

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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Involvement

Motivated and involved students have a tough time figuring out why the unmotivated students aren't as excited about life as they are. Many students get frustrated when they run an event that NOBODY wants to participate in.

You first have to decide whether you want them to be there as an audience or be a participant. This is important because the event must be chosen that will suit your chosen audience and participants. Not everyone will wear boxer shorts on their head, but many people will turn up to watch the principal do it.

Be aware of the reach of the advertising you are using. The best morning PA announcements just announce. Excellent posters will only notify. Stopping someone in the hallway and inviting them to the dance is the most powerful advertising that you can use — it is also the most labour intensive but it will generate your best results.

Be aware of the power of NOBODY and EVERYBODY. In your one-on-one promotion, let the person know that EVERYBODY will be there.

There is no magic dust that guarantees that your event will be fantastic. It is the people who organize it and the individuals who participate who make any event successful.

The Best of Times . . . the Worst of Times . . .

This is a very exciting time for CASAA and an exceptionally trying time for activity advisors in most parts of Canada. We know of the difficult situations in BC, Alberta and Quebec, and here in Ontario things are getting back to a different kind of normal. Other provinces have had work stoppages and “work to rule” situations around activities. This is not good for education, and it's certainly not good for kids.

Being a true optimist means that when your beer is half full, you are only half a glass to another beer! Instead of crying in our beer, let's look at what CASAA *has* accomplished. This is the fifth year that we have delivered this newsletter to secondary schools across Canada. The Canadian Student Leadership Conference (CSLC) is now in its eighteenth year with our visit to Saskatoon in September, 2002. Two of our CASAA resources have now been translated into French, and we have the *7 Habits for Effective Teens* available in French in our print resource list. The CASAA website has been providing help for over six years to advisors and students seeking assistance, ideas and resources so they can become more effective in their responsibilities. Finally, we are now registered as a non profit organization, which allows us to pursue funding in a brand new way.

Up until now, CASAA has been a volunteer organization that generates its funds through the sales of resources and the collection of memberships at CSLC's. The next concrete step for CASAA is to support an office that coordinates resources, produces information and provides a central source of lobbying for the importance of co-curricular activities. This is why you will find a CASAA membership application enclosed in this newsletter. It is now time for the schools in Canada to support their own endeavours by purchasing a CASAA membership. This support will help us through these trying times and bring us to the next level of support for activities and student leadership in Canada.

Dave Conlon

CASAA

Community Involvement Fair

One of the complaints that students have about volunteering is that they don't know who is looking for volunteers. Solve this problem by inviting local charities, associations and volunteer groups to your school for a community involvement fair. This fair can run during the school day or just at lunch times, but bringing the agencies to your students will provide the opportunity for involvement to happen.

Students in Ontario have a minimum of 40 hours of community service to accomplish before they receive their diploma. Once students realize all of the opportunities for involvement in your community, they will be able to contribute in a positive way.

Souper Olympics

One of the keys to successful food drives is establishing a unique approach that keeps students interested in participating. It's unfortunate, but unrealistic to expect people to continue to contribute just because it's a worthwhile cause.

Consider sponsoring competitions using cans of soup to get into the Olympic spirit and help the food banks in your area at the same time. Teams from each class compete to create a soup can sculpture, fill shopping carts with soup or create souped-up relay races. It's a great way to have a souper time and help the food banks in your area at the same time.

Band Fest Attracts All Kinds!

Every Student Council I have ever worked with has faced a similar challenge of trying to plan activities that will involve or interest a large number or a wide variety of students in our school. Particularly difficult to entertain it seems, are the kids who choose to maintain a distance from the mainstream student body by their demeanour, dress or music preference.

At BRCI we have had great success with an activity that grew out of a simple plan to have live music at our pep rallies. Who knew we had so many bands (and I use the term loosely) in our school? Although it was quickly apparent that most of the groups who auditioned were either too loud or not polished enough to play the pep rally gig, it did inspire our SRC to create a venue for them to perform and Bedford Roadstock was born. Now in its third year, this five day outdoor band fest is held in May on the football field with the bands supplying their own equipment and the SRC providing the flat deck, the roadies and the publicity.

Each band has to submit an audition tape and a play list which is screened mainly for content. They also sign a contract agreeing to be responsible for their own expenses and to keep to the play list. (Serious deviations from the play list result in the plug being pulled during their performance. Only happened once!) The SRC added to the whole rock concert atmosphere by obtaining a sponsorship from Coke, who provided all kinds of giveaways, id cards and of course, product.

Students were encouraged to bring blankets to sit on but some tables and chairs were set up to form a little *gardens* area. Some of the more artsy types were encouraged to set up booths where they sold their own hand made items. Lots of fans choose to play frisbee and /or friendly games of soccer on the playing field. Staff were asked to help supervise one noon hour during the week and seemed quite happy to hang around outside, watch the kids and listen to the music. The only real problem we encountered (other than the odd weather- induced scramble to the previously booked auditorium) was that the outdoor venue attracted students from other schools and offended one or two neighbourhood residents. Some yard raking and notices to the community in advance the next year worked to smooth out the ruffled feathers and the students from other schools were simply asked to stay outside the school property. All in all a great activity that gives a few up-and-coming musicians their 15 minutes of fame while involving a large percentage of the student body in a low risk activity.

*Alison R Montgomery
Bedford Road Collegiate
Saskatoon SK*

from the CASAA listserv

The following question was posted:

We have had a problem getting our athletic association members to attend our regular Monday meetings. We used to have 40 members, but now there are less than 10 attending. Is there any creative method for getting your message across for meetings and other programs?

We have a “coming attractions” board in our main foyer that highlights all events. The announcers merely say and now for “coming attractions” if you are involved with...please check the coming attractions board. The benefits are twofold. Much shorter announcements without all those meetings being read and even if students don't listen to announcements (a common problem), they know the board is there and pass it on a daily basis. It is the responsibility of the club, team, activity to keep the board current with their particular information.

Regarding your particular problem with meeting attendance. Was it clearly stated that meetings are held every Monday, are mandatory and that a valid reason must accompany an absence? Are meetings productive? Do you have an agenda? Do all students feel that they are part of the “team”? Do they feel that they are getting something out of being there? Do they have something to accomplish when they leave? Just a few questions to ponder that may help determine where to go from here.

Tam Fawcett

The members of your Athletic Council are speaking with their feet. They are telling you that you meet too often and don't have anything for them to contribute to. This is not a slam against you and your executive, but even big business won't try to meet every week with that many people.

The P.A. system plays throughout almost every school in North America but it is probably heard by less than 10 people per school. If you have to announce a weekly meeting, then you are telling your people that they can't remember that the meeting is on Monday. (It's kind of like your mom always telling you to clean your room — is it clean?)

One suggestion is to make a database of your members and then make invitation/notice/announcement slips that get passed out in home room to the specific people involved. Our Guidance department and VP's use this method in our school and most people make their appointments (those that don't are speaking with their feet again.)

Dave Conlon

The CASAA listserv is an email forum that you can access from the CASAA website. You can post questions for all to see or simply absorb the combined wisdom of the group.

Mascot Scrabble

Equipment: Large sidewalk chalk

Instructions: Give each group of about 5 students a piece of sidewalk or parking lot, near the bus, etc. They are to take their mascot's name as the start, and build words from it in scrabble like fashion which indicate things about their school of which they are proud.

This is a good reflective activity at this time of year, and especially useful in the current political/economic situation in which we are in here in BC. When times get tough or disappointing, it can be a useful exercise to review what it is about your school that was worthwhile in the first place. Next step — how do we face these ‘challenges’ as a leadership class to keep us proud of our school within the constraints placed upon us by the ‘job action’.

Al LaFontaine

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Poster Time

Your clocks are probably the most watched spots in your school, so utilize this opportunity to make people aware of what is happening in your school! Advertise your upcoming events by making timely posters that surround the clocks or mini posters that hang in the middle of a clock. "What time is the Spring Formal?" is a quick way to let people know you're having a formal dance to end the year.

Practising Listening _____

Common Sounds

Get a tape recorder and tape 10 — 15 common sounds from around the house or around the school. Play the tape and have the class identify the sounds. Video the students listening and point out good listening habits and postures.

The Act of Listening

Choose 3 people in your class and send them out of the room for a few minutes. Call each of the three in one at a time and interview them in front of the class. You can ask simple questions like their name, schools they have attended, how many in their family, where they were born, what they did last summer, do they have a part time job, etc. Two minutes is long enough for each question period.

With the first two volunteers for questioning, make sure you maintain eye contact, nod affirmatively, piggyback on their answers, face them and attend only to them.

With the third person, ask the same questions with these differences — look around as they answer, repeat questions, talk to someone else while they answer, look at your watch, yawn, bite your nails, fidget, ask the next question before they have finished talking, and ask them to repeat answers.

In your debriefing, ask the respondents how they felt about the questioning encounter — you will get a much different perspective from the third person.

The act of listening is more than being quiet. You must *act* like a listener to listen well.

Tower of Air Activity _____

Topic Areas: Problem Solving, Working Together

Concept: Sometimes the decisions we make are not ours alone to make. There might be a group of people involved. You need to know how decisions are made in a group and the dynamics that take place. Students will look at the issue of problem solving while trying to create the tower. They will also have to determine ways to work together since this activity sets up an artificial situation that requires them to do so.

Time Estimate: 15 minutes plus discussion time

Materials Needed: 10 balloons for each team of three (The balloons can all be the same size or shape, or they can be various sizes and shapes), masking tape, metre stick

Activity: Divide your group into teams of three. Give each team ten balloons and a metre of masking tape. Explain that the object of this challenge is to build the tallest free standing tower using just the balloons and the masking tape that they have been given. The tower must be built on the floor (or table) and may not use any other objects to lean against or help support it. They will have ten minutes to build their tower.

Variations: While the activity is underway, call out certain instructions that must be followed. For example, “For the next 60 seconds no one in your group may talk” or “For the next 60 seconds everyone in the group may only use one hand.”

Discussion Ideas:

• *What* Questions

How tall did your tower end up being?

Did you do any planning before you started building?

Did the plan change after you started building? In what way?

Did everyone provide input to the plan?

What happened in your group as time was running out?

Was your end product satisfactory? What would you change next time?

• *So What* Questions

Did you look at what other teams were doing to get ideas? (Mention that this would not be cheating. You did not tell them they couldn't look. It is a good practice to use good ideas no matter where they come from)

What can this activity tell us about working together?

What problems can occur when you work in groups?

Was a leader chosen in your group? Did one emerge? Who? Why?

Describe the roles that each person in your group played.

Were some people in your group more involved than others? Why?

• *Now What* Questions

How does working together help us solve problems?

What behaviours should you exhibit when working as a part of a team?

How important is communication with your team members?

Tom Jackson www.activelearning.org

Creating the Metric Day

It is common but does not make sense that if you want to get something done, give it to a busy person. It would make more sense to give the job you need done to a person who is not very busy. Now, the difference must be stated that there are people who look busy, and those who really are busy. Don't give your jobs to the former group as they will only tell you how much work they have to do.

The reason a truly busy person is able to get many things done is that they *concentrate on results*, not on being busy. There are many well-meaning people who will generate great amounts of unfocused effort and get very little done. These people are concentrating on being busy: they need a central shift in attitude to concentrate on results.

The Pareto Principle is the 80/20 rule. This states that typically 80% of unfocused effort generates only 20% of results, and that the remaining 80% of results are achieved with only 20% of the effort. Time management ensures that you can achieve the greatest payoff possible with your investment of time.

The non-planner does not use proper time management because they employ unfocused effort. They may be too lazy to plan or they may enjoy the adrenaline rush of getting it done "just in time!" This type of approach increases stress, promotes tiredness and leads to the failure of some projects that had potential to succeed.

The following will focus your time and allow you to concentrate on results:

Determine which things you do are important, and which can be dropped. Increase the time in which you can work by getting up a half hour earlier. Control the distractions that waste your time and break your flow . Know how much your time is worth and avoid or delegate lesser tasks. Use your time that is spent waiting effectively. Use a "to do" list and prioritize these jobs.

Activity

- List all of the things that you need to complete in the next five days. Prioritize this list in numerical order.
- Identify "waiting times" in your next five days. Put a W beside those items on the list that can be done during your wait times. (e.g.. reading a chapter of a book while waiting for or riding a bus)
- Make an appointment in your schedule for one big job and schedule it to avoid all distractions that will break your flow.
- Check back in five days. Make sure that you cross off items that are completed and prioritize your list again.

(Hint: use a post-it note to write your "to do" list on. It can be moved and repositioned within a daily planner for maximum visibility and focus.)

Spirit Rally Events

The key for events is that they have rules and no matter how silly the event, the rules must still be followed.

Silent Cheer

At a pep rally, invite a section of the audience to stand up, wave their arms wildly, and attempt to look like they are making a lot of noise without actually making a sound. The results can be captured on video for use as a spirit competition during the pep rally or during an end of year video.

Mummify

Toilet-paper someone completely like a mummy. Specify a time for completion. The team with the most skin/clothing showing loses.

Use Your Head

Couples run to a point fifty feet away and then back again, carrying a balloon (or marshmallow, or tennis ball) between their foreheads. If the object is dropped, the couple must return to the start.

Balloon Sit-Pop

Squirt shaving cream into balloons, as much as you can, and then inflate them the rest of the way. The competitors must sit on the balloons and pop them without using their hands.

Pudding Pass

Line up a bunch of students on a team (boy-girl) Place a glob of pudding on the nose of the first person. How far down the line can the kids pass the pudding by rubbing noses? (check for food allergies first!)

Muffin Monday

It doesn't take a lot of money to make a homeroom happy, so randomly draw a homeroom name out of a hat to receive muffins and juice during first period on Monday. This will involve those homerooms that normally don't get involved in activities.

Paparazzi Wall Loonies

Students pay a loonie to put embarrassing—but school appropriate—pictures of their friends in a locked display case in the main hall or the cafeteria. The pictured person must pay a toonie to get the photo taken down.

Custodian Appreciation

Student leaders create a lot of activities which put stress on a building and its caretakers. Take the time to thank the custodians by having a Custodian Appreciation Day. Serve them a complimentary lunch and have your leaders clean the cafeteria and halls on that day. The clean-up work give students a greater appreciation for the hard work custodians do.

Senior Greeters

To promote interaction between senior citizens and students, Derby High School in Kansas sponsors a Senior Greeters program. The student council buys a variety of trinkets for volunteers from the senior centre to hand out as they greet the students every Wednesday. In appreciation, student council also provides the seniors with breakfast, parties, and shirts that say, "Ask me about my 2,000 grand kids at Derby High School."

The Youth Millenium Project

The Youth Millenium Project (YMP) provides a support network for both teachers/facilitators and students in developing and implementing projects which address social concerns. Young people design a plan for a project they feel would help to make the world a better place, and a facilitator (teacher, parent) helps support them through the process. YMP supports the project by putting each group in contact with 4 companion groups (fellow YMP groups at home and abroad) and publicizes each group's project through the YMP newsletter and website.

The Youth Millenium Project was founded in 2000 by two graduate students at UBC who envisioned an organization which would support youth (and facilitators) to develop projects which young people themselves would create, lead and own. They wanted to help youth realize that they *can* make important and positive change in the world and work towards realizing their vision of the world in the future.

Thus far, YMP has been involved with over 300 projects implemented by over 10,000 youth in 80 countries throughout the world. These projects range from planting gardens, to building desks for classrooms, to raising chickens and selling eggs for school materials, to reading books on tape for blind children, to making sandwiches for the homeless. The projects may be as short as a couple of hours, or may extend into months, or years. These projects contribute to local communities, and, from their efforts, the youth participating have developed a sense of empowerment and community activism.

A YMP project can be incorporated into several different subject areas – science, social studies, art, religious studies, literature – and can work in conjunction with the existing curricula. YMP has designed lesson ideas which serve to integrate YMP initiatives into various subject areas at various grade levels.

The Youth Millenium Project is a non-profit organization which works in partnership with University of British Columbia, UNICEF, CIDA, the Vancouver Foundation, Simon Fraser University, McGill University and other private philanthropists who support the long-term goals. YMP believes that it shares teachers' values and optimism – that by supporting youth in their efforts to contribute positively and significantly to their communities, and by fostering communication and friendship with communities around the world, students will develop a strong sense of participation in their communities – both local and global.

Please contact them if you would like to become involved

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Mike Etiquette and Skills

Student leaders and advisors address the school on many occasions formally and informally, and these occasions can be undermined by simply not knowing how to use a microphone. This is a skill that all students should practice and learn before ever going to speak in front of a large group. An excellent leadership lesson is on how to set up a basic P.A. system and then the skills needed to use the microphone. A great student council meeting could have microphone training on the agenda — train your speakers before they appear in front of their peers. Here are some basic tips for good microphone skills:

- Test the whole P.A. system before your audience arrives. This will ensure that it is working and avoid all the “check 1, check, . . . check 1, check 2” meanderings that your audience does not need to hear.
- Always be prepared. You must know what you are going to say before you step up to the podium. Don’t expect divine inspiration to motivate you as soon as you turn on the mike.
- Establish eye contact with your audience before you begin to speak. Don’t use the mike to command attention: you have to establish it first.
- Speak slowly. The mike is an amplification device not a decoder.
- Project your voice into the mike as though you were speaking to someone at the back of your room. A normal speaking voice will sound hesitant and unsure.
- Observe the rule of thumb: hold the mike near the top; extend your thumb to your chin — that’s how far away to hold the mike .
- Don’t speak directly into the mike unless you are a rapper. Speak over the top of the mike .
- Don’t scream or cheer directly into the microphone.
- Don’t speak over a roaring crowd. Your contribution will be to the noise not the silence you seek.
- Turn the mike off when it is not in use. The audience doesn’t want to hear what you don’t want to tell them.
- Avoid feedback by pointing the mike away from the speakers. Try to stay behind the speakers to avoid that annoying squeal.

Remember that the microphone is only an amplification device. It will amplify a great presentation, but it will also make your errors more obvious if you do not have good microphone skills.

Skateboard Olympics

The students on my leadership team hosted the Skateboard Olympics during lunch hour last year in the cafeteria. They were a hit! There was rowing (sitting on the skateboard using a short toilet plunger to paddle), skiing (standing on the skateboard using two toilet plungers on broom handles to push yourself), and swimming (laying on your stomach or back on the skateboard while using your hands to push yourself). These events are lots of fun and are low cost. The activity can be spruced up by having colour teams, special accessories to make contestants look ridiculous such as flippers, swimming caps, snorkelling masks, and lifejackets.

Tina Winters

MVC’s

Recently, we came across a slight problem with choosing our student of the week. Our new council kept nominating students who had been selected last year. They are exceptional students and we appreciate them but we wanted to reach others in the school as well. So now, when a former student of the week is doing something exceptional for our council, we give them the *Giant Cookie Award*. Our cafeteria makes a giant cookie, the appreciation committee decorates it, we select some appropriate upbeat music which we play as we enter the student's first period class, where our committee makes the presentation. We also announce the selection on announcements for the day. Needless to say the event is a hit and we are planning future presentations. We now have Most Valuable Cookies at our school.

Quotes

Be master of your petty annoyances and conserve your energies for the big, worthwhile things. It isn't the mountain ahead that wears you out — it's the grain of sand in your shoe.

Robert Service

Language is the apparel in which your thoughts parade in public. Never clothe them in vulgar and shoddy attire.

Dr. George W. Crane

To understand the heart and mind of a person, look not at what he has already achieved, but at what he aspires to.

Khalil Gibran

You can't turn back the clock. But you can wind it up again.

Bonnie Prudden

You cannot mandate productivity, you must provide the tools to let people become their best.

Steve Jobs

A problem well-stated is a problem half-solved.

John Dewey

A lot of disappointed people have been left standing on the street corner waiting for the bus marked Perfection.

Donald Kennedy

There is a universal truth I have found in my work. Everybody longs to be loved. And the greatest thing we can do is let somebody know that they are loved and capable of loving.

Mister (Fred) Rogers

Goal Setting Gone Wrong?

Goal setting can go wrong for a number of reasons:

- Outcome goals can be set instead of performance goals. Where you are using outcome goals, and you fail to achieve the goal for reasons outside your control, this can be very dispiriting and can lead to loss of enthusiasm and feelings of failure. *Always set performance goals.*
- Goals can be set unrealistically high. When a goal is perceived to be unreachable, no effort will be made to achieve it. *Set realistic goals.*
- Conversely goals can be set so low that you feel no challenge of benefit in achieving the goal. Setting goals has been a waste of time. *Always set goals that are challenging.*
- Goals can be so vague that they are useless: it is difficult to know whether vague goals have been achieved. If achievement cannot be measured, then your self-confidence will not benefit from goal setting, nor can you observe progress towards a greater goal. *Set precise, quantitative goals.*
- Goal setting can be unsystematic, sporadic and disorganized. Here goals will be forgotten, achievement of goals will not be measured and feedback will not occur into new goals. The major benefits of goal setting have been lost. *Be organized and regular in the way that you use goal setting.*
- Too many unprioritised goals may be set, leading to a feeling of overload. *Set an achievable number of goals.*

Where goal setting does go wrong, not only are the benefits of goal setting lost, but the whole process of goal setting can fall into disrepute. By avoiding these problems, and setting goals effectively, you can achieve and maintain strong forward momentum.

More information on leadership topics such as this can be found at www.mindtools.com

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