

The DifferenceMaker

VOLUME 2 ISSUE 3

THE DIFFERENCEMAKER—AN ADVISER NEWSLETTER

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Teens and change

Adolescence is ALL about change— wholesale change.

BIOLOGICAL CHANGES

- Their bodies are making the final transition from child to adult. Boys who mature late and girls who mature early often experience negative social and self esteem consequences.
- Their bodies grow in spurts—hands, feet, nose growing first and that helps make them feel unattractive and clumsy.
- They reach sexual maturity sooner than in past generations—as young as 9. Their heart, lungs and muscles are growing fast providing strength and endurance.

COGNITIVE CHANGES

- A teenager's prefrontal cortex is rapidly developing producing a higher-

level adult-thinking capability. Adolescents can now think in more categories, more abstractly, less egocentrically, more idealistically and with more organization to their thoughts. They are growing adept at using inference and logic—yet this new cognitive skill fuels the emotional / social side as it helps them to see and hear things that are not there.

- Their cognitive development makes them more adept forming arguments which helps to stir debates with their parents. Since they are also better at reasoning, they are more likely to question parental authority and rules because they can conceive of other possibilities.

- A teenager's limbic system where raw emotions are rooted is in overdrive. The levels for neurotransmitters such as serotonin drop, making teens more likely to act impulsively. They naturally crave greater and greater sensations in order to raise their serotonin levels and thus make themselves feel good.
- Adolescents can selectively attend to stimuli (often mistakenly called multitasking), which means they can divide their attention between several stimuli. That is why they enjoy studying while listening to music or watching TV.
- They have better short and long term memory

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From the Bookshelf

SLTP's our bookstore has several volumes that should be on every staffer's wish list.

The Encyclopedia of Energizers

By Ashley Robshaw
A complete collection of energizers.
25.00

In-Actions Index

By Pam Horan

A complete collection of mixers, icebreakers and games.
25.00

The Little Big Books of Leadership Series

Follow the exploits and adventure of our own Suzie Snowflake and the famous Cookie Cupcake Club.

Making Meetings Matter 20.00

The 12 basic building blocks of Student leadership 20.00

I can't stop. 20.00

FOLLOW THE ADVENTURE OF SUZIE SNOWFLAKE AND THE COOKIE CUPCAKE CLUB.

Cheating and the truth

A recent study of 4,500 high school students suggests that cheating is a significant problem:

- 74% of respondents admit to at least one instance of serious cheating on a test.
- 72% admit to serious cheating on a writing assignment.
- More than 50% admit to plagiarism via Internet use.

- More than 80% do not see anything wrong with buying a term paper or assignment on line

- More than 60% believe it is okay to lie to their teachers
- More than 60% believe their teachers and administrators regularly lie to them

The Enron scandal, Martha Stewart, Kobe, Michael, Monica and going back a little further

to OJ have a much deeper effect than we take into account.

Teens and change

capabilities, they are faster at processing information and they can implement organizational strategies or plans of action. This often exacerbates the conflict with parents or other adults as teens see these changes as evidence they are smarter than the adults.

- Teenagers hold to their own personal fables seeing their experience as totally unique. They move through their day performing for an imaginary audience that is watching them and knows their thoughts. The result is that teens are highly self conscious. I call the condition being “self conspicuous.”
- There is a deep sense of invulnerability.
- Teens are forming their own sense of identity which includes their own set of STRONGLY held opinions.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL CHANGES

Teens experience a change in status as they are recognized by society as adults. The inconsistency and arbitrary nature of the age at which teens acquire the adult privileges (work permit, dating, driving, voting, etc) affixes a muting of the status. The

age for each privilege varies from state to state and community to community. Schools do little or nothing to improve the confusion. Responsibility is a word most used as a bludgeon and the role of student activities is rarely credentialed.

In general the Social / Emotional Changes can be divide into 5 categories:

- **EMOTIONAL CHANGES**

Includes the upheaval in their closest relationships—friends, family and especially parents. Childhood friendships often come crashing to an end during 6th, 7th or 8th grades and again in 11th and 12 grade. Parental relationships become dramatically different—sometimes worse, sometimes better.

- **BEHAVIORAL CHANGES** They want to decide things on their own—little things and big things. And when they are not involved in the decision—look out! They can accept and choose to accept the responsibility for their actions. They want credit for doing things right.

- **VALUES** Teens develop the principles and standards to guide their actions—taking pride in

what they achieve.

- **IDENTITY** They strive to find their place. They want to belong to something. They want to find who they are.
- **SPIRITUAL** Teens spiritual beliefs mirror their cognitive development. They become more abstract, principles and independent. They are very much interested and fascinated by spiritual and ideological issues.

The Seven dimensions of self esteem

It is the experience of *doing something* and *being something* that one did not feel capable of being or doing that leads to increased self esteem. At our leadership conferences the group events of Vaudeville, Achievement Night plus all of the crew activities provide that vehicle for our campers to feel the sense of accomplishment through achievement. The campers become part of a team - - they are unsure that they can pull it all together - - it is about BEING and DOING. We recognize the feeling and provide as many positive affirmations as possible.

Helping is a fine art. If I want to help you to increase your self esteem, I must be inventive enough to create conditions within which you will develop your own abilities - - especially those abilities to overcome your fears of being inadequate. You have to do it for yourself.

So although we cannot GIVE our campers higher self

esteem, we help to create the conditions within which it is easier for campers to enhance their own self esteem.

Below you'll find the seven dimensions of self esteem — what do we do to influence the development of each in our campers? What do we do to enhance the development of each in our staff? What does your school/ organization/job do?

- **ALIVENESS** - *I'm fully alive. I'm energetic. I use myself well. I'm not bored*
- **SELF DETERMINATION** - *I choose my own life. I am in charge and I am my own boss. I feel free and not coerced. I'm responsible for myself.*
- **SELF AWARENESS** - *I tell the truth to myself and others. I do not deceive myself. I expect more from myself.*
- **SIGNIFICANCE** - *I feel significant. I recognize my*

importance and contribution. I know I make a difference.

- **PURPOSE** - *I have something to do and a place to be. I contribute. I belong. I am needed.*
- **COMPETENCE** - *I feel competent. I can cope with the situations that confront me. I know how.*
- **LIKABILITY** - *I feel likable. I enjoy my own company. I like the person I am.*

The DifferenceMaker Showcase—April 3, 2005

The *DifferenceMaker Showcase* is a very special conference. We believe that service should not be a "have to." Service should be a "get to." Service is leadership in action. This conference is about expanding service opportunities, learning how to stage particular events and exploring the possibilities for service inside and outside of school.

Our attendance goal is

250 – just one carload. It's only 10 bucks each!

We'll learn who won the Student Leader of the Year.

We'll learn who won citations for Public Service.

We'll learn who won citations for Personal Development.

We'll celebrate the Lifetime of Difference Award winners.

We'll learn, we'll listen, we'll laugh, we'll see old friends

and make some new ones.

So mark your calendar now – bring your friends and your students for a spectacular spring afternoon. It's **Sunday, April 3rd.**

Tech talk with Adam by Adam Travis, SLTP Conference Director

Computers continue to become more and more prevalent in our lives. For student leaders, they can provide valuable tools for organizing, communicating, researching, and more. Computers are supposed to help us and save valuable time, but when things go wrong any productivity gains can quickly be lost. This series is designed to help keep your computers up and running, in order to help keep you up and running.

When it comes to protecting your computer from Viruses and other threats, there is a lot of bad advice out there, and even more misinformation. There is no such thing as perfect protection, but using many approaches can help keep you safe.

First and foremost, you need to have a good Antivirus program. It must be one that is constantly protecting you and can automatically update itself when you are online. In June 2004, PC World magazine tested a number of leading programs. They

found McAfee VirusScan to be the most effective but a little difficult to use; Norton AntiVirus to be almost as effective and a little easier to use; and PC-cillin (from Trend Micro) to be sufficiently effective, and very easy to use (also the only one to offer free telephone tech support). PC-cillin also costs less than it's main competitors. In my personal experience, McAfee works great on Windows XP, but has problems with other operating systems, Norton is effective, but does things that I don't want it to do. I haven't used PC-cillin, but other software from Trend Micro has been effective and easy to use. I know a lot of Macintosh users that think they are immune to viruses, and they couldn't be more wrong—this is software that everyone needs.

Now having Antivirus software is not enough, you must keep it updated

with the latest Virus Definitions. Most companies require you to renew your subscription with them each year in order to get these updates. It is absolutely critical that you do this—most companies release new virus definitions at least once a week, so being more than two weeks out of date can be a serious weakness.

For more information, see <http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/article/0,aid,115939,00.asp>

Developing student leadership

A few months ago I helped to facilitate a conference for advisers on developing students as leaders. My session had covered the academic and atmosphere benefits of student leadership. One of the administrators seated at the head table at lunch turned to me and remarked, "I loved your speech. It was very entertaining. But isn't it like pooling their ignorance—letting students run things?" I was completely taken aback.

If my 30 plus years in education have taught me anything—it is the value of student leadership. Young people in leadership roles is the greatest catalyst for success that any school can hope for.

That doesn't mean that student activities should be adultless. Nor does it mean that adult leadership has no place at the table. It does mean that students have a place at the table too.

So what are the signs that indicate you might need to re-evaluate the role of student leadership in your school?

- When you sit down to plan a big event, are most of the people there over the age of 18?
- When deciding the school calendar, are most of the people there over the

age of 18?

- Are you the only person planning your events?
- Do you do most of the prep work—moving furniture, buying pizza/soda, running off agendas, running to the store?
- Does your school embrace "token" youth leadership positions—titles but little or no responsibilities and no authority.

If you answered yes to any question, it is probably time to get started developing students as leaders.

Step one — identify prospective leaders. I recommend the acronym SHAPE as a guideline — Spirit; Heart; Abilities; Personality; Enthusiasm. Students viewed through those five lenses are worth the investment.

Step two — teach them what they need to know which is the procedures to follow. Then let them go. Keep in mind — things will go wrong. No one gets 100% all of the time. When mistakes are made, be patient. Process it. Teach the lessons as they are provided. Allow the teens

room to grow.

Step three— encourage growth. Nurture it. Help the students learn. Provide the best resources for them to lean on. Create a leadership laboratory. Encourage attendance at conferences and more importantly set the expectation of sharing learnings and understanding when they return.

**ISN'T THAT LIKE
POOLING THEIR
IGNORANCE—
LETTING
STUDENTS RUN
THINGS?**

The 2005 SLTP Conference Schedule

Where leaders learn HOW
to make a difference!

- **The DifferenceMaker Showcase**
April 3
- **Leadership Training Conferences (4)**
July 5 - 9; July 12 - 16; July 26 - 30;
Aug 2 - 6
- **Advanced Leadership Conferences (3)**
July 13 - 16; July 27 - 30; Aug 3 - 6
- **The Leadership Center**
July 6 - 9
- **Officer Training Seminar**
July 1 - 2
- **Adviser Certification**
July 27 - 30
- **The ReEnergizer Conference**
November 26

We're on the Web!
www.sltp.info
Information for Parents, Teachers, Students, Administrators
Applications * Photos

SLTP Applications . . .

All of the applications for all of our conferences are online as PDF files. Print them out and make as many copies as you need.

SLTP School Survey 2

Please send us this information as soon as you can. We are compiling data on student services in our area. Send it electronically to: jim@sltp.info or via snail mail to: School Survey 108 Observatory Way Marshfield, MA 02050



Are advisers provided an office? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> Yes but shared <input type="checkbox"/> No	Are advisers provided extra "free time?" <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Are advisers compensated for overnight supervision? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	Is certification required for advisers? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Are the student activity fees distributed equitably among the activities? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Not distributed	Are student activity fees based on student participation? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Flat fee	Do student activity fees pay for buses? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> No buses at all	How many fundraisers is each activity allowed? <input type="checkbox"/> 1-2 <input type="checkbox"/> No limit <input type="checkbox"/> Permission for each

School

Address

Principal's Name

Name

Address

Email

Activity sponsored

Lessons for the leadership class (reprinted with permission from [Step it up!](#), a CASA publication)

Each month this column will be devoted to leadership lessons or strategies to empower student leadership.

10 Mid Year Communication Lessons

GOAL: to increase ability to communicate effectively within a group

I. PUBLIC INTERVIEW

Discuss interviewing techniques. In small groups (5-6) have students interview one person at a time for 2-3 minutes. Rules:

Any question is OK.

(Questions must be appropriate for class setting.)

It's OK to pass.

Answer must be honest.

2. TICKETS

Determine a topic for group discussion. Give each student four tickets. Students must turn in a ticket to speak. When their tickets are gone, so is their opportunity to speak.

3. NETWORK OF COMMUNICATION

During a discussion each person holds the thread and passes the spool to the next person who chooses to speak. At the end of a predetermined time, ask students to stop and examine the network of communication illustrated by the thread which was woven among the participants.

4. TINKER TOYS

(You'll need plenty of tinker toys!) Prior to exercise, instructor shout construct a creation out of tinker toys. Have one person from each small group examine your hidden creation. This person returns to their group and instructs the group on how to build the creation. The group constructs without any further instruction. Compare creations.

5. BACK TO BACK

In pairs, have students sit back to back. Give each student a piece of paper. Ask one student to fold, bend, or tear paper while giving their partner directions. Partner may not ask questions. At the end of one minute, have students compare their papers. Repeat exercise only this time allow partner to ask questions. Discuss the difference between one-way and two-way communication. What are the implications for a student leader or teacher?

6. ABSTRACT RE-CREATION

Prior to exercise, draw an abstract design on a large piece of paper. Have one student come to the front of the class and, without showing the design to the rest of the class, explain how to draw the design. Each student tries to draw the design as the directions are given. Compare creations. Discuss obstacles to communication and specific ways to overcome such obstacles.

7. POSITIONS

This exercise consists of having the group conduct three five-minute discussions. After each discussion, each member writes down several adjectives to describe his/her feelings and reactions to these seating arrangements:

- A circle with everyone's back to the center
- Members seated at a table
- Members seated comfortably in a close-knit circle

8. PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY

Put these items on the front table: peanut butter jar, jar of jelly, loaf of bread, knife, spoon, and napkins. Ask students to write directions of "How to make a Peanut Butter and Jelly Sandwich." Allow a short time for writing the directions. Have a

volunteer read one sentence at a time as instructor follows directions exactly. (e.g., "Put peanut butter on bread." Instructor places the peanut butter jar on top of the loaf of bread.) This exercise vividly and humorously demonstrates the importance of speaking with clarity and listening with understanding.

9. NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Ten volunteers are asked to portray the following emotions (to be handed out secretly on separate slips of paper):

loneliness	contentment
sorrow	indifference
anger	shyness
happiness	frustration
resentment	fear

The communicator may use any nonverbal behavior they wish to use in order to communicate accurately the emotion they are portraying. Students may wish to use their hands, their head, their whole body, or may involve others by touching them or engaging them in a nonverbal interchange. The rest of the group records on paper the emotion they think is being portrayed by each student.

10. A QUALITY LETTER

Prior to this exercise the instructor should create a few imaginary letters written to your principal from a student regarding some current school issue. Make each letter unacceptable for some reason (e.g., poor grammar, poor spelling, accusing, negative, demanding, overly critical, or unclear). Discuss how and why your principal would respond to each letter. Have each student write a quality letter to your principal concerning a current concern.

The Adult Role in Student Leadership by Dr. Jim Fitzgerald

She had the kind of reputation that made you shudder at the possibility that you might wind up in her 4th grade class. Everything about her said, "Don't mess with me." I survived her class with only the usual amount of after school time, but it was a couple of years later—after I messed with her, I guess—that she gave me the first leadership challenge of my life.

By that time I was a 6th grader at Saint Ambrose Grammar School in Dorchester, Massachusetts. My buddies and I patrolled the recess yard like we were small town cops with an attitude. One day, for reasons that are not at all clear to me now, we decided to violate the rules by crossing through the kindergarten area and visiting the younger kids' play zone. Sister Gerado intercepted us as we were strolling back to our own turf. She demanded to know what we were doing; and instead of cowering and apologizing like I should have, I offered her a confident response that included challenging what I thought was a stupid rule.

The look that passed over her face made me regret immediately what I'd said. She surprised me by not growing furious and laying caustic rebukes all over us. Instead she got quiet, refusing to conceal her disappointment in us. We had "let her down."

Her response gnawed at me all day. I realized that I had a genuine respect for ole Geronimo and had treasured her opinion of me more than I ever knew. After school I shuffled downstairs into her classroom to whimper an apology. Instead of letting me off easy, she told me *why* she was so hurt by my flippant attitude. She told me that she had always thought I was an unusual young man, in a category with only a couple of students she ever had and while I was lazy, I was the kind of person from whom she "expected great things." My smart-aleck backtalk earlier was in another category entirely. It was just "common."

At that moment I realized I never wanted to be *common*. Sister Gerado was the first in a long line of adults who have variously modeled,

taught, inspired, encouraged, challenged, and corrected me. Seeing stuff in me that I wasn't aware of, these grown-ups helped me to discover the joy of leadership, and eventually the thrill of teaching leadership.

All of which brings me to my point. Those who believe that student leadership is simply about adults getting out of the way so kids can take over are wrong-headed and short-sighted. Their thinking has been soaked with the same sort of laughing gas that led French philosopher Rousseau to conclude that the problem with education is...ADULTS! *If we tyrannical adults would just leave children alone they would learn, grow, and develop just fine on their own. Like wild flowers in a meadow, kids have everything they need to bloom their way toward a beautiful life. Only adults could mess up such a naturally perfect plan....*

That's crap!

I think that today's version of student leadership aspires to something more than a vision of teens who come early and stay late so they can set up and clean up. If that is true, then adults must play a significant role in the process. The key is the role of the adults must be finite. It must not control everything. And the role of the adults in the organization must be defined and accepted by the student leaders from the beginning.

To lead, student leaders must exercise real decision making and real choices. Adults face the responsibility of balancing the student's choices against legal, moral and ethical standards as well as the reputation of the school and the community.

To be sure there are gray areas. To be sure there are misunderstandings and conflicts. Those too can and should be learning experiences.

Being a student activity adviser is complicated. Let's examine the first rule of the job.

Rule 1. Don't Let Kids Set the Direction without help

When you want to travel to Hartford from Boston, the direction

you choose matters. There is one correct direction. Everything else is, at best, a temporary detour and, at worst, a sitcom episode waiting to happen. "Which way should we go?" Anyone who's looked at a map should be able to come up with the *correct* answer. "We head west...and a little south."

Some adults think they are doing cutting edge student leadership by asking kids to supply the direction for the group. They're wrong. Direction-setting needs to be assisted by those who are geographically literate. Non-map-readers need not apply. It doesn't mean that kids can't help – it just means they should not do it alone.

In SLTP we call this process "non-participatory participation" and it is the cornerstone of our adviser training program. Without solid grounding any student group is vulnerable to misdirection. Student activity misdirection is characterized in at least three ways: *lostness* (when the group never had a clue that anyone even cared about where they should go); *defiance* (when the group knew what was wanted/ expected but decided to go their own way); and *chaos* (when the group goes in every possible direction). We don't do students any favors when we ask them to do something they aren't ready for

