

ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE NEWSLETTER FOR ADVISORS AND STUDENT LEADERS ACROSS CANADA

Vol. 9 No. 1

CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF STUDENT ACTIVITY ADVISORS

Fall 2005

DWYSYWD

At the beginning of the school year, you wonder what would be the best advice you could give to your student leaders. What would put them on the right path to success for their year-long program? Kouzes and Posner, the leadership gurus, state that the three elements that people expect from their leaders are: honesty, vision, and competence. Therefore, what you can do is have them follow a simple three-step process:

1. Have a realistic plan for the year. Establish events and goals for the whole year that are within the range of your students' abilities.
2. Plan events that appeal to all groups in the school. This will make your leadership program inclusive and gain the respect of people within your school.
3. The final part is DWYSYWD. It's simple: Do What You Say You Will Do. When you follow this, you establish credibility. This is the key element that ties all of the leadership elements together.

When you follow the visionary plan, you demonstrate honesty and competence. It really doesn't matter what specific events you run, it matters that you will DWYSYWD this year.

Big Step for CASAA

It has been a long process of small steps for our association, but CASAA is finally reaching a goal that has been in mind for a while. I remember sitting on a hotel bed in Montreal in 1989 listening to a number of senior advisors talk about the possibilities of this advisor organization that we should start. It was obvious back in 1989 that advisors in Canada needed a network of support to run more than just the national conference; advisors needed resources and a central office to co-ordinate the many opportunities that we provide for students and schools. It wasn't until the next year in Burnaby that we agreed upon a name for this association.

In 1992, our first resource was published at the CSLC held in Kitchener-Waterloo. The *CASAA Student Activity Sourcebook* has now sold over 2600 copies all across Canada and the world. This book, along with the *CASAA Leadership Handbook*, was sold beyond the borders of Canada through our Internet site that first went online in 1995. Our website is now in its new revamped glory and is the top item on a Google search for "student leadership". This CASAA newsletter, *Above and Beyond*, followed in 1997 and is now mailed to over 2950 schools across Canada.

Our resource catalogue has expanded from one book to over 34 items, and two CASAA books have been translated into French. Memberships have expanded from just those people who attend conferences to schools from all across Canada who receive the monthly CASAA e-letter.

All of these accomplishments have been small steps towards our main goal of establishing a CASAA office. As of this fall, I will be teaching half-time and working on behalf of CASAA for the other half. We are finally able to say that we have taken the step away from the cardboard box under my desk to an office. It's still the same desk and the cardboard box isn't that far away, but a major step has been achieved. You can look forward to more steps this year as your CASAA membership will bring you access to more resources and entry to our online discussion groups. Our website will be a focal point of activity information and there will be a new DVD resource available soon. All of these steps keep moving our association forward, so put on your running shoes and have fun this year.

Dave Conlon

CASAA

Tongue Twisters

This is a fun lunch-time challenge activity. Have a bunch of tongue twisters put into separate envelopes. Participants come to the front microphone and stand to the left or right in front of a screen with an overhead. They pick one of the numbered envelopes and try to say the tongue twister that is found in the envelope four times—they may not look back at the screen. The audience sees the tongue twister on the overhead screen behind the victim. (The person running the overhead matches the number on the envelope to what they have prepared to display on the overhead.) The website www.geocities.com/Athens/8136/tonguetwisters.html has over 100 tongue twisters to get you started. The champion is the person who best masters the twisting language and wins a bag of Twizzlers.

BBQ Solution

We were advised by the local health department that we couldn't cook and sell hamburgers from their frozen, raw state, so we now buy a bulk box of pre-cooked burgers from M&M Meats. They come with the grill marks already painted on them, and as long as the chefs have warmed the frost out of them, the burgers are edible, and nobody is going to get a nasty bug from eating them. It's a great way to make some cash, and we make sure to open the doors and let the BBQ smell waft through the building about 10 minutes before classes are out for lunch. It's like a popcorn reflex, and the hungry ones come on the run!

Thanks Is Due

It is important to teach the art of recognition. However, too often the leadership group does not take time to recognize their own efforts within the group. This fun program allows the group to recognize the small and large things that individuals contribute to the leadership group.

Focus:

To increase understanding of positive reinforcement and to develop techniques for improving school climate.

Materials:

Purchase or make awards, trophies or tokens that represent the Magic Wand and Giant Giraffe Awards.

Wands may be made easily with dowels, metallic paper or cloth, glitter and cardboard, and ribbons. The giraffe trophy may be a ceramic or plastic model from toy, zoo, or nature outlets. Stickers on buttons or stuffed puppets and animals work as well.

Nominating ballots:

- Magic Wand Award
- Giant Giraffe Award

Process:

The Giant Giraffe Award is to be given to students who deserve to be thanked for really “sticking their necks out” by taking a risk. Actions could include doing something difficult and/or unpopular, taking a stand on an issue or really working above and beyond the call of duty.

The Magic Wand Award is to be given to students who deserve to be thanked for making M-A-G-I-C happen in your school (Making A Greater Individual Commitment).

- 1) The awards may be given after large projects or spontaneously, as students in the group realize that “thanks is due”.
- 2) Following an explanation of the awards, students complete nominating ballots. Encourage the students to distinguish between the Giant Giraffe Award and the Magic Wand Award.
- 3) After tabulating ballots, pass out all the forms to those nominated so that public recognition is received. Encourage students to keep track of previous winners so that the trophy travels through the group as much as possible.

This activity is from the new resource: *Starting in the Middle: Leadership Designs for Middle Level Students*. This is a leadership resource for elementary or middle school leadership programs. It is now available from CASAA.

Reynolds Links

We are a 9-12 school, so it is difficult to do some school-wide activities more than once every 4 years or it wouldn't have the same impact. The leadership students decided that one of their goals for this year was to do an activity that would involve the entire school and get as many people as possible to feel connected. The first thing that came to mind was the "Stars of the School" idea (each person's name is printed on a yellow star and posted in the main hallway). Because we had done that activity recently, we brainstormed other ideas. We came up with this unique idea along the same theme—called "Reynolds Links".

Step 1: A list of all the student and staff names at Reynolds Secondary was obtained.

Step 2: Very colourful card stock paper was purchased and cut into strips.

Step 3: Each person's name was written on a single strip of paper (950 students + 150 teachers, assistants, custodians, secretaries etc.)

Step 4: A gigantic chain (like a Christmas chain) was made by linking all the strips together and stapling them.

Step 5: During the Reynolds Links week, we put up posters and announcements designed to get people asking, "What is Reynolds Links!?" e.g. "Are you linked up? Find out Friday!" with a different teaser each day Mon.-Thurs.

Step 6: On Thursday night, we put the chain up above the lockers all down our main hallway and down past the library.

Step 7: On Friday, in homeroom, every single person received a candy necklace (representing a chain) and a note which read: "Thanks for being a link in the Reynolds Chain. Without you, our chain is broken." We had pre-packaged these in zip-lock bags and had them in teachers' boxes with instructions on the Thursday night.

Step 8: We included a contest on the Friday. Students filled out an entry with their name, the colour of their link and the names of the individuals linked with them to the left and right. The students wanted this element to encourage everyone to get to know someone else in the school.

We had the chain up for a full week to allow as many as possible to participate in the contest. Can you believe that it did not get broken at all! This is one thing the students were concerned about, and we decided we would quietly just keep fixing it if it did get broken. I said to them that I didn't think that it would be broken because everyone was a part of it!

The staff really liked this event too because they were included as well. It was lots of fun to watch everyone in the hall craning their necks to read all the links and find their link. Try this event and link up your school.

*Heather Coey
Reynolds Secondary, Victoria, BC*

Bodyspeak

We all know and understand body language, but it is helpful to explore the nuances that can be hidden behind different physical behaviours.

Exercise:

Have a volunteer demonstrate one of the following examples of body movements. As the person demonstrates an example, record the emotion or feeling that you think is being conveyed. Identify the physical clues that back up your answer. Discuss some of the physical changes that can be made to the body positioning that can influence or change the message. (e.g. folded arms across chest can be influenced by facial expressions and emphasized by hip position)

- Folds arms across chest
- Wrings or clenches hands
- Stands with legs spread and hands on hips
- Crosses leg, kicks foot slightly
- Strokes chin
- Keeps hands in pockets, directs eyes to floor
- Covers mouth when speaking
- Raises eyebrows
- Winks eye
- Rubs nose or pulls at ear
- Averts eyes
- Constantly clears throat
- Puts single finger across lips when listening
- Doodles on a piece of paper

Once your students understand how to decipher a physical movement, give them a specific situation and ask for the appropriate resulting body language to be demonstrated.

The Blue Club

True Colours is a personality determination exercise that will break people into one of four colours. The Blue personality is the type of person who remembers and wants to celebrate everyone's birthday. These are the people who put smiley faces and hugs and kisses at the end of their memos. Instead of looking down on this type of behaviour you can celebrate it by starting a club for them. Here are some activities that the Blue Club members will love:

Pay it Forward with Class

As a group, get your teacher's approval to schedule a day to surprise the class next door with cookies and milk. Do this for no other reason than to spread good will. Encourage the class receiving the mini-party to repay the favor, but not toward your group but to another class. Watch as they plan to outdo your efforts by doing something nice—and unsuspecting—for another class down the hall. You might see a chain reaction where your original act of kindness makes its way through the entire school, perhaps even back to your group!

Locker Recognition

Ask each teacher to anonymously select and submit the names of two or three students who have either done well at a particular project or showed some real improvement or contributed in a special way. Then, surprise these students by decorating their lockers with congratulatory streamers and balloons. Make certain each recipient knows the reasons that they are being honoured.

Rumour Clinic: A Communications Experiment

Focus: To have students experience the distortions which may occur in transmission of information.

Time Required: 45 minutes

Location: classroom

Materials: newsprint, pens, handout: *Rumour Clinic Observation Form*

Process:

1. Ask for six volunteers. Have five of the six volunteers leave the classroom to a location where they can easily be called back to the room, yet will be unable to hear or see the proceedings in the classroom.
2. Distribute student handout, *Rumor Clinic Observation Form* to the remainder of the class. The class will act as observers. Explain that they are to track the evolution of the message and they are not to assist the volunteers in any way.
3. Read at a normal, conversational speed just one time the “accident report” as it appears on the *Rumor Clinic Observation Form* to the volunteer who stayed in the room. The volunteer should listen carefully, but should **not** be allowed to take notes.
4. Have one of the volunteers return from the isolation area. The first volunteer repeats (only once) to the second what he/she heard. It is important that each volunteer transmit the message without any help.
5. A third volunteer returns and the second repeats what he/she heard from the first. The process is repeated until all volunteers have heard the message.
6. The sixth (final) volunteer is told that he/she is to assume the role of a police officer and must write out the “accident report” on newsprint so that the entire group can read it.
7. Post the original message so that it can be compared with the police officer's version.

Summary Items

(questions to help students understand and apply to “real life”)

- How accurate was the transmission of the “accident report”?
- From where did the inaccuracies come?
- How could the accuracy of the report be improved?
- Do you use these accuracy improvement techniques in your everyday conversations?
- What implications does this experience have for you as you hear rumors or other “Did you hear what . . . ?”

Variations

- a. The succession of messages can be recorded (audio or video) for replay.
 - b. Rewrite the message to be more pertinent to your group.
 - c. The entire class can be used as conveyers of messages. Groups of six are formed and five members from each group are sent to the isolation area. Read a different message to the remaining member of each group.
 - d. Construct more messages to allow other members of the class a chance to experience the rumor clinic process.
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Rumour Clinic Observation Form

Accident Report:

“I cannot wait to report this accident to the police. I must get to the hospital as soon as possible.”

“The delivery truck, heading south, was turning right at the intersection when the sports car, heading north, attempted to turn left. When they saw that they were turning into the same lane, they both honked their horns but continued to turn without slowing down. In fact, the sports car seemed to be accelerating just before the crash.”

Volunteer	<i>Additions</i>	<i>Deletions</i>	<i>Distortions</i>
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			

This exercise is from the resource: *Building Leaders for Life: A High School Leadership Class Curriculum*. It was put together by the Washington State Principals Association and is available from CASAA.

Blue Club Too!

Public Displays of Affection

Reserve an easily accessible area at school with a bulletin board or display case. Use this space to post public notes of appreciation. Use a drop box to collect notes and select new ones to display each week.

Service with a Smile

Secretly select one school day to spoil each staff member. As the teachers pull into their parking spaces before classes begin, your group could go to the designated teacher to cheer, open the car door and usher him or her into school to be met by rousing applause from other students. From there, another student group could escort that teacher into the classroom while carrying his or her books and briefcase. Finally, bring the designated teacher coffee and a bagel along with a certificate of appreciation. Can you think of a better way for a teacher to start the school day?

School Mugging

There is a lot of talk about violence in schools, but how about mugging people in a nice way? Pick a student or staff member a week and have a public mugging. At a designated time, you arrive in this person's classroom and present them with a school mug. You can fill the mug with coffee, hot chocolate or just Tim Hortons coupons. You will be amazed how many people want to get mugged when there's free stuff being handed out!

Perseverance Tool

Stanford professor, Lewis Terman, studied fifteen hundred gifted kids for several decades and found that high intelligence was a poor predictor of success. Only a small portion of the highly intelligent group did succeed. The group who succeeded had one thing in common. They had all learned the value of perseverance and not giving up, and they had all learned it before they left high school. It was that trait that was most critical in helping them succeed.

Procrastination Tool

Most people know that this is not a good tool to use, and they promise to stop using it some time the next week or the week after. People, who procrastinate regularly, do this because they are addicted to the feeling of crisis. They feel alive under pressure and will believe that they do some of their best work at the last minute. There are many students who are impressed with their essays that they put together the night before. However, when the final result is judged against being done or not being done, the completed option will always appear better.

The best way to cure yourself from using the procrastination tool is to break the job into small bits with finite dates for completion. This involves some backwards planning, but it will sharpen your organization tool as well. This method will provide smaller hits of crisis mode rather than being overwhelmed when the final due date is tomorrow.

Gratitude Activity

In our North American culture, we have become oblivious to the abundance that surrounds us. Our lives are cushioned by good food, education and good health. Unless we travel to underdeveloped countries and work directly with the people there, poverty can be just a situation that someone else has because they haven't worked hard enough.

The simple act of saying a meaningful grace before meals has been lost in most families because we are too rushed or busy to take the time to be grateful. In her thoughtful and profound book, *Simple Abundance*, Sarah Ban Breathnach emphasizes the importance of taking time everyday to reflect upon those things for which we are grateful. If we can cultivate that same sense of awareness within each of the student leaders we meet, we can help them to not only enrich their own lives but also the lives of those around them.

Activity:

1. To begin, make a few points with your students about the importance of cultivating a grateful attitude in each of our lives.
2. Break your council groups into groups of four or five. Give each person in the group the worksheet and ask them to fill it out.
3. Have the small groups sit in a circle and give each group a die. Each face of the die corresponds to one of the six items on the worksheet. Each person takes turns rolling the die. Whatever number comes up is the number the group discusses. For example, if a person rolled the number 3, each person in the group would describe their most treasured possession and why it is important to them.

GRATICUBE Worksheet

"Gratitude unlocks the fullness of life. It turns what we have into enough and more. It turns denial into acceptance, chaos to order, confusion to clarity. It can turn a meal into a feast, a house into a home, a stranger into a friend. Gratitude makes sense of our past, brings peace for today, and creates a vision for tomorrow."

Melody Beattie

I Am Grateful For:

1. A significant person in my life: _____
2. An experience that defined me: _____
3. My most treasured possession: _____
4. Something related to my school: _____
5. A skill or talent I use everyday: _____
6. Anything at all: _____

Bob Tryanski

Connecting Disconnected Students

Students who are connected to a school and the programs that a school offers are the students who will do best academically and socially within school. Disconnected students will join the ranks of the disaffected within your building, and everyone is welcome in the Disaffection Club. The challenge becomes: how do we attempt to connect the disconnected and positively affect the disaffected?

One thing to understand immediately is that not every student is ready to be connected. You may have a great program or process in place to help these students, but it is impossible to plug someone into an existing program who does not want to be connected. It may be that you have to find the right person to approach the student or you might have to find the right time to make the offer, but discovering and meeting the needs of the disconnected is often a long and frustrating process.

Many students do not participate or attempt to connect because they have not developed the skills necessary to become part of a group. These individuals have grown up on the outside of groups because of economic or social issues. They may not have been on teams as a child or part of lessons because of the costs. They may not have been part of youth clubs because of a lack of parental support. It is in these early experiences with groups that they will develop the skills necessary to become and exist within a group. These skills include: decision making, communication, problem solving, and lack of confidence in individual worth.

Therefore, how do you attempt to connect the disconnected? You create or design a program just for them.

At EDSS, we run coffee houses that are designed to connect the disconnected. Yes, there are connected students participating, but our target audience and target participants are the disconnected student and friends. Music is one passion that many of these students share, and they are often willing to show more dedication and commitment to practicing with their instrument than they have ever demonstrated in school. The event is low-tech and low threat. If you can make it successfully through a song, you can make it up on stage. We also attempt to not have the connected students run too much of the program, because this scares of the target audience that we're aiming at.

I am suspicious of any program that touts amazing results in connecting the disconnected. This group has many reasons to opt out and even the good programs make only small steps away from the comfort of the Disaffection Club. The key to connection is finding something that the Disaffection Club is interested in and going to them rather than expecting them to come to you. It's worth it in the long run, because even a friend of the guy on stage will feel connected if your program is working.

Dave Conlon

Organization Tool

Why do organized people get more things done in a week?

This is because organized people have good command of the tools of organization. There is also a difference between busy people and organized people. To demonstrate this do the following: Take a huge pile of clothing and one suitcase. Try to get as many pieces of clothing in the suitcase as possible, just by stuffing them in. On your second attempt, fold all the pieces neatly and pack them in the suitcase. What instance do you get more clothing in the suitcase?

The suitcase represents your week. It is a finite amount of space/time and you can only get so many things accomplished. If you just stuff the things into your timetable, you will be busy and get things done. But, if you plan and organize, you will accomplish more during the week.

Planning Tool

Paper is the best planning tool. It takes ideas and concepts from the world of maybe and should to the reality of goals and deadlines. Using your planning tool is like folding your clothes before you put them in the suitcase. Busy people find planning to be unproductive because you don't seem to be busy doing something. However, planning saves time and accomplishes more in the end.

It is a good use of your planning tool to keep an agenda up-to-date. Take 10 minutes each day to use your agenda and you will accomplish more and not miss those important details.

Quotes

If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader.

John Quincy Adams

Be not afraid of moving slowly; be afraid only of standing still.

Chinese proverb

When one door closes, another door opens; but we so often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door, that we do not see the ones which open for us.

Alexander Graham Bell

I have often wondered how it is that every man loves himself more than all the rest of men, but yet sets less value on his own opinion of himself than on the opinion of others.

Marcus Aurelius (121-180)

The leaders who work most effectively, it seems to me, never say 'I.' And that's not because they have trained themselves not to say 'I.' They don't think 'I.' They think 'we'; they think 'team.' They understand their job to be to make the team function. They accept responsibility and don't sidestep it, but 'we' gets the credit.... This is what creates trust, what enables you to get the task done.

Peter Drucker

Don't say you don't have enough time. You have exactly the same number of hours per day that were given to Helen Keller, Pasteur, Michaelangelo, Mother Teresa, Leonardo da Vinci, Thomas Jefferson, and Albert Einstein.

H. Jackson Brown Jr.

Useful Skills

What was the most useful thing that you learned in high school? That's an interesting question to ask your students and list the group's responses.

One of the most useful things that I learned in high school was how to type—yes, in the good ol' days before MSN there were typing classes. It was the one skill that I can say helped me after high school and is still being used as I write this article. At the time, I didn't know how useful it would be because we seemed to spend a lot of time trying to sabotage the manual typewriters for the people in the next class.

Since I left my high school, I have never multiplied a negative number by another negative number, nor have I figured out the volume of a cone. Most of the math that I learned in high school was useful only because learning it gave me the opportunity to go where I wanted to go.

The question becomes: What is a useful skill and what is a skill that you can use to get somewhere?

Leadership skills learned through activities are useful *and* they can be used to get you somewhere. Learning how to run an election is a skill that for most is just a way of getting somewhere. Learning how to use a planner is a useful skill that can be used continually after your high school experience.

Some things you learn in school are the bricks and mortar of basic knowledge. You should know your geography today especially when you're booking flights online, or you'll end up in New Brunswick instead of Newfoundland (my wife's hairdresser made that mistake confusing the Johns). The times table and simple spelling rules are these basic elements of knowledge. Other things you learn are the keys to doors that you want to open.

I still believe that involving students in running events is a way of getting them to use their leadership toolbox. These are truly useful skills that they can learn to use and become adept at using. These leadership tools are the *useful* skills that can be learned in high school.

Dave Conlon

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This newsletter has been printed with the generous support of **Premier School Agendas**. Contact Premier Agendas on the internet at www.premieragendas.ca for the office near you.