

MARCH / APRIL,
2005

student leadership

The Student Leadership Training Program
A Newsletter for the Advisers of Student Activities

The DifferenceMaker

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VOLUME 2 ISSUE 4

THE DIFFERENCEMAKER—AN ADVISER NEWSLETTER

Adultism

"The schools as presently constituted serve the interests of a society content to define education as a means of indoctrination and a way of teaching people to know their place." - Lewis Lapham

Put yourself in the following scenario, imagine a large corporate building filled with adults who have all been called to a meeting ...

... Welcome, we have gathered you all here because things are about to change in your lives.

Quit your jobs; put aside your other interests:

For the next 4 years, you are going to be attending school.

We have sorted you into groups according to your chronological age: 23 year olds, proceed to room 214

down the hall; 38 year olds, please stop whining and walk in single file to the cafeteria.

We have designed the curriculum. We know that it seems largely unrelated to your daily life, to your concerns and to your dreams. But that's just the way it is.

In fact, if you don't perform up to our expectations, learning what we decide you need to know, when we decide you need to know it, there will be consequences that could have lifelong implications. One more thing: Misbehavior will not be tolerated. We would prefer you to be excited about all this, but if you can't muster enthusiasm, at least don't talk back.

*Did we hear moaning?
"This is not what you want to do!" you say?*

What gave you the impression we are interested in what you want?...

An unpleasant scenario? Unquestionably.

But if we are honest, we have to acknowledge that this is how many young people experience school.

Our current education system leaves little room for student input or student choice. It is not student driven. It is adult driven.

And increasingly, coercive tactics--zero tolerance policies, high stakes testing, threats of punishment, etc.-are employed both to get students to school, and to "inspire" them to do what educators want when they are there.

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2005 SLTP Conferences

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**
Aug 3-6
- **The ReEnergizer Conference**
November 26

Adultism

Sure, most young people acquiesce with only occasional complaints. But can we reasonably expect them to act differently when this is the **only** approach to education they have ever known?

And true too, many, many teachers, by engaging their students, are able to actually inspire their students. Students in these classrooms would freely choose to attend school.

Still, public and private education provides ample evidence of a form of mistreatment increasingly known as "adultism."

Adultism refers to behaviors and attitudes that are based on the assumption that **adults are better than young people, and entitled to act upon them without their agreement.** It is characterized by disrespect towards the intelligence, judgment, emotional life, leadership, or physical being of young people.

Adultism is so pervasive in our world that, like the fish who don't realize they live in water, most of us are simply unaware of it.

Consider a few obvious examples:

The stranger who touches a toddler without asking permission...

The store manager who suspiciously follows any teenager through his store...

The teacher who treats a student rudely...

The teacher or principal who employs sarcasm as a disciplinary tool ...

The regular, systematic, emotional and social bullying employed by high school coaches ...

The adviser who does everything ...

The teacher who teaches a subject ...

The principal who never asks for

student input before implementing a rule or schedule change ...

Locked bathrooms ...

All these actions, taken with impunity, demonstrate the kind of disrespect that young people regularly face.

Now I am not suggesting that 12 year olds begin to design their own curriculums with impunity. Young people expect, crave and depend upon the guidance, advice, structure, material support, and discipline that caring adults can provide.

I am not saying we need to do away with the institution of public or private education. Quite the contrary: Providing free public education is one of the finest impulses in our culture, one that is essential to creating a just, prosperous and peaceful world and I agree with Franklin Roosevelt – it is a basic and fundamental right.

My concern is that the dominant approach to education demonstrates a gross lack of respect for and understanding of young people's ability to manage their own lives in an age-appropriate way. **Students simply are given little choice about matters of consequence related to their education:** what to learn, when to learn, who to learn with, where to learn, who should teach them, etc. Respect must be given. Responsibility is not a code word for obedience or compliance. Leadership depends on both respect and responsibility. And both require the benefit of experience to grow.

And young people are so much more capable of guiding their lives and acting responsibly than society gives them credit for.

This lack of self-determination in schools is perhaps the biggest reason why students respond so positively to SLTP. By contrast,

SLTP is fundamentally concerned with *showing respect for* and *giving power to* young people.

In fact, SLTP is characterized by a relatively benign set of questions that nevertheless seem almost revolutionary in the traditional school context.

Questions like:

Do you want to be here and participate?

What do you think?

Do these lessons connect to you and to your life?

Are the lessons applicable?

How will you use this lesson?

What are your concerns, hopes and desires?

How do you feel today?

How do you understand your current life situation?

Invitational learning

Our “business” is learning. Our products are knowledges, skills and self actualization. Businesses stay in business by understanding their markets, and developing their products to suit their consumers. The most successful businesses cater to their customers realizing that their customers will only buy their products when they see themselves enjoying, using and owning it. It should only make sense then that SLTP is learner driven.

Being learner driven is an easy thing to SAY (virtually every school says it), but not as easy to DO. Throughout our staff training we explore all of the dimensions of our invitational philosophy. Let’s look at this through the mindset of a teacher. As teachers, we must first try to understand all of the “hows,” “whys” and “whens” about learning. AND we need to know if our “whats” (which is leadership skills & knowledges) fit our “whos” (the campers).

Early on in staff training we provide a fairly succinct overview of how learning works. Check out the

staff manual.

Now let’s delve into the why. What motivates people to learn? Curiosity is a common response. But curiosity is fickle, the motivation to learn that is driven by curiosity wears off as soon as the novelty of the lesson is gone. This paradox of learning vs. teaching is ignored by teacher driven programs / schools. In those environments, the entire responsibility for learning is placed on the learner. The educator educates, and if the learner learns - - well, that’s a good thing. If the learner doesn’t learn, well **he / she** failed. Those who fall behind usually stay there.

Learner driven programs / schools focus on ENABLING the student to learn - every learning style, every teaching method is utilized, every avenue for learning is explored. No learning style is ignored or presupposed. The response-ability for learning is shared by both teacher and learner. Because learners are involved in their learning, it becomes difficult for learners to fall behind.

SLTP is an experiential

learning center. The very nature of experiential learning necessitates being learner driven. We aspire to be more than that. We aspire to be INVITATIONAL. Would you agree that absolutely everything at a hospital should be directed toward making people well? So shouldn’t everything at a learning center be directed toward making people learn? It is our ambition to make every aspect of the SLTP *an invitation to learning*.

An invitation to learning, think of the image. Invitations come for parties, for weddings, for all sorts of events. Invitations are inclusive. Invitations are fun. Invitations are individual. We want SLTP to be in its entirety an invitation to learning. That means we must by word and deed incorporate an invitational spirit to EVERY aspect of SLTP.

Examine the chart below and on the next page—what isn’t mentioned?

Things that INVITE

inviting comments

- ◆ thank you
- ◆ tell me more about it
- ◆ I appreciate your help
- ◆ I like what you did
- ◆ What a great idea!

inviting behaviors

- ◆ learning together
- ◆ sharing an affirmation
- ◆ listening
- ◆ smiling
- ◆ picking up litter

inviting atmosphere qualities (physical)

- ◆ up to date bulletin boards
- ◆ student names
- ◆ candy jar
- ◆ clean purposeful organization
- ◆ displays of student work

inviting signs

- ◆ welcome
- ◆ come back soon

inviting teacher behaviors

- ◆ share names
- ◆ preparation & organization
- ◆ inquiry based learning
- ◆ use collective, inclusive pronouns
- ◆ be a greeter - greet every student
- ◆ be a leave taker - thank students for their attention and for working with you
- ◆ focus on the learner
- ◆ enjoy learning
- ◆ share responsibility
- ◆ praise in public

Things that DISinvite

disinviting comments

- ◆ *that won't work*
- ◆ *what Billy is trying to say is ...*
- ◆ *you should not feel that way*
- ◆ *anybody can do that*
- ◆ *because I said so, that's why*

disinviting behaviors

- ◆ *shaking your finger*
- ◆ *being obscene*
- ◆ *laughing at someone*
- ◆ *telling a lie*
- ◆ *being sarcastic*

disinviting atmosphere qualities (physical)

- ◆ *bare walls*
- ◆ *dirty floors*
- ◆ *uncomfortable temperature*
- ◆ *smells / noise*
- ◆ *full trash cans*

disinviting signs

- ◆ *signs falling down*
- ◆ *misspelling*
- ◆ *old faded signs*

disinviting teacher behaviors

- ◆ *disorganization*
- ◆ *sarcasm*
- ◆ *teasing*
- ◆ *aloofness*
- ◆ *finishing sentences for others*
- ◆ *lack intentionality*
- ◆ *accept only those that EARN respect*
- ◆ *criticize in public*
- ◆ *never EXPLAIN why*
- ◆ *fail to know the relationships between students*
- ◆ *Not knowing names*

Bully Awareness Week—April 17-23

Six years ago, on April 20th, 1999, our nation's worst school shooting took place at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado. Thirteen students and a teacher were killed, and 23 other students were wounded. The two young attackers, who had been bullied by their schoolmates, also died.

We must learn from this tragedy. We must join the organizations, school districts, teachers, and parents who have already spoken out against bullying.

We must do our best to make people understand the harm it can cause. In addition, we must show younger students, through actions as well as words, that their emotional and physical well-being is important to us.

SLTP's fight against bullying in school must not, of course, be limited to one week a year. However, in remembrance of the Columbine shootings, and as a symbol of our year-round struggle against bullying, we invite you to do something

and to join the national effort to raise awareness.

For more information visit:

<http://www.bullypolice.org>

Final SLTP Mailing

The third and Final Mailing of SLTP's Application Packets will arrive at your school in the next two weeks -- please direct this packet to the students and advisers who are interested in learning how to make a difference.

Applications for all of our summer conferences are rolling in at this point. We are expecting our highest enrollment to date. Because of staffing limita-

tions this year, we may have to restrict the size of some of the sessions -- so if a particular session is the only one of your students can attend -- please register soon. Do not be left out.

Arrangements can be made to register officer teams for OTS without providing the identities of those who will attend. Since many schools hold their elections in late May or early June, schools

may register their officers without providing names. Then once the elections are held, you can fax the applications to complete the registration.

Tech talk with Adam by Adam Travis, SLTP Conference Director

Protecting your computer from Online Threats, part 2 – Spam/Spyware.

Unfortunately, having anti-virus software does not protect you from spam and spyware. Spam in itself is just a nuisance, and will not harm your computer, unless you open a message that contains a virus or something else that may harm your computer. Still, it is inconvenient and can become overwhelming. The good news is that many Internet Service Providers (ISPs) have free spam filters, though their effectiveness varies. If you really hate spam, you may want to buy some software to protect yourself. Check out this article from PC World for more information: [http://](http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/article/0,aid,115885,00.asp)

www.pcworld.com/reviews/article/0,aid,115885,00.asp

The good news is that Anti-Spyware programs are getting better, and the best ones are free. In PC World tests, Lavasoft's Ad-aware 6 Plus and Spybot Search and Destroy performed best. Ad-aware is better at finding the adware variety, and Spybot is better at finding and removing the spyware type of threats. The bad news is that these programs are only about 57% effective, and none of the other products tested were even close to being that good. Some products were found to be almost completely ineffective, despite their cost. The free

version of Ad-aware is not as good as the one you pay for; both can be found at <http://www.lavasoft.com/>. My personal favorite is Spybot, which can be downloaded from <http://www.safer-networking.org/>. For more information, see <http://www.pcworld.com/reviews/article/0,aid,115939,00.asp>

And God created teachers . . .



From the internet ...

On the 6th day, God created men & women. On the 7th day, He rested. Not so much to recuperate, but rather to prepare himself for the work He was going to do the next day. For it was on the 8th day that God created the teacher. This teacher, though taken from among men and women, had several significant modifications. In general, God made the teacher more durable than other men and women. The teacher was made to arise at a very early hour and to go to bed no earlier than 11:30 pm with no rest in between. The teacher had to be able to withstand being locked up in an air-tight room with 35 little monsters on a rainy Monday. And the teacher had to be fit

to correct 103 term papers over Easter vacation. Yes, God made the teacher tough - but gentle too. The teacher was equipped with soft hands to wipe away the tears of the neglected and lonely student... of those of the 16 year old girl who was not asked to the prom. And into the teacher God poured a generous amount of patience. Patience when a student asks to repeat the directions the teacher has just repeated for someone else. Patience when the kids forget their lunch money for the 4th day in a row. Patience when 1/3 of the class fails the test. Patience because the text books haven't arrived yet, and the semester starts tomorrow. And God gave the teacher a heart slightly bigger than the average human heart. For the teacher's heart had to be big enough to love the kid who screams, "I hate this class-it's boring!" and to love the kid who runs out of the class at the end of the period without so much as a good-bye or a thank you. And lastly, God gave

the teacher an abundant supply of hope. For God knew that the teacher would always be hoping. Hoping that the students would one day learn to spell... Hoping not to have lunchroom duty...hoping that Friday would come... hoping for a free day... hoping for deliverance. When God finished creating the teacher, he stepped back and admired the work of his hands. And God saw that the teacher was good. Very Good. And God smiled, for when he looked at the teacher, he saw into the future. He knew that the future is in the hands of the teachers. And because God loves teachers so much, on the 9th day God created "SNOW DAYS" -- "Teachers are expected to reach unattainable goals with inadequate tools. The miracle is that at times they accomplish this impossible task."

- Haim G. Ginott

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. This month we will examine In-Actions.

In Actions should always be grouped according to their purpose. Since all of these activities can be facilitated to serve many purposes, the grouping is based upon the primary purpose of each structured experience. Herein, the divisions are centered around the following areas.

OPENERS AND WARM-UPS

Extremely versatile in design, opener, and warm-up activities can be used in a wide variety of settings. The ice breakers in this division loosen inhibitions by stimulating, challenging, and motivating the participants. Developed to heighten the creative resources of the group, these activities often elicit intense, playful interaction. The group leader may use openers and warm-ups to begin a program, start a session, prime the group after a break, ready the members for new content material, or shift the focus of study.

GETTING ACQUAINTED / MIXERS

Mixers contains activities that provide the group members with opportunities to learn more about one another in a non-threatening manner. These activities generally solicit only surface information, i.e., work responsibilities, general goals and values, enjoyable fantasies, etc. Getting Acquainted activities are ideal for quickly mixing the group for lowering barriers.

INITIATIVE GAMES

Initiative Games and Brainteasers contains activities that stimulate creative thinking, alternative perceptions, and the examination of basic assumptions.

These activities often facilitate a competitive environment by putting individuals or teams against one another.

TEAMBUILDERS

Teambuilders are initiative games purposefully directed towards building a team.

ENERGIZERS AND TENSION REDUCERS

Energizers and Tension Reducers con-

tains activities / songs that shift the emotional nature of the group. Most effectively used when the participants appear "flat" or overly anxious, energizers and tension reducers require some mild physical contact.

BOUNDARY BREAKERS

Boundary Breakers generally require some sort of feedback and disclosure. This group contains activities that are aimed at establishing interactions of a personal nature. Going beyond mere introductions, these activities often explore thoughts, feelings, perceptions, impressions, and reactions. Cautious selection is advised for use in groups that are not directed toward personal explorations.

SOME EXAMPLES

I. Name Game (opener)

1. Organize the group so that all the members sit in a circle or in some way so that they may all see one another.

2. Explain to the group members that they will each in turn receive an imaginary "duck" from the person next to him. The facilitator starts by saying, "My name is John (the name for the facilitator), and this is the duck which I gave to Jim (The name of the first group member)."

3. The first group member says, "My name is Jim, and this Jim, and this is the duck which John gave to me who gave it to Joe (the name of the second group member)."

4. Each group member then states his name and the names of each of the group members as he tells how the "duck" was passed from person to person until it reached him who in turn passes it to the next group member.

5. The "duck" proceeds around the circle until it reaches the facilitator again who then proceeds to repeat the name of each group member in proper order. (Remember: A leader cannot ask a group member to do something he himself would not do.)

6. It is not necessary for the members to pass a "duck." They may pass any imaginary object of something concrete such as a car key or coin.

II. Human Knot (warm up)

1. Divide the group into circles of ten to twelve people standing shoulder to shoulder.

2. Instruct each member to grasp two other people's hands. The members are not allowed to grasp the hand of either person to their immediate right or left.

3. Without letting go of each other's hands, the members of each circle must untangle themselves so that they stand shoulder to shoulder with those people whose hands they are now holding.

III. Progressive Poetry (opener)

1. The facilitator begins the activity by asking the group members to divide into work groups of four participants each. If necessary, a work group may contain five members.

2. When the work groups have formed, the facilitator explains that the members of each group will be working together to write a poem.

3. The group leader gives one person in each group a pencil and a piece of paper and tells him to fold the paper in an accordion style so that the paper contains eight sections.

4. The facilitator then explains the exercise:

a. Each group's poem is to contain two four-line stanzas.

b. Each member of the group is to write a line for each stanza in the work group poem.

c. The participant, who folded the paper is to begin the poem by writing a sentence in the first space on his work group's piece of paper.

(Other group members should **not** observe or be told what is being written.)

d. Next the participant is to fold back his line and, telling only the last word of the first line of the work group's poem, pass the pencil and paper to the next group member.

e. The group member then writes his line, making sure that the last word of the line rhymes with the last word of the first line of the poem. He repeats only the last word of the second line to the next participant, who then writes the third line of the poem, again making sure that the last word of his line rhymes with the last word of the line that precedes it.

f. When the fourth person has completed the stanza by adding his line, the group begins the second stanza with a different group member providing the group's first line.

5. After explaining the exercise, the facilitator directs the work groups to begin their poems and tells them they have 10 minutes in which to create their literary masterpieces.

6. When the allotted time has elapsed, the facilitator asks a volunteer from each group to stand and read his group's poem to all of the participants.

The DifferenceMaker Showcase—April 3

Service is leadership in action. The DifferenceMaker Showcase is about expanding service opportunities, learning how to stage particular events and exploring the possibilities for service inside and outside of school. The theme of the workshops and for the speakers this year is “helping in a time of need.”

The seminar will be held Sunday, **April 3** at Nichols. And we expect to fill Davis Hall. The

new Alumni Board is hard at work, planning and inviting speakers and workshop presenters. If you have an idea for a speaker or a workshop that fits the theme—contact Jen McGonagle (jen@sltp.info)

We will be celebrating the nominees for SLTP’s Student Leader of the Year and the other biggie – SLTP’s Lifetime of Difference Awards!!!!

Bring your friends for a spectacular spring afternoon. **It’s**

only \$10! And if you submit 10 registrations, you can bring 12 delegates as two will be admitted free.

A registration form for the conference is attached to this newsletter and they are also available on line (www.sltp.info) .

The Showcase Packet was mailed to all of the schools in New England this week.

Applications

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

- <http://sltp.info/applications>

www.sltp.info

The new website has received a lot of attention and we have been receiving nearly constant feedback each day. A great deal of our tedious paperwork has been eliminated by the site’s interactivity. We have had a whole bunch of address corrections — even more registrations for the various newsletters as well as a raft of applications for the Alumni Card and for the most part these things are taken care of electronically. For an all volunteer organization, this is a godsend. In the 2 months since it has been active, one of the most popular pages has been the monthly survey. All in all it has been a busy place!

More monthly Surveys are planned and individual pages will

be updated as the need arises. The site is huge and complex, yet easy to navigate and it’s so fast loading. It is a full service site that takes care of the big things and the little things. It is definitely “user friendly.” It is filled with information. It is fun. We hope –just like the organization it represents.

So Adam has turned his attention to the staff pages. Soon there will be a great increase in the interactivity on those pages. Password Protected Bulletin Boards for issues and ideas are in the works. And a special Praise Bulletin Board will be up and running soon. The energizer check lists and games check list will also soon be up and running. The

idea is to make it easier to be so far apart (our 60 person staff are stretched over 10 states).

Already there is a very useful Calendar for staff in place.

Adam continues to find ways to contribute and make us stronger.

