

ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE NEWSLETTER FOR ADVISORS AND STUDENT LEADERS ACROSS CANADA

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CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT ACTIVITY ADVISORS

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CLSC 2005

Canada's only border city, Lloydminster Alberta/Saskatchewan, will be hosting the 21st Annual Canadian Student Leadership Conference. Your host schools are Lloydminster Comprehensive, Holy Rosary, Lloydminster and Wainwright High Schools. Although they are separated geographically by 125 kilometers, they are neighbours in their vision of what this great conference experience is going to look like.

The dates for this CSLC are September 27 – October 1, 2005. The pre-conference tour will see you 'Adventure into the Rockies', to Jasper, Alberta and spend three days in and around this mountain centre. Pre-conference will be limited to the first 200 delegates who reserve their spots.

If you have questions regarding this CSLC, contact Brent Allen, Chairman, at 780-842-4481 or via email at brenalle@whs.btps.ca or allen01@telusplanet.net Registration for this conference will begin on February 1, 2005.

See you at CSLC 2005 and prepare yourself to return to your schools and communities with much of what you need in order to make them better places to live, work and play!

Spreading the Leadership Word

You know that you have a good student leadership program, but it seems that very few people in your school seem to be getting the message. The first thing is that you cannot expect a huge following to appear in the first few years. Your program needs to grow from the few converted individuals that you start with. These people need to speak personally to two or three others and bring them into the leadership faithful. This means that if you have three good student leaders in your first year, you must make it their job to recruit and convert three other participants. If this is followed, you will have a possible group of twelve apostles in your second year. Not all who are approached will follow, but by keeping this proselytizing process going, you can have a large core of leadership support and followers in three short years.

This leadership mission applies to your role as an advisor as well. As a leadership advisor, you must attempt to bring other teachers into the leadership fellowship. These may be other teachers in your school who can assist you in running events or sharing some of the load of planning activities. Your job will be much more enjoyable when you share it with other teachers who can support and assist you.

There are also other teachers in your district who have been struggling on their own with nascent leadership programs. Make these teachers in your area aware of who you are and what you do in your school. You will be able to form a network of support from the advisors in your area who believe in the power of leadership as well. One of the ways to make your program stronger is to share its successes and failures with others. This allows the whole group to learn, avoid pitfalls and grow stronger.

Finally, you can join CASAA as a member and receive the many blessings associated with membership. The discounts are only earthly, monetary benefits but the monthly electronic newsletter will lift your spirit and definitely support you in your daily leadership trials. Amen.

Dave Conlon

CASAA

Time is Money

Hand each member of your group a cheque for \$84,400 (fake of course, unless you've recently won the lottery). Tell them that they have 24 hours to spend it or the time until you meet again as a group. At the next meeting, have the group members share how they planned to spend their money.

When the exercise is over, note that most people spent every single penny of their cheque. Now inform them that each day has the same number of seconds as the cheque has dollars – 84,400. Discuss why we are so much more likely to prioritize how we spend our money rather than our time.

E-mail Mailing lists

This is an excellent way to have your busy student leaders stay in contact with each other. It is important to establish some basic rules before you implement this communication tool:

- Have students register a separate e-mail account from their personal/social account. This means that they treat messages in this area as business.
- Do not allow forwards to be posted no matter how funny or outrageous they are. This mailing list is for school business only.
- Train the group to answer the individual who posts a request for individual information individually rather than to the whole group. e.g. The group does not need to know the t-shirt sizes of everyone in the group.

Motivation on Your Mark

At the beginning of class, ask the students to leave the room. While the classroom is empty, place three lines of tape on the floor, each at a further distance from your garbage can. Ask the students to return one at a time to the classroom. Give each student a box of 10 paper balls and tell them to throw as many balls as possible into the can. Before throwing, they are to select only one distance from which they will throw the balls. Give each person the same instructions and have each student who has already been through the exercise remain silent as the others do it. Record the distance each person stands from the garbage can. This distance is the point of the exercise, not the number of balls each person throws in.

The lines the participants choose can reflect their inner motivations. Discuss how they felt as they were participating and what the results were. David McClelland of Harvard University divides these motivations into the following three categories:

Farthest line – Power-oriented motivation

These people like power for its own sake or for the benefit of their organization. They like to influence or have an impact on people, are attracted by prestigious activities and are sensitive to status and formal recognition. These people enjoy directing others, giving instruction and providing help. Many are seen as Leaders, whether or not they are.

Middle line – Achievement-oriented motivation.

These people want to perform better, improve situations, and set their own goals. They like moderate risks and challenging situations. They take personal responsibility for their actions, seek feedback regarding their behaviour, and do things in creative, innovative ways. Many are seen as Entrepreneurs. People who selected the middle distance probably have a strong need for achievement. They chose a spot where they (a) had a good chance of landing the paper balls in the basket, yet (b) the task was still challenging to them.

Closest line – Affiliation-oriented motivation.

These people like to interact with others. They enjoy mutual friendships, get involved in group projects, want to be liked and appreciated, enjoy working with others in a cooperative way, and are sensitive to people's needs. Many are seen as Team workers. People who selected the closest distance are likely to be affiliation-oriented because they wanted to do what they were asked to please the "leader" of the activity.

Have the students discuss whether the description of these motivations fit them. It is important that they realize that although they may be motivated by one thing, the members of their group may be motivated by other things.

This exercise is found in the new resource book, *Leadership 101*, available from CASAA. It is an academic leadership curriculum well suited for senior classes.

Good at it and Good for you

Many people see someone succeeding at a task and say, “He’s good at it because he enjoys it.” Canada’s favourite philosopher and handyman, Red Green, disagrees, suggesting instead, “He enjoys it because he’s good at it.” Student activities prove that Red is not only handy, but right on this point.

Students vote with their feet when it comes to participating in sports, clubs, the arts or spirit activities at school. They are either there willingly or they’re not there at all. If they’re not there willingly, they will misbehave and cause problems like any student who does not want to be in a classroom. If kids are not “good” at something, they will not enjoy it. Being “good” may mean simply that they are able to be social with a lot of their friends and that is why they enjoy the dances that are provided. Students will not enjoy dances that few people attend because they can’t be social. Being “good” at the winter carnival may mean that it is an exciting place to be with lots of opportunities to have fun and be with their friends.

Your leadership students may think that it’s fun to run or be in a spirit assembly, but that may not be something that your school’s student body is “good” at. The student body *must* have a reason to enjoy themselves. They will not cheer for people whom they don’t know or “enjoy” seeing. The student body will not enjoy skits that are aimed at people with inside knowledge. It is important for students to be good at running assemblies, but they must also create a situation that the audience can be “good” at.

The following are some points to help your students be “good”:

- Just because something is a tradition at your school doesn’t mean that it is enjoyed any longer. All events have a life cycle and some may need to be discontinued before they cause poor behaviour because they’re no longer something students can be good at.
- Humour is enjoyable but it must be appropriate and accessible to the whole group. “In jokes” are good for the group that “get it” but tend to alienate the ones that don’t.
- Being well-organized in a presentation allows a group to behave appropriately. Your audience can be good because they are not bored or frustrated with the presentation. Disorganization allows the audience time to be good at something else and that may be misbehaviour.

It is a fine point but intentionally creating situations where students can be good will cause them to enjoy themselves and make it good for you!

Dave Conlon

Herd vs. Flock

A leadership style where everyone follows the leader without question is similar to a herd mentality. It is a situation where there is one person in charge and only one person who makes all of the decisions. This can be a very efficient and effective leadership style because if you have a competent leader, things get done quickly with a minimum of stress and problems. This style has been likened to a herd of buffalo and the weakness of the style becomes apparent when you consider what happens when the leader of the herd of buffalo is killed. At the death of the leader of the herd, the remainder of the herd will wander about aimlessly because they have no one able to take the initiative to lead the group. This style does not allow for anyone to easily assume control when things go wrong.

A different way to lead is comparable to a flock of geese. In this situation, each goose knows where to go, and the leader of the flock breaks the wind resistance for the rest of the group. Once the leader of the flock gets tired, he drops to the back of the formation and the next goose in line takes over. In this leadership situation, everyone has a blueprint of what must be done and they have the skills necessary to assume the lead when the situation demands it.

The flock analogy is an example of leaders who influence others to willingly take on the challenges that are present(ed). The herd mentality, where everyone follows the leader without question, must be avoided.

Enquiring Icebreakers

Collect back issues of the *National Enquirer* or *Weekly World News* (or download the covers from the Internet). Take each cover and block out one of the main headlines. Give one of these covers to each member of the group and ask them to create an outrageous headline about themselves to complete the front cover. Go around the room and ask each person to read three of the headlines including the one about themselves. The rest of the group attempts to discover which is the headline about the speaker.

Back Art Closure

Pass out a crayon, a pin and a paper plate to each individual in the group. Use as many different coloured crayons as possible. Have the participants form a circle with their right shoulders toward the center of the group. Pin the paper plate on the back of the person in front of them. Begin by writing something positive on the paper plate about that person. Circulate around the group until each participant has written on everyone's back. This is a good closure activity for a group that has spent some time getting to know each other.

Spirit Shirts and Dates

Avoid putting dates on t-shirts that you sell for spirit events. If you have to put a date on it, make sure that you have pre-sold the order. Students won't buy a spirit shirt with last year's date on it, and you don't want a huge unsold inventory.

Going In Circles

Knowing how to accomplish a task is not enough to attain success in today's workplace. Most work situations involve a group effort. This means that working with others is a skill that must be mastered by today's youth. This activity allows the participants to problem solve a specific challenge and then work together to accomplish the challenge. Communication and teamwork skills will be vital in any successful attempt.

Time Needed: 10 minutes plus discussion time

Materials Needed: One rope long enough for each member of the group to grab it with both hands while standing in a circle. A watch with a second hand or a stopwatch.

Activity: Before you begin, tie a knot in the rope creating a circle. Lay the rope on the ground in the shape of a circle. Have the participants stand around the outside of the rope circle. Have all of the participants reach down and grab the rope with both hands and bring their hands up to their waist so the rope is at waist level all around the circle.

The challenge of the activity is to see how fast the group can move the knot around the circle. The person holding the knot becomes the starting and ending point. Before you begin, have the group estimate how long they think it will take them to have the knot travel around the circle one time. The rules for passing the knot are that the rope must never touch the ground and every person must be in contact with the rope at all times. This point of contact point can be anywhere from the shoulder to the hand. Only one point of contact is required by each participant. Time their effort and see how close they come to their completion estimate. Allow for additional tries to see if they can improve their time.

Variations:

- Instead of one trip around the circle, have them try two circuits.
- Have them go one time around in one direction and then immediately go back the other way for a second circuit.
- Require them to use only one hand instead of two.
- Except for the first person, have the participants close their eyes.

Discussion Ideas: The above activity is only a game if the lesson stops now. You must discuss what occurred during the activity to ensure that some learning takes place. The format of discussion is important as well. Try to lead the discussion through the pattern of "what" questions, "so what" questions and then "now what" questions. This helps the activity remain fun, but more meaningful as a teaching tool. The questions that follow should not be read in a pedantic manner, but they can act as a guide for your discussion.

“What” Questions

- How long did our first effort take us?
- How close were we to our estimate?
- What methods were tried to help reduce our time?
- Were any of these methods successful? Which ones?
- Were any of these methods unsuccessful? Which ones?
- How did the variations change the nature of the challenge?

“So What” Questions

- What role did communication play in the challenge?
- How does working together help us solve a problem?
- How many leaders can there be when trying to solve a problem?
- What happens if everyone wants to be the leader?
- What happens if no one is willing to assume the role of leader?
- How many people in the group contributed to helping solve this challenge?
- How can the group be sure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute to the solution?
- What happens in a group if everyone is not given a chance to be a contributing member?
- What would have happened in this challenge if one or more people purposely tried to slow the rope down?
- What steps could the group take when one or more people are not actively helping solve the challenge?

“Now What” Questions

- List specific behaviors which show that a group is working together.
- List specific behaviors which show that a group is not working together.

This exercise is from Tom Jackson. His excellent series of *Activities that Teach* books contain many more of this type of exercise presented in this format for the teacher. These exercises have been used in leadership training, character education programs, at-risk student seminars, and substance abuse prevention. All of Tom's books are very popular with teachers and are available for purchase in Canada only through CASAA.

Superlative Qualities —

It is difficult to reach a goal if you can't see it. It is even more difficult to behave in a certain way if you have not seen this behaviour modeled or demonstrated. One way to encourage good qualities in people is to have the objectives understood as a quality and then assigned to specific individuals that you know, have met or have heard about. Define the following, and then ask your students to list the names of people they know who have exhibited the following personal qualities:

- Greatness
- Integrity
- Creativity
- Humility
- Efficiency
- Sincerity
- Dedication
- Foresight
- Generosity
- Intelligence
- Perseverance
- Decisiveness
- Capability
- Inner beauty
- Faith
- Compassion
- Initiative
- Sensitivity
- Competence
- Individuality
- Understanding
- Accomplishment

One aspect of this exercise is to understand that the substance of a person includes many things; each person is more than a single quality. However, we can aspire to those superlative qualities that some people exhibit.

Cafeteria Capers

Lunch is a great time to have your school participate in spirit games and activities. The following are just a few group challenges from Bob Burton's invaluable resource, *Spirit Works: Turn it On!*

Chicken for Launch

Ten members of a group use a water balloon launcher (sling shot held by two people) to propel a rubber chicken across a gym floor or cafeteria during a rally or class contest. One member of the group stands on the other side of the room with a fishing net and attempts to catch as many of the rubber chickens as possible.

What's for Lunch?

Ask for 5 student volunteers to sit on a chair that is facing the audience. Behind each chair is a "lunch" pail that has a temporary cardboard lid on it to hide the contents. Tell everyone that the volunteers will have to agree to have the contents of one of the pails dumped over their heads. Tell them that at least one of the pails has between \$5 and \$25 in it. The other pails may have anything: water, flour, milk, oatmeal, anything. If the money is dumped on them they can keep it. Fill the other four buckets with confetti, dry cereal, water and potato chips.

Lick 'em and Stick 'em

Each person on a team is given a pack of Life Savers. The contest is to find out how many Life Savers each participant can lick and stick on his or her own cheek, chin, nose and forehead in one minute. One judge for each player counts the Life Savers that are still sticking at the end of one minute.

Just do it! . . . Why?

It is important to teach students the levels of risk that any person or group is comfortable with. Leadership students are often natural risk takers, and they find it difficult to understand why other people won't do simple things that they are asked to do. When your leaders learn how resistant groups and individuals can be to risk, the leaders will not be as frustrated when they come up against the wall of "Why?" when they ask a group to "just do it!"

Exercise:

You must not let the group know what you are trying to accomplish with this exercise. Try to be assertive but not overly demanding in your requests.

1. Ask each member of the group to take off their right shoe.
2. Now have them switch their right shoe with someone else. Now, ask them to put that new shoe on. Watch the group carefully and try to ask, order, cajole, beg, or bribe those who are reluctant to put this new shoe on to comply.

Discuss how easy it was to get the group to comply with simply taking off their right shoe. Why was it easy?

When the group was asked to switch shoes with someone else, discuss how many complied. Then discuss what happened when the group was asked to put on their neighbour's shoe. Why did some people have no problem with this request while others were very reluctant?

Take the time to outline the different comfort zones and risk levels of people in different situations: when they are acting as an individual, part of a general group, in a group of their friends, in public or standing in front of their peers.

It is important to discuss that even in this group of high risk takers there are people who feel uncomfortable with a simple request that others in the group had no problem with and may have even found humorous. It is up to the leader of the activity to find the right level of risk and help the group choose their compliance level for that risk.

Apply this simple exercise to situations that your student leaders find themselves in during assemblies and home room contests. Discuss how they can assess the level of risk that a group is willing to take and still maintain the integrity of the event.

Dave Conlon

Meeting with the Principal

Many student leaders believe that since they are doing good things for the school, everyone in the school should fully support them in all of their endeavours. Frustration sets in when students find that the reality of running an academic institution sometimes runs counter to their plans for student involvement and activities. This usually happens when they meet with the administration about a new school-wide activity and find that the person in charge has some problems with their plan for this new activity. Student leaders must learn how to approach the person “in charge” and know how to present their plans in an effective and appropriate manner.

If you are planning on asking for a major change to the present way of doing things at your school, the following are some points to help the meeting process have a chance of success:

- Remember where your power as a student leader comes from. Your power comes from the principal. You need the principal on your side to make any event or changes possible.
- Gain your advisor’s approval. There is no sense in going to the principal if your advisor won’t support your plan. Administration needs to keep your advisor happy, if they want to keep the advisor.
- Do your homework. Anticipate questions the principal might ask such as: supervision, safety, liability, insurance, interruption of class time, use of facilities, clean-up, etc. When you show that you have put a lot of planning into your project, it makes it easier to allow it to proceed.
- Get organized. Organize your plan before the meeting. Decide who will attend the meeting (no more than 4). Make copies of everything you will need.
- Make an appointment with the principal’s secretary. Most students think that they can just “drop in” and ask for major changes from the administration. Principals are busy people and they appreciate people who respect their time.
- Dress appropriately for the appointment. Arrive about five minutes early.
- Briefly explain your purpose to the principal.
- Listen.
- Be willing to alter your plans to meet the principal’s concerns.
- Be willing to accept “no” if that’s the answer. This is the key point in your meeting. Ask what specific part(s) of your project the principal has a problem with. Ask if you can address these issues in a further meeting with him or her.
- Send a thank you note to the principal.

Stu Shaffer

Notable Notes

I never ceased to be amazed at how much it pleased kids or staff members that I took a minute to write a note and to send it to the student or teacher or custodian at home. There are countless reasons for doing so: to congratulate the newly elected student officer, to encourage the student or coach who suffered a big disappointment or a personal loss, to recognize the student whose achievement was not celebrated even by her friends, to thank the student or custodian whose extra help saved you a great deal of time or made the dance even more spectacular, or to congratulate the kid who overcame great odds to reach a goal. Obviously there are many more.

Some Activities Directors use school stationery or school post cards to write notes home, and this works very well. However, I often simply use plain white stationery to write these personal notes. Although I wrote hundreds through the years, I never felt that I wrote enough. They mean a great deal to the teen who is still looking for acceptance – as well as the parent. We all like to feel like we are appreciated. Put it in writing.

Bob Burton

There are 98 more nuggets like this for advisors in Bob's great book, *99 Nuggets*. This is a combo deal available from CASAA and is combined with the best-selling *Spirit Works: Turn it On* (which is for your students!). Everyone benefits from this purchase.

Quotes

Money may be the husk of many things but not the kernel. It brings you food, but not appetite; medicine, but not health; acquaintance, but not friends; servants, but not loyalty; days of joy, but not peace or happiness.

Henrik Ibsen

The one thing that doesn't abide by majority rule is a person's conscience.

Harper Lee

You probably wouldn't worry about what people think of you if you knew how seldom they do.

Olin Miller

This thing that we call "failure" is not the falling down but the staying down.

Mary Pickford

Problems arise in that one has to find a balance between what people need from you and what you need for yourself.

Jessye Norman

If you want others to be happy, practice compassion. If you want to be happy, practice compassion.

Dalai Lama

It would be a great reform if wisdom could be made to spread as easily and as rapidly as folly.

Winston Churchill

The Future Value of Volunteers

Peter Drucker is *the* management theory guru, and he has written recently on the value of the non-profit institutions and what role they have to play in the knowledge economy that we are now entering. He states that as we have become an essentially urban-based society, as opposed to the previous rural society, we need to intentionally create more opportunities for citizens "to achieve, to contribute and to matter." This is because an urban society or city does not naturally promote community the same way that a rural society does. In a rural society, community is a fact of life and necessary for survival. In the city people don't know who is on the same floor of their apartment building or who rides the transit with them every day. Human beings crave community and it is the job of the citizens of the urban society to create this community. Drucker states that "only social-sector institutions can provide opportunities to be a volunteer and thus enable individuals to have both a sphere in which they are control and a sphere in which they make a difference."

What does this mean for our schools and education system? It means that our schools must become the centers for community and not locked after 4:00 p.m. because there is no money to run programs. It means that our students must see volunteering as a contribution to their society rather than an onerous duty. Students must also be given the opportunities to learn the skills that are necessary to lead the non-profit organizations that will build community for them in the city that they live in.

Drucker is very adamant that "only the social sector, that is, the non-governmental, non-profit organizations can create what we now need, communities for citizens." As an advisor to leadership students, you have the opportunity to train your student leaders in these areas and provide the future "opportunity to achieve, to contribute and to matter."

If you want an interesting read, the article that the above quotes are from is "On Civilizing the City". It is found in Peter Drucker's recent book, *Managing in the Next Society*.

Dave Conlon

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