

**The Race to the South Pole:
Lessons in Problem Solving, Planning, and Teamwork**

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Abstract

In 1912, two explorers, Roald Amundsen and Robert F. Scott, were preparing separate expeditions to conquer the South Pole. The vast southern oceans separated Antarctica from the shores of South America, Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. To date, little was known about the continent's interior. To be successful Amundsen and Scott needed to decide on the objective of their expeditions, schedule and chart their course across the formidable continent, and select the appropriate equipment and supplies for their trip.

This critical incident uses this historical event as the basis for problem solving, planning, and teamwork. Taking on the role of the Antarctic explorers Amundsen or Scott, students will work in teams to assess the situation confronting Amundsen and Scott, solve the problems involved in operating in the inhospitable Antarctic environment, and design a successful expedition.

Learning Outcomes

In completing this assignment, students should be able to:

1. Analyze a problem solving situation to identify relevant situational factors and decision objectives.
2. Engage in planning a group's activity to solve the challenges it faces.
3. Work as a team in problem solving and planning situations.

Application

This critical incident could be introduced in graduate and undergraduate courses associated with leadership studies or those that require teamwork.

Key Words

problem solving, planning, teamwork

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