

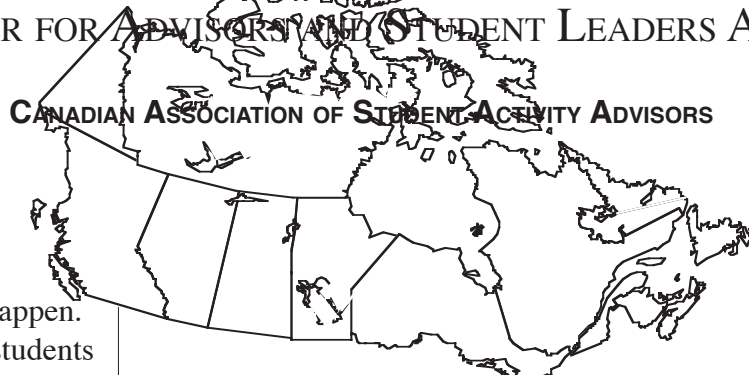
ABOVE AND BEYOND

THE NEWSLETTER FOR ADVISORS AND STUDENT LEADERS ACROSS CANADA

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Leading is Making

Good leaders make things happen. This sounds so simple, but students must understand *how* to make good things happen. A popular motivational speaker named Phil Boyte says that to change the spirit of a school you must “be what you want to see.” This is how you really *make* things happen.

One normal part of being involved in activities is the feeling that nobody else in the school seems to be as spirited or involved as you and your fellow student leaders seem to be. Many student leaders get discouraged by trying to *make* others into active participants. The reality is that you can bring about change by *being* what you want to see at your school. This approach takes more time, but it is more effective in the long run. This is an important aspect of being a leader. You are setting an example of behaviour that others will follow.

Fun and spirit is infectious and being spirited in the stands at a school basketball game will attract more people than standing in front of them and asking/demanding/pleading that they cheer for the home team. You will *make* good things happen in your school when people willingly join your positive, spirited approach to leading.

Taking Leadership Activities Public

It is important for advisors to understand the full implications of teaching leadership students through the use of school-wide activities. When a student completes a school project and hands it in to a teacher in an academic class, the evaluation of the project – the mark – is shared usually only between the teacher and the individual student. When a student completes a school activity in student leadership, the audience is no longer just the classroom teacher. Also, the project is not shared between a few people in a single classroom. This is a positive thing because it makes the activity and the learning more real, but it places new stresses on the student and the advisor responsible for the activity.

Using school-wide activities as student leadership class projects mean that students who work hard on their projects will have them judged by fellow students and staff members from the whole school community. There are individual classroom projects that fail and the result is a poor mark. There are also activities that will fail and the result should not be the questioning of the validity of the activity program, but a focus on the learning that is taking place. You must have the support of your administration and the understanding from your staff that learning is happening as the students promote and produce their varied activities.

However, the hardest part of the advisor/teacher leading these types of activities is when to let a student fail and when to step in and make sure that public failure does not happen too harshly. The only thing to do is to make sure that the student's project has been checked at different points along the way to production. Student leadership is learning through running activities and the advisor must be willing and able to let this learning take place. The true school-wide benefit is that your students will probably work harder and produce better results on a whole school project than any individual classroom project. Once you take your leadership activities public, your investment in student learning will pay great dividends for all.

Dave Conlon

CASAA

Meeting Monopolizers

Here are some methods you can use to handle difficult people who try to seize control of a meeting:

Monopolizers interrupt often, ramble and repeat because they enjoy hearing themselves talk. Method: Don't argue with them but don't hesitate to confront them.

Wait for them to come up for air and interrupt them by name. Note that they've made their point and immediately invite someone else to comment on the topic.

Distracters seek attention. To get it, they'll often bring up irrelevant topics that waste time.

Method: Firmly halt distracters, restate the meeting purpose and ask them to answer a specific question to get them to focus on the main topic.

Skeptics fault everything you or others say.

Method: Have a friendly talk with skeptics before the meeting and firmly say what behavior you expect. If that fails, cut them off by repeating that you want solutions, not criticism. Then ask them to contribute.

Snipers resort to stage-whispered, snide comments to challenge your authority by switching attention from you to them.

Method: Shine the spotlight on them and bluntly ask them to share their comments with everyone. Most will be so embarrassed that they'll decline.

Source: *Talking With Confidence for the Painfully Shy*, by Don Gabor, Crown Publishers Inc.

Making Meetings Matter

Question:

I was wondering what I could do as the President of my Student Council to get a better attendance at meetings. I usually call a monthly meeting and last time only half of my group showed up.

Answer:

There are many reasons for meetings to suffer from attendance problems, but the following are some of the ways to convince more people into seeing your meetings as being important enough for them to attend.

- **Purpose:** Has your group defined its purpose, its reason for existing or is it assumed that everyone just knows? Although this may seem to be a boring thing to do, it is a fundamental element. Once you know why you exist, you can direct your agenda items to promote your mission at your school.
- **Plan/Structure:** Does your group have a plan and an organization that is structured to put the plan into action? Does your group have a memory — last year's plan — or are you constantly trying to create from scratch as you go along? This is a tough thing to do. Does your structure include permanent and temporary task roles? Do all members have a participatory role?
- **Facilities/Resources:** Do you have a specific space in your school? Not just for storage, but also for meeting, sitting and talking. Have you established a home for your student council that your student council will fit into?
- **Incentives:** Should you be giving prizes for attending meetings? Sometimes you could have coffee/juice and other times have donuts, but these should be courtesy offerings and not intended to be incentives for people to attend meetings. Bribery works once and then people must feel it is important to come on their own initiative.
- **Advisor(s):** You really need a strong advisor(s). Strong means a teacher who is really interested and believes deeply in your purpose. Perhaps your principal can help, and you may also gain support from your parent council/group.

Your meeting problems can be solved. My suggestion for groups that are experiencing problems is for them to set specific goals to ensure the above questions are answered.

Dave Garvie
John Diefenbaker High School
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Processing the Learning Experience

One of the most important elements in teaching is processing the learning experience. This is no less important in the teaching of leadership. Too frequently teachers assume that the students understand the purpose of an exercise or activity. Many students get so involved in winning the game or solving the challenge provided by the activity that they feel processing is the “boring” part of learning. In actual fact, processing a learning experience is where real learning can take place.

The following questions help students draw conclusions, interpret information and experience, generalize and apply information.

Describing:

What happened during the activity? Give the sequence of events.

What really went on? Give details when you describe the activity.

Who had the same experience/saw or felt the same? Who felt differently?

What did you really observe?

How do you know you are correct? Check it with others.

Measuring Feelings: Personal reaction

How did I feel during the event? How do I feel now?

How did I react to others during the event?

Did I feel conflict in my feelings?

Interpreting: Making sense of data.

How do I account for what happened?

What does the event mean to me?

How was it good/bad/indifferent?

What did I learn here?

What do I better understand about myself/my group/my goals/ the process? Why?

Generalizing: Drawing connections

What does all of this suggest to me? (in general/specifically)

What principles do I see operating here?

Can I see any relationship between this experience and others I have had?

What did I learn . . . relearn?

Applying: For future use

How can I use what I have learned?

Where can I use what I have learned?

What changes will I make because of what I have learned?

What would I do differently/same?

General open-ended questions:

I felt . . .

I was surprised . . .

I learned . . .

I know now . . .

from The Michigan Association of Student Councils (MASC)

A Song of Leadership

Many popular songs of today and yesterday have great leadership lessons contained in their lyrics. Students are very aware of music, but it is valuable to make them aware of the important messages that many songs contain. Once this assignment has been completed a few times, you will have a good library of music to use for leadership themes and lessons.

Assignment:

- select a song that has a particular meaning from a leadership perspective.
- type out the lyrics to the song and make an overhead transparency of the lyrics.
- make a cassette tape copy of the song.
- write a two-page paper explaining why the song selected has a leadership meaning.
- give a presentation to the class explaining why this song was selected as one that can be used in a student leadership situation. Give some specific examples of the connection to leadership. Use the cassette of the song and the overhead of the lyrics in the presentation.

These assignments can be saved and the music and lyrics used in leadership situations in the years to come.

Tom Heethuis

Shave for a Cure

This year our class held a fundraising project for the Leukemia Foundation. We asked about 12 male teachers with beards to shave their facial hair off for charity, and asked what price they would like to pay for their beards. The range of beard prices were from about \$200 – \$900. We put the names and prices of these teachers' beards on a notice board, and as soon as we had raised enough money, we stuck a picture of scissors next to the teacher's name. We made announcements at school and posters, and at lunchtime asked for people to donate small change. After two weeks we had raised \$800. On the Friday, the gym was packed, we had music playing, and the teachers sat on chairs, contemplating the shaving. We had MC's, mirror girls, and photographers. After each teacher had been shaven, they quickly took a walk down the mock 'catwalk', and the whole school applauded their efforts. It was a great day, which raised school spirit and our awareness of Leukemia.

*Leanne H
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Popular Advertising

One popular way to promote school events is to place custom-made stickies on pop (soda) cans that are available in the cafeteria or vending machines. Students make up labels on a computer (or just with a marker or crayon) and you stick them to the cans, so that when students buy a can of pop, the advertising is right there!

Chris Korte

POWER Pizza for World Food Day

On October 16th, people from all over the world commemorate World Food Day. Established by the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, World Food Day gives all of us an opportunity to focus on efforts to combat hunger and malnutrition in our own communities and around the world. October 16th is the anniversary of the founding of the FAO, and World Food Day is observed in more than 150 countries worldwide. Its objectives are to heighten public awareness of the problem of world hunger and to focus attention on agriculture and food production.

The POWER leadership team at Grande Prairie Composite High School planned and produced a powerful pizza fundraiser to recognize World Food Day. (POWER is an acronym for Presenting Opportunities Where Everyone Rises.)

Jeff Ostrom, a student leader, came up with the idea to support World Food Day by exchanging a slice of pizza for two non-perishable food items or to sell the pizza for \$1.50. If you brought in two more non-perishable food items or \$1.00, you could have a can of pop. The lunch hour sale raised close to \$500.00 and collected over 250 food items which were donated to the local food bank.

Jeff did a great deal of the work himself obtaining close to 30 business sponsors from the city of Grande Prairie. Each business had the opportunity to sponsor any amount of large pizzas. Plaques were given out to the top three sponsors. A local pizza company gave a 30% discount on each large pizza and the cafeteria supported the pizza sale as well. The POWER team ordered a variety of 60 pizzas and enjoyed selling the pizza and collecting the food items.

The positive response from the business community guaranteed the success of this project, and businesses were recognized for their support in our local paper. The local paper donated half the advertisement space as well. We think that this idea was a POWERful win/win for all in our community.

*Jim Telfer
Grande Prairie Composite High School*

Rock Solid Thanks

Teachers deal with lots of paper everyday, so a personal paperweight is a great staff appreciation gift. A simple project is to create pet rocks for all of your staff with acrylic paint and a few creative ideas. Paint a colourful rock for a history teacher stating that *Classics Rock!!* and you will have created a memento that will be appreciated and used. Rocks are cheap and the more personalized you can make the messages, the more they will be treasured.

Theme Day Library

The following is a collection of spirit day ideas from schools all around North America. At least one of them will be right for you. Understand that each event has a different risk level for students, so pick one that will meet with the greatest approval rating in your school. Be sure to get approval and support from your administration first before proceeding with any spirit day ideas!

Salad Dressing Day - Dress like your favourite salad dressing (e.g.. Ranch (cowboy), Italian, French, etc.)

Holiday Day - Dress like your favourite holiday (e.g.. Santa, Easter Bunny, etc.)

Come Dressed for Work Day - Wear current work uniforms or future occupation attire or parent's occupation attire

Movie Theme Day - Pick a movie and plan the day (e.g.. Grease, Star Wars, etc.)

Fake Hair Day

Fake an Injury Day

All Sports Day

Slipper Day

Stuffed Animal Day

International Day

Pyjama Day

Hat Day

Superhero Day

Dress Like Someone You're Not Day

School Colours Day

Fake Tattoo Day

Sunglasses Day

Hawaiian Day

Wacky Hair Day

Dress Like Your Favourite Teacher

50's, 60's, 70's, 80's, 90's Day

Incognito Day

Button Day

Flood Pants Day

Summer in Winter Day

Winter in Summer Day

Knee Pad Day

Leather Day

Bring Your Pet to School Day

Toga Day

Kriss Kross Day

Little Kid Day

Twin Day

Rollerblade Day

Western Day

Class T-shirt Day

Jungle Day

Concert T-shirt Day

Pro Sportswear Day

Retro Day

Western Day

Disco Day

Spy Day

Ugly Tie Day

Tips for a successful Theme Day

- All members of the organizing group must participate. Don't ask others to do what you are unwilling to do.
- If theme days are new to your school, start with a low risk choice.
- Never run it on a Monday. You need a few school days in a row to hype the activity.
- Make sure that the theme activity has wide appeal in your school. It can't be successful if the only group that likes it are the organizers.

Icebreakers

Icebreakers are a great way to break down the barriers in a new group. These activities can warm up a room and get people to know each other in different ways.

Jelly Beans R Us

Ask the participants to take some jelly beans, as many as they want. After everyone has their beans, you tell them that for every bean they took, they have to tell one thing about themselves.

Be Prepared

This is similar to the jelly bean activity. Tell the participants that you are going on a weekend camping trip together and they need to grab as much toilet paper as they will need to survive the weekend. Each participant must then count out the number of squares that they have taken and tell one piece of information about themselves for each square.

The Bean Game

Material: 10 beans per participant
Each participant is to move about the room, challenging one player at a time to guess if the number of beans concealed in his/her closed hand is odd or even. If the person responds correctly, he/she gets the beans. If he/she responds incorrectly, he/she must give away the number of beans that was in the player's hand. The object of the activity is to collect the most beans in a given amount of time. A player is eliminated once he/she has lost all his/her beans. Encourage participants to challenge a different person each time.

Creepers for Peepers

“Jeepers creepers, we need your old peepers” is the slogan for a great community service activity called Sight Night. Sight Night is an eyeglasses collection project organized around trick-or-treat in your community. Sight Night is sponsored by LensCrafters and Lions Clubs International. Volunteers from Lions, LensCrafters and other organizations across North America canvass their neighbourhoods and collect used eyeglasses during trick-or-treat.

All colours, shapes and sizes of children’s and adult’s eyeglasses and sunglasses are needed — prescription and nonprescription. Collected eyeglasses are cleaned, repaired and hand-delivered during optical missions to developing countries. These missions are sponsored by Lions, LensCrafters and in Canada only, Operation EyeSight Universal.

You can obtain more information about Sight Night Collection by visiting the website: www.sightnight.org. To partner with a LensCrafters store for Sight Night, contact the Gift of Sight Captain or the store’s general manager in August or early September. For the location of the LensCrafters store nearest to you, call 1-800-541-LENS.

If your school is not near a LensCrafters location or would like to conduct the activity on its own, e-mail: gos@lionsclubs.org for a Sight Night Collection kit.

A Puzzling Proposition

Goal setting is a process where you attempt to visualize the end before you start a project. Many students do not take the time to think about where they are headed as a destination, as they are happy to start and simply continue the journey. This activity demonstrates the difficulties of not having a clear goal in mind when you begin and attempt to continue your activity without having a clear goal in mind.

Time required: 25 minutes

Materials needed: Four different simple puzzles (20 - 40 pieces) each placed in a manila envelope along with a photocopy of the puzzle box cover.

Activity: Prior to starting this activity, the manila envelopes containing the puzzle pieces should be set up in four separate stations in the room and the photocopies of the box covers should be taken out of the envelopes and set up as follows:

- envelope A — photocopy set on top of envelope
- envelope B — photocopy removed and made not available
- envelope C — photocopy removed and set on envelope B
- envelope D — photocopy removed from station and pieces of puzzle taken out and placed upside down (pieces must remain face down for the remainder of this activity)

This will produce the following set up:

- envelope A — pieces used face up with correct picture
- envelope B — pieces used face up with wrong picture
- envelope C — pieces used face up without picture
- envelope D — pieces used face down without picture

Divide the class into four groups. Each group will try each puzzle set up. Announce that the goal of this activity is to complete all four puzzles in the next 15 minutes and that all members must be involved in assembling the puzzles. After about three minutes rotate the groups.

Discussion:

1. Ask which group worked the hardest.
2. Why was puzzle A completed first?
3. Which puzzle was more difficult: puzzle B or C?
4. Why was puzzle D so difficult?
5. How important is it to have a clear picture of what the final product will look like when working on a project?
6. How important is it that you check your progress along the way?
7. How did a clear picture of the goal help the success of the project?

Nurture Leadership with Recognition

An important part of nurturing leadership is to give recognition to your members for doing a good job. Students feel good when they receive such recognition and in turn, learn the importance of giving positive recognition to others. Your positive strokes need not break the bank. Many small items available at craft stores, candy stores or dollar stores can be used for clever ways to express appreciation. Next time you need to say “good job,” try the following:

- A jeweled star on the end of a two inch pipe cleaner or toothpick to make a *magic* wand with “You created magic for the ____.”
- A die with “No matter how you roll the dice, your hard work on the ____ paid off in its success!”
- A birthday cake candle with “Although it seemed you had to burn the candle at both ends, your work made the ____ a flaming success!”
- A bundle of miniature silk roses with “You certainly deserve a dozen roses for your hard work on ____.”
- Faceted costume jewels with “You’ve been a jewel to work so hard to make the ____ successful.”
- Fish stickers, erasers, or Swedish fish with “I know you’re not fishing for compliments, but your work as ____ was an outstanding success.” or “I know it seemed as if you were sometimes swimming upstream, but your hard work on the ____ certainly paid off.”
- A globe key chain with “Your efforts made a world of a difference in making the ____ a success!” or “There’s no one on earth like you! The ____ would not have happened without your hard work!”
- A paper clip with “Your work on the ____ held us together.”
- A pencil top eraser with “No mistaking it, your contributions made the ____ the success it was.”
- A sneaker eraser with “Just do it? I’ll say you did! Your leadership on the ____ was exceptional.”
- Wrapped peppermint candy with “The work you put in on the ____ was worth a mint! Thank you so much for your help!”
- A piece of chalk with “Chalk up another successful ____ . Thanks for helping to ensure its accomplishment!”
- A hand or mitten shaped mini cookie cutter or wooden cutout with “Thanks for lending a hand at the ____ . Your help made it the hands-on-experience it was!”
- A crayon with “Thanks for making your mark on the ____ . You can colour it completely successful.”
- A key with “Your hard work on the ____ was the real key to its success.”
- A Lego™ building block with “You are one of the building blocks of our success. Thanks for the work you did on the ____ project!”
- A plastic star-shaped bead with “Thanks for being the star of the ____.”
- A Christmas tree light bulb with “Your help and hard work helped to light up the success of our ____.”
- A miniature compass with “You kept the ____ moving in the right direction to provide a successful ____.”
- Give candy bars with corresponding messages. For example, a Mars bar with “Your efforts on ____ were out of this world.” or a Mr. Big with “Your big efforts helped to make our events a success.” Or, “When it came down to Crunch time, your help on the ____ made all the difference in the world.” Or a box of Smarties with “Your intelligent contributions made the activity a colourful success!”

Barbara Lord

This article first appeared in the
NASSP-DSA publication
Leadership for Student Activities

Quotes

Never look down on anybody unless you're helping him up.

Jesse Jackson

A parrot talks much but flies little.

Wilbur Wright

I claim to be an average man of less than average ability. I have not the shadow of doubt than any man or woman can achieve what I have, if he or she would make the same effort and cultivate the same hope and faith.

Mahatma Gandhi

It's what you learn after you know it all that's important.

Earl Weaver

Every animal leaves traces of what it was; man alone leaves traces of what he created.

Jacob Bronowski

Life is change. Growth is optional. Choose wisely.

Karen Kaiser Clark

Peace has its victories, but it takes brave men and women to win them.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

In matters of style, swim with the current; in matters of principle, stand like a rock.

Thomas Jefferson

It is the individual who is not interested in his fellow men who has the greatest difficulties in life and provides the greatest injury to others. It is from among such individuals that all human failures spring.

Alfred Adler

Advisors Require Support

The following quote appeared in the October 2000 issue of *Principal Leadership* magazine published by NASSP. It alludes to much of the philosophy related to Student Activities and the development of student leadership that is supported by CASAA.

A successful student government requires a dedicated advisor and principal and an immense amount of time and energy, but the payoff is a student government that is recognized by the student body as a real source of leadership and service to the school community.

If student governments are intended to educate students to be intelligent participating members of our democracy, advisors must be selected carefully and given the training, the salary, and the teaching schedules that reflect the seriousness and the significance of their responsibility. Too often, advisors are given the title but not the preparation, the salary, or the administrative support they need to fulfill their responsibilities.

What the above paragraphs state is true for all schools. Student leadership is important to the whole school community and it must be recognized with time, support and resources. Too many advisors are placed in the position with no support and few resources, and as a result the turnover in the advisor position is akin to a revolving door every three years. It takes about four years to fully change a school from a negative atmosphere to one that encourages students to care, participate and believe in their school and local community.

Too often the person who begins this positive change is burned out before the change can be fully realized. Take the time to push for support and resources for your student leadership advisor at your school before it's too late. We must begin to understand that student leadership in 2001 is more than running a dance and hanging posters for the Prom. It is about giving students tangible lessons in leadership, and these lessons produce activities that help our schools improve and connect with all students.

Dave Conlon

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