

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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Opportunities for Excellence

The experiences of educators across North America, as well as the findings of numerous research studies, indicate that co-instructional activities such as sports and the arts are vitally important parts of a student's education. Students who participate in co-instructional activities have greater opportunities to develop character, critical thinking skills, social skills, and talents. They learn first-hand the importance of teamwork, responsibility, commitment, and hard work. These qualities are sought after by employers and improve students' chances for successful careers.

Co-Instructional Activities put the learning responsibility on the student rather than the teaching responsibility on the teacher. This is a responsibility that students willingly assume because they come voluntarily to these situations.

These are learning situations that teachers can create with the right amount of resources and support. It is also important that co-instructional activities must remain voluntary on the part of teachers because it compliments and respects the voluntary aspect of the student's participation. Activities do create opportunities for excellence.

Purpose, Persistence and Patience

As a leadership advisor for more than a decade, I have realized that there are many repetitive circumstances that present themselves each year in schools. One common circumstance is that students and staff members all start the beginning of the school year with a common purpose of excellence – they want to do the best job possible, to help others and make this the best school year ever.

What happens next is that things get off to a great start full of enthusiasm, support, and great ideas and events. Suddenly, reality sets in with all its distractions. The multitude of interests our students and staffs share and their busy lives get in the way of maintaining the excellent start.

What is happening here?

To live up to the common original purpose of excellence requires patience, persistence and a plan. You require persistence to work through the tough busy times; you must have patience to know that Rome wasn't built in a day. Patient leaders also know the value of staggering events, time commitments and sharing responsibilities. They then quickly learn the value of the plan.

Student leaders come and go each year. It is job of the constant – the advisor – who develops, maintains and teaches planning. A one-year-plan is great start, but a longer term plan is even better. It is the advisor who can provide the continuity and longevity to the plan. You will have to be persistent and patient, but you will begin to see the fruits of your labour. Help your student leaders to reach their purpose and with the right parameters you will see a school that is the best it can be year after year.

John Thompson
CASAA President

CASAA

Image Consciousness

An organization is healthy once it has a clear sense of what it is and what it stands for. Positioning is the concept of image-development for your group. Each one of us has a personal self-image that we project. What kind of image does your group project? Decide on how you want to position your group within the school and work toward that end. Make this image simple, direct, and have fun with it. A student group could work to create a marketing strategy of awareness campaign of posters, slogans, and publicity stunts. Listed below are some ideas to get you started.

Sandwich Boards – Use the old-fashioned sandwich boards and hang them on council members or even teachers and have them walk around the school at lunch or in the morning before class.

“Canvassing the Can” – A news flash containing information about an upcoming event which is placed on the backs of restroom doors.

Table Tents – Paper tents placed on cafeteria and library tables with information about upcoming events or activities.

Press Release – Send regular reports of upcoming events to local newspapers to let the community know that you are making a difference.

Publicity Scrapbook – Create a file of posters and flyers that were used for past events. This allows future committees to see examples of poster layouts as well as the quality of publicity that has been used in the past.

Stephen Telka

Group Mixer

Give each participant a blank 5x8 card and a safety pin. Tell them that they’re going to make “another” nametag (assuming they’re already wearing one). Have them print their first name in letters about 2" high as they hold the card horizontally facing them. Now tell them that they’re going to answer 3 questions about themselves in each corner of their card (so, leave space for three lines in each corner).

Start with the upper right corner. Tell them that each of these 3 are going to be **PLACES**. First, have them print the place where they first successfully rode a 2 wheel bike. Then, just below that, the place where they had their best experience ever with an ice cream cone. Third, if they could return tomorrow to one place where they’ve been before, where would it be?

Now go to the upper left corner: **THINGS**. First, have them print their most meaningful material possession. Then, a gift that they gave of which they were very proud when they gave it (what was the gift?). Finally, something that they always wanted but never got.

Now, down to the lower left corner. Remind them that they need to leave space for 3 lines. These will be questions about **PEOPLE**. First, if you could meet one person from all of history and spend 4 hours with him or her getting to know each other, who would it be? Then, have them print the name of the person who’s had the greatest influence on them. Finally, the name of the best teacher they’ve ever had in school.

Now over to the lower right: **ENTERTAINMENT** Print their all-time favorite TV show, book, and then movie (3 lines, one under the other).

Pair kids with others who they haven’t known well. Then, tell them that they are to choose any two corners of their card, and talk about their answers to their partner for 2 minutes. **IMPORTANT:** the partner may not talk for the 2 minutes. No questions. No nothing. **JUST LISTENING.** After 2 minutes, switch talkers and listeners. What about the **SAFETY PIN**, you ask? Now, have each participant attach his/her new nametag to their shirt for the lunch period or the rest of the day or whatever. Encourage students to check other nametags and to ask others about their answers.

Bob Burton

Bob Burton’s *Spiritworks: Turn It ON!* and *99 Nuggets* are excellent resources available from CASAA. *Spiritworks* is a superb collection of fun activities for classroom competitions, noon hour games or energizers for pep rallies.

The Songs of my Life

It is valuable for student leaders to know more about themselves and who their influences are. Music is one thing that students surround themselves with, so this lesson allows them to express artistically who they are with the music that they know and enjoy.

Assignment: Each student leader will create a CD cover as follows:

1. Select a name for the artist or group that represents the “Real You.”
2. Select a title and design for the album cover that represents how others see you.
3. Select six song titles:
 - a. One for the type of friend you are.
 - b. One for the types of friends you have.
 - c. One that tells where you feel most comfortable.
 - d. One that tells what you would like to accomplish.
 - e. One that tells what you do well.
 - f. One that tells what makes you feel good.

(These song titles could be actual songs that the students know, or they can be invented titles.)

4. Choose a producer—your most influential family member.
5. Choose an agent—your most influential non-family member.

Each leader will present the CD cover to the class, explaining the choices he/she made.

Processing questions: Why does a leader need to contemplate these things about him/herself? Why do we need to share these things with each other? What did your own CD cover teach you about yourself? What did you discover about someone else in the group?

Note: I give very little specific direction about what the size the creation should be, and while many will cut the construction paper to the exact size of a CD cover, the results will vary from student to student. Some of my students actually placed their designs inside plastic CD covers, while others were the size of a piece of construction paper. Some students include actual photographs of their agents and producers, too. The variety is good, and details like that have very little to do with the concept of the project. I would encourage you, though, to set it up however it works best for you.

Lori Kiblinger

This leadership lesson is from the great idea swap spot on Mike Smith’s website: www.differencemakers.com

CASAA Share Shop Ideas

Salad Spirit Week

During Salad Spirit Week, each dress-up day was named for a salad dressing. Monday was Ranch Day, so people wore cowboy/western clothes; Tuesday was Thousand Islands, so people wore beach or tropical attire; Wednesday was Caesar, so people wore togas; Thursday was Blue Cheese day, so people wore all blue; and Friday was Salad day, so people wore green, which is one of our school colors. In addition to dressing up each day, lunchtime activities ranged from salad bowling (use a head of lettuce as a bowling ball and cucumber halves as pins) to salad toss (a blindfolded person had to throw salad fixings backwards as their partner tried to catch them with a salad bowl). Prizes included salads and salad bar gift certificates from a local restaurant.

Peggers Game

Students pay \$2 to sign up and the game can last anywhere from 2 days to 2 months! This is how it is played: Students who sign up are given a clothes pin/peg with another player’s name on it. The object of the game is to “peg” the other person, without them seeing you and without being pegged yourself. If you are pegged, you are out. And when you peg someone, you get their peg, and now have to get that person. You are not allowed to peg during class and the game lasts during school hours. Students will line up against the walls in the hallways trying to see everyone else to make sure nobody pegs them. The winner is the last person pegged.

Fear of Delegation? _____

Any human will tend to repeat behaviour that is followed by positive reinforcement and reward. The more successful people are, the more positive reinforcement they tend to get. If a student finds during a group project in grade five that she has to do all the work for the group to be successful, she is reinforced when all of her hard work on the project is recognized with a good mark. This behaviour is further reinforced with each time that she is successful at doing all of the group's work. This means that she will develop a great fear of letting other people do some of the work because if she changes her behaviour these good results may disappear. In fact, she can be convinced to let go of control at least once, however, if the group is not successful that time, her original behaviour is doubly reinforced.

Don't expect your student leaders to like delegating. Most of them have spent many years learning through reinforcement that they do the best job and that others usually fail them when asked to help. It takes a while for both sides to learn what their job really is. The leaders must trust that the followers will complete the tasks assigned, and the followers must believe that they will be allowed to complete the job on their own. Many followers have learned that if they falter, the leader will take over for them. This is reinforcement for a successful follower. Both the leaders and the followers must find a new paradigm of positive reinforcement for your activity groups to be successful.

Leadership Tournament _____

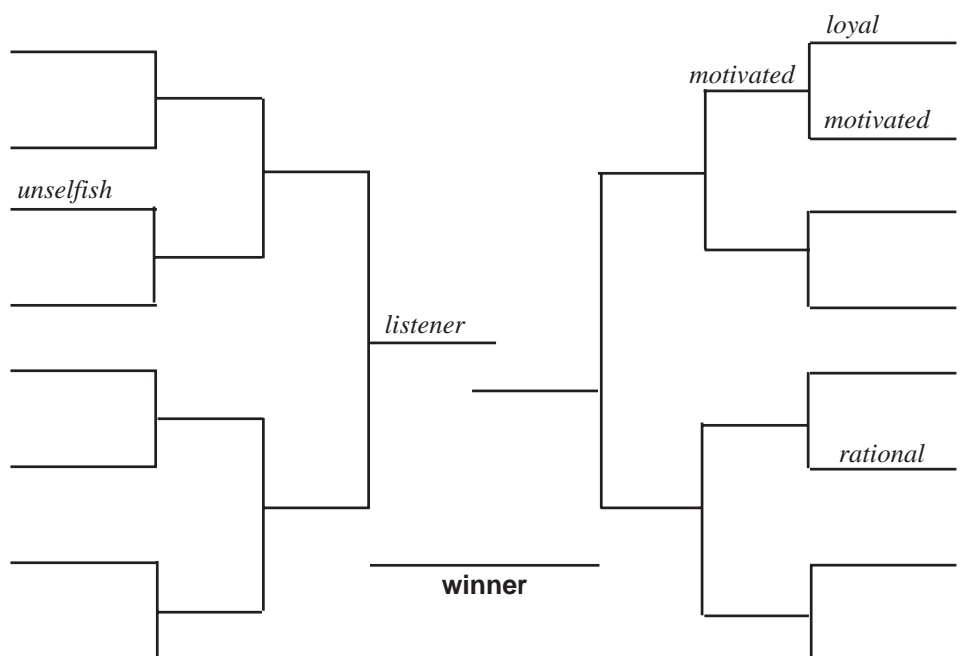
According to James Kouzes and Harry Posner, the top four characteristics that people look for in a leader are: honesty, competence, forward looking and inspiring. It is useful to get students to think about what special characteristics or qualities they value in a leader.

This exercise is based on the March Madness tournament that is familiar to students through US College basketball. It is essentially a tournament that pits the important leadership qualities against each other to decide the best leadership quality of all. It provokes lively discussion as students must consider what they truly value as leadership qualities.

Students can be asked to brainstorm a list of 16 leadership qualities or they can select from the following:

Integrity	Listener	Communicator	Creative
Intelligent	Flexibility	Compassionate	Detail driven
Unselfish	Risk taker	Goal oriented	Careful
Helpful	Democratic	Sense of humour	Rational
Organized	Motivated	Problem solver	Loyal

The activity is then set up as a single elimination tournament with each quality taking an initial position and then being placed against an opposing quality. This works well if the tournament draw is placed on an overhead or put on the blackboard, so everyone has a chance to contribute and see the progression of the tournament. e.g. Students are asked to consider whether they would prefer a leader who is *loyal* over a leader who is *motivated*. If they choose *motivated*, it moves on to the next level. Different seedings can produce different winners. Let the games begin!



Elementary Connections

We have connected our after school program with the leadership class at the local high school for the past two years. The experience has been great for everyone involved.

Two years ago, leadership was held the last block of the day. The leadership teacher and I worked on a plan that would involve his students with my after school students. I had started a program called Homework Buddies. The object of the program was to provide a quiet place for students in Grades 4–6 to do their homework and get help with any problems they may be having. The leadership students came to our school and worked with the students, many times in a one-on-one situation, and helped with their work. My students got homework and studying done and the leadership students had their time with us count towards their grade in leadership.

I didn't realize the impact of the program on the participants outside of obvious academic ones, until one day when Josh, a regular at the program, was late. Josh came to the door of the room and stopped. When he didn't come into the room, I approached him and asked if there was a problem. He hung his head and quietly said, "Mrs. Cross, my buddy is working with someone else." I told him I was sure that Ryan could work with him too, and he sat down. I was surprised at how fast my kids had connected and taken "possession" of the high school students.

I went to the leadership class and was talking to them about the impact they were having on the kids at Homework Buddies. I began telling the story about Josh and I could see Ryan getting redder and redder in the back of the class. I told Ryan that he had made such an impact on Josh that both his mom and his teacher were noticing the difference in his work. Ryan sat a little taller in his seat and looked a little proud as his peers were asking him, "Was that you? Is that the kid you work with?"

This year the leadership class has moved to before lunchtime—not a convenient time for working with us. The leadership teacher had a group of his students plan activities for the after school club here at the school. Groups of his students come to our school from 4:00 to 5:00 pm, two days a week and work with the after school club kids. Comments from my staff have indicated how focused our kids were and how quiet the gym was while the leadership kids were talking. Again, a fabulous experience mixing high school students with elementary school kids.

*Cathy Cross
Redford Community School,
Port Alberni, BC*

The CASAA website has an excellent section on peer tutoring if you are considering a homework buddy or peer helping program.

Unhappy Campers

Viewing activities as a product and teachers and students as customers is one good way of coping with complaints by staff and students.

A written complaint by a teacher doesn't necessarily mean that they don't like activities in general. The fact that they took the time to write their note and *sign it* is a sign that they are willing to talk about their concerns. People who are treated well after voicing their complaints are often more willing to support you the next time you run an event. Here are some ways to deal with unhappy teachers:

Listen attentively. Approach the individual in a non-confrontational manner and let them explain again what they found fault with.

Ask questions. Clarify the issue so that you understand their point of view. Don't assign blame, but be aware of what caused them to write.

Propose a solution. Things do go wrong and most people just want to be assured that it's not going to happen again. Letting them know that your leadership students have already identified and started to generate solutions to a problem is already the best step towards solving their concerns.

Bring closure. Thank the teacher for bringing it to your attention, and make sure that they are aware of the solutions being proposed. Act on the solutions and don't be afraid to keep the original person aware of your actions.

Some people are complainers and it's difficult to win them over, but dealing fairly with valid complaints will strengthen your base of support for when things do go wrong again.

Meeting Tips

Write an “anticipated action” for each agenda item. Examples:

“Prom Decoration Committee report, brief questions and answers: no action needed.”

“April Charity Drive: Anticipated Action: form committee of 3-4 individuals.” “Grad Committee: Anticipated Action: approve choice of dance venue.”

Make sure that each person says at least one thing at every meeting.

This is the Chair’s responsibility, but everyone should help! E.g. “Stephanie, you haven’t spoken on this issue. I’m wondering what you’re thinking about it?” “Karim, at the last meeting you made a good point about teacher support. Are there staff issues here that we aren’t thinking about?”

Encourage “dumb” questions, respectful dissent, and authentic disagreements. Find a chance to be encouraging, at meetings: “Cathy, I’m glad you asked that ‘dumb’ question. I didn’t know the answer either. Let’s find that answer from the administration.”

Do the fun stuff at the beginning of your meetings. This will make those people who are late realize that they miss something if they don’t arrive on time. If you have morning meetings, create a schedule to make one person responsible for muffins or treats that can be eaten before the meeting begins. Schedule this fun time on your agenda to teach a quick leadership lesson that is activity based.

Student Wellness in Leadership

The York Region Health Unit started the idea of Student Wellness Councils in 1988. They joined with their local school boards to create a student-based model for health promotion within their secondary schools. Student Wellness Councils were organized and operated by students within each secondary school. Each council assesses the health needs of its school community, identifies priorities and then plans health promotion strategies and activities that build skills and knowledge. A teacher advisor and a health unit staff member provide assistance to each council.

The Wellness Councils have a mandate to promote, advocate and develop wellness policies and programs in their schools and communities. Their objectives are:

1. To orientate new wellness council members.
2. To survey students on a yearly basis about their wellness issues and to prioritize the issues.
3. To operate wellness activities for the purpose of increasing awareness and promoting long term healthy behaviours and environments.
4. To develop an action plan for each school year that will be evaluated.
5. To take an active role in advocating for health curriculum in the school.
6. To mentor peers in the area of well-being.

The staff advisor acts as a liaison between the students and the school administration. The advisor helps the council set goals, objectives and plans for the school year as well as assisting in booking facilities and liaising with other school committees. The most important job is to offer positive and enthusiastic support to the wellness council thus enabling them to develop their leadership skills. The intention is for the teacher advisor to empower the students which allows them to take responsibility and create their own ideas for wellness activities.

Past wellness activities in the York Region have included installing juice vending machines, safe grad activities, anti-bullying campaigns and healthy eating theme days.

The above information is part of a booklet prepared by Christine Preece for the Lambton Community Health Services Department. (Ontario) You can get more information by calling them at: 519 -383 - 8331 ext. 515 or by fax: 519 - 383 - 7092.

You're the Boss — Now What?

Many student leaders find themselves elected or selected as the head leader without knowing what they really are supposed to be doing beyond getting elected. The emotions of a successful election have been experienced, but the realities of the top position soon set in. Students know that they want to make a positive difference, but some of their real responsibilities are not clear. The following six points will give some key directions that new leaders can follow.

Know the Job

Know what your responsibilities are as the top leader. Find out what has been done before by previous students in your position, and explore what expectations people have for the position this year. It is not enough to just want to be the boss. You have to know what the parameters of the job are and what you must do to be competent as the top leader.

Learn Meeting Skills

While the job of president is more than just running meetings, the ability to run a good meeting is one key to success. Good meetings keep students interested, contributing and motivated. Learn how to write and stick to a solid agenda, how to encourage participation from everyone, and the other skills needed to keep a meeting running smoothly.

Know your Support

The people on your council or leadership group are now the wheels that will move your ideas forward. If you're not sure what makes them turn in the right direction, you will have some difficulties moving your plans forward. Get to know more than their names. Learn what their expectations and plans are for the upcoming year.

Inventory your Group's Skills

Find out what skills your group has. Is there someone who has computer, video, or graphic arts skills? Ask who can get access to fundraising dollars or donations. When you know what your team members are capable of, your delegating will become easier.

Be Visible

Make your presence known in the school community by "walking the walk." Find out when Parent Council meetings are and plan to attend them. Ask to make a quick presentation at the first staff meeting. Get out there and look and act like a leader throughout the year rather than just the first spirit assembly.

Have a Vision

Know what you want to accomplish by the end of your term of office. Find out who and what will make this vision possible and then go about making it happen by following the above five points.

Your Dash

It sounds morbid, but ask students to visualize their tombstone. Now, ask them what they see and identify the parts that normally appear on a headstone. Finally, ask them to consider the dates on the stone. e.g. 1988 — 2063 What you now want them to look at is the dash between the numbers. What does it mean? The intent of this visualization is to ask them to consider "What will your dash be?" Is your life a flat line or is there some depth, meaning and accomplishments to that dash?

Mascot Meaning

One of the things that students believe is that a school needs "spirit". They can't quantify the quality exactly, but they know it's important. One of the reasons that it's important to teens is that school spirit gives a definition of *who* you are. Through the promotion of healthy school spirit images, you are allowed to imagine yourself as a Panther or Lancer or Viking. Without images, you cannot imagine yourself.

Images of success allow people to see themselves as successful. This is why the athletic shoe companies spend lots of money on having successful athletes promote their products. Images of spirit allow students to see themselves as part of the school. Mascots are images of spirit and give a definition of belonging to students. You are not asking your students to be a cartoon character, but they identify with the energy, spirit and positive behaviour of your spirit mascot.

Quotes

By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart.
Confucius

When spiders unite, they can tie down a lion.
Ethiopian Proverb

Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral.
Paulo Freire

Peak performers are great "team" people. They care enough to encourage, challenge, and support teammates when necessary. They stay respectful and appreciative of the many "role" players and attributes that are necessary to create and maintain an effective team.
Michael Jordan

If there be any truer measure of a man than by what he does, it must be by what he gives.
Robert South

Hobbes: "Why do we play war and never peace?"
Calvin: "Not enough role models."

When one door closes, another opens; but we often look so long and so regretfully upon the closed door that we do not see the one which has opened for us.
Alexander Graham Bell

Whenever two people meet there are really six people present. There is each man as he sees himself, each man as the other sees him, and each man as he really is.
William James

Developmental Assets

The Developmental Assets can be defined as the opportunities, skills, relationships, values, and self-perceptions that all young people need in their lives. The assets are both external (things that other people provide for youth) and internal (things that develop within young people themselves). There are four categories of external assets and four categories of internal assets.

External Assets

Support — Young people need to be supported, cared for, and loved by their families and many others. They also need organizations and institutions, such as schools and congregations, that provide positive, supportive environments.

Empowerment — Young people need to feel that they are valued by their community and that they have important ways to contribute. They must also feel safe.

Boundaries and Expectations — Young people need to know what is expected of them and whether activities and behaviours are acceptable or not acceptable.

Constructive Use of Time — Young people need to spend their time in positive, healthy ways. This includes doing activities in youth programs, in religious institutions, and at home.

Internal Assets

Commitment to Learning — Young people do best when they develop a strong interest in and commitment to education and learning.

Positive Values — Young people thrive when they develop strong values that guide their choices.

Social Competencies — Young people benefit from having skills and competencies that equip them to make positive choices, to build relationships, and to deal with difficult situations.

Positive Identity — Young people need to develop a strong sense of their own power, purpose, worth, and promise.

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