.12.1 Anticipate and avoid potentially dangerous outcomes and consequences during participation in physical activity.

5.12.2 Accept leadership responsibility in a group setting.

5.12.3 Evaluate role of physical activity in a diverse society (i.e. skill level, gender, race and disability).

| Developing non-cognitive skills rubric |   |  |   |  |  |
|--|---|--|---|--|--|
|  | Level 0 (0-49%)   | Level 1 (50-59%)   | Level 2 (60-69%)  | Level 3 (70-79%)   | Level 4 (80-100%)  |
| Outdoor Skills                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not meet Level 1</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• performs outdoor skills with limited competence</li> <li>• during course activities, including trips, performs movement skills with limited competence</li> <li>• with assistance may describe key elements of an outdoor skill</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• performs outdoor skills with moderate competence</li> <li>• during course activities, including trips, performs movement skills with moderate competence</li> <li>• with encouragement can describe key elements of an outdoor skill</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• performs outdoor skills with considerable competence</li> <li>• during course activities, including trips, performs movement skills with considerable competence</li> <li>• able to describe key elements of an outdoor skill independently</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• performs outdoor skills with high degree of competence</li> <li>• during course activities, including trips, performs movement skills with high degree of competence</li> <li>• able to describe key elements of an outdoor skill and is able to teach others effectively</li> </ul>  |
| Fitness Level                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not meet Level 1</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fitness level limits active participation in outdoor activities</li> <li>• seldom works to improve personal fitness level for outdoor activities</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• regularly able to participate actively in all outdoor activities</li> <li>• occasionally works to improve personal fitness level for outdoor activities</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consistently able to participate actively in all outdoor activities</li> <li>• consistently works to improve or maintain personal fitness level for outdoor activities</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• always able to participate actively in all outdoor activities</li> <li>• always strives to improve or maintain personal fitness level for outdoor activities</li> </ul>   |
| Self-Reflection                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not meet Level 1</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• basic understanding of non-cognitive skills both weaknesses and strengths.</li> <li>• with encouragement able to connect outdoor concepts to real outdoor activities</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• good understanding of non-cognitive skills both weakness and strengths.</li> <li>• on occasion able to connect outdoor concepts to real outdoor activities</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• proficient understanding of non-cognitive skills both weakness and strengths.</li> <li>• consistently able to connect outdoor concepts to real outdoor activities</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• excellent understanding non-cognitive skills both weakness and strengths.</li> <li>• with high degree of efficiency able to connect outdoor concepts to real outdoor activities</li> </ul>  |
| Communication                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• does not meet Level 1</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• with encouragement uses proper outdoor ed terminology</li> <li>• with encouragement communicates properly with peers and teachers in a school/outdoor ed setting</li> <li>• seldom, when in activity in the community, uses language that represent self and school in a positive manner</li> <li>• seldom allows others to communicate freely without judgement</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• usually uses proper outdoor ed terminology</li> <li>• usually communicates properly with peers and teachers in a school/ outdoor ed setting</li> <li>• with encouragement, when in activity in the community, uses language that represent self and school in a positive manner</li> <li>• with encouragement allows others to communicate freely without judgement</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• consistently uses proper outdoor ed terminology</li> <li>• consistently communicates properly with peers and teachers in a school/outdoor ed setting</li> <li>• consistently, when in activity in the community, uses language that represent self and school in a positive manner</li> <li>• consistently allows others to communicate freely without judgement</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• always uses proper outdoor ed terminology</li> <li>• always communicates properly with peers and teachers in a school/ outdoor ed setting and encourages other to do the same</li> <li>• always, when in activity in the community, uses language that represent self and school in a positive manner</li> <li>• always allows and encourages others to communicate freely without judgement</li> </ul> |