

## Adviser Professional Development

Reflecting on their teacher training experience, few student activity advisers can recall receiving any professional training on how to be an adviser. Unfortunately, it's usually assumed that educators can step into adviser roles using only the knowledge and experience that prepared them to be teachers. Too often, training specific to how to work with groups in a nonacademic setting is overlooked. Educators who find themselves in the role of adviser to a student organization have to sink or swim on their own.

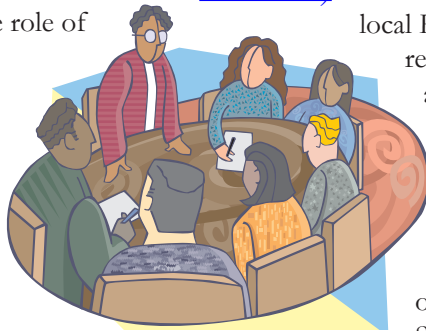
Although adviser professional development remains, for the most part, a self-taught endeavor (see recommended reading list), training opportunities are available if one knows where to look for them. Most often, advisers learn the ins and outs of advising through local contacts, state or national organizations, and by developing a supportive network of colleagues.

### Local Level

Adviser training is often offered through a school district's professional development office, covering such topics as fundraising, district procedures for handling organization money, facilitating meetings, working with

administrators, and so forth. If your district doesn't currently offer such training, suggest it for an upcoming inservice workshop.

Another idea is to join with other schools in your area to bring in a trainer for a professional development day. Herff Jones enjoys a close working relationship with "The Original" Mike Smith, a motivational speaker and consultant to educators ([www.difference-makers.com](http://www.difference-makers.com)).



Check with your local Herff Jones representative about the possibility of bringing Mike in for a day of training. Sharing the cost between schools makes it affordable and also provides an opportunity for networking among advisers.

Don't forget to check with your Herff Jones representative to take advantage of the many resources of the Impact program. In addition to this newsletter, of particular note is the Toolbox Workshop Series, an essential series that helps student leaders and/or faculty learn more about leadership workshops, effective assemblies, time management, getting people involved, one-on-one communication, and effective public relations skills.

### State Level

Moving beyond the local level, look to your state education associations for adviser training opportunities. Many state principals' associations sponsor workshops for activity advisers, as do specific organizations such as state student council associations, and adviser associations like the California Association of Directors of Activities (which welcomes advisers from other states), the Nevada Interscholastic Activities Association, and the Virginia Association of Student Activity Advisers.

### National Level

Workshops, idea sharing sessions, and networking opportunities abound at conferences of various student organizations such as NASC, DECA, FCCLA, FBLA, Key Club, and FFA. Visit the websites of these organizations for details about their regional and national meetings.

The National Association of Workshop Directors ([www.nawd.org](http://www.nawd.org)) holds an annual conference in December that includes seminars and workshops geared toward helping adults improve student leadership. Contrary to its name, the conference is not exclusive to workshop directors; NAWD members are usually state student council executive directors, state and regional leadership camp coordinators and staff, and school

activity directors. The conference is held the first weekend in December and rotates to a different part of the country each year. This year's conference will be held in Washington, DC.

If attending a conference is not in your budget, reach out beyond the local level through message boards and listserves. One such service is "Leadership Lessons," an online group for people who teach leadership at the middle or high school level in a classroom setting. The group focuses on all aspects of teaching leadership and serves as a resource for sharing lesson plans, grading strategies, activities, resources, and more. To subscribe to the group, send an e-mail to: [leaderlessons-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:leaderlessons-subscribe@yahoogroups.com).

Also of interest is a youth leadership development information clearinghouse, Youthleadership.com ([www.youthleadership.com](http://www.youthleadership.com)). The site features a forum to discuss current issues related to youth leadership development. The public pages include information on noteworthy events (workshops, calls for presenters, position announcements, etc.) from organizations and programs all over; links or information on youth leadership resources and organizations; and an open discussion forum. Member-only pages include reviews and discussion outlines of books and films, leadership lesson plans, articles that delve into leadership topics, and more.

Many of the state and national

organizations already mentioned maintain message boards where members can post questions and seek answers from other members. Message boards provide an excellent way to connect with other advisers on a national level.

Advising a student organization takes a great deal of time and energy and can often leave educators feeling burned out by the end of the school year. Advisers who stick with it year after year find that reaching out and connecting with other advisers in their field is often what keeps them going. Developing support networks and sharing ideas of what works with educators in similar circumstances can be the best form of professional development.

## Recommended Reading

Blanchard, Ken, and Patricia Zigarmi. **Leadership and the One Minute Manager: Increasing Effectiveness through Situational Leadership.** New York, NY: William Morrow, 1999.

Burton, Bob. **Spirit Works.** Fallbrook, CA: Spirit Works, 1997.

Collins, Jim. **Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap... and Others Don't.** New York: HarperCollins, 2001.

Covey, Stephen R. **The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People.** New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989.

Crawford, Roger. **How High Can You Bounce?** New York: Bantam, 1999.

Fiscus, Lyn. **Advisers Guide to Student Activities.** Reston, VA: Leadership Logistics, 2005. (Available from your Herff Jones representative.)

Gerety, Ed. **Combinations: Opening the Door to Student Leadership.** Exeter, NH: Gerety Presentations, 2003.

Ireland, Patricia B. **Elections and Beyond.** Albuquerque, NM: DifferenceMakers, Ltd., 2003. (Available from your Herff Jones representative.)

Johnson, Spencer. **Who Moved My Cheese? An Amazing Way to Deal with Change in Your Work and in Your Life.** New York, NY: Putnam Pub Group, 1998.

Lundin, Stephen, Harry Paul, and John Christensen. **Fish! A Remarkable Way to Boost Morale and Improve Results.** New York, NY: Hyperion Press, 2000.

Maxwell, John C. **Developing the Leaders Around You.** Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1995.

Maxwell, John. **The 21 Indispensable Qualities of A Leader.** Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1998.

Maxwell, John. **The 21 Irrefutable Laws of Leadership.** Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson, 1999.

Phillips, Donald T. **The Founding Fathers on Leadership: Classic Teamwork in Changing Times.** New York: Warner Books, 1997.

Reivich, Karen and Andrew Shatte. **The Resilience Factor: 7 Keys to Finding Your Inner Strength and Overcoming Life's Hurdles.** New York: Broadway Books, 2002.

Sikes, Sam, **Executive Marbles: And Other Teambuilding Activities.** Tulsa, OK: Learning Unlimited Corp, 1998.

Silberman, Mel. **101 Ways to Make Meetings Active.** San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass Pfeiffer, 1999.

Thompson, Charles "Chic". **What A Great Idea!: Key Steps Creative People Take.** New York: Harper Perennial, 1992.

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