

The Quest

Planting the Seeds for Building World Class NYLT Programs



www.nylt-ysdc.org

March 2009, Issue III

SPL's Corner by Sam Leitermann

In almost every NYLT problem solving workshop it is inevitable that one or more questions is answered with the words: "That should happen at staff development."

Unfortunately, there is rarely any type of follow-up discussion of how to run staff development effectively. Thus, in the spirit of providing a resource to help both new and established courses run effective staff developments, here is a list of important parts of the staff development process.

1. Plan Ahead and Set a Schedule

It is impossible to have a well trained staff when your staff does not attend staff development. Realizing this, it is crucial to set dates early and get prior confirmation of attendance. Depending on the time frame and the experience of your staff, 3 to 4 staff development meetings is a reasonable. In a perfect world, these would be held over a weekend at your course location. Finally, set an allowed number of absences and set consequences for exceeding this allowance limit.

2. Set the Mood

Before delving into the syllabus, schedule, or other curricular material, have your staff construct a vision for the course. Discuss the "Special Place" concept and what type of environment will make your course conducive to learning. By setting an initial atmosphere and creating guidelines for conduct, you assure your staff is onboard with you and will create a safe and respectful environment free of staff elitism.

3. Set the Example

It is unfair to ask your new staffers to practice presentations on the course material before an experienced staff member has given them an example to follow. Use staff development to foster relationships between newer staff members and experienced staff who can mentor them.

4. Practice, Practice, Practice

Remember, no part of the schedule is too small to plan and practice before the course. Practice everything from the morning flag ceremony to major presentations. Also, be sure to compile a list of staff responsible and equipment needed for each activity.

5. Evaluate

Practice is not useful without effective evaluation. Have a standard evaluation process and an evaluation form that you use to provide consistent and helpful feedback. The form allows the staff being evaluated to have a physical reminder that can be used in the future. A large evaluation with the staff at the end of each staff development will also help to wrap up any remaining issues and will allow the leader to gauge where his team falls on the team development path. Remember, feedback must not be negative but constructive and helpful to foster a beneficial learning environment.

6. Relax

After all that hard work you deserve some time to kickback. A staff that plays together, stays together, is what I always say. Allow time of for your staff to relax and bond. This will make them much more effective in the future.

An effective staff development will lead to an effective course; so make sure yours is stellar! A staff that trusts each other and trusts its leadership will work as a cohesive unit and provide the best course possible.

Feedback is a gift. Send any feedback to newsletter@nylt-ysdc.org

Where are you on your Quest?

NYLT staff are always refining and applying their skills to make a world of difference, be it inside and outside of Scouting. We'd like to hear about your experiences. Send your stories to newsletter@nylt-ysdc.org, and we'll feature some in each issue.

Prepared for the Next Step

by Andrew Ilovich

Just like every grade in school is designed to prepare you for the next step, Youth Leadership Training has done the same to prepare me for college and the real world. Many of the examples and situations where EDGE and vision, goals, and planning are presented at NYLT become mundane and obvious when taught

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year after year. However, I have found that these simple principles are easily applied and very useful in the college setting.

After being on various projects, committees, and groups with members from all backgrounds I have found that the vision, goals, and planning approach is by far the best method. For some of the basic situations and examples presented at NYLT, the vision can be obvious. In contrast, when the reason for the committee or groups is not as defined to everyone, developing a vision became a much more important first step and in turn vital to the success of the group.

The teaching EDGE is another great skill I use consistently from NYLT. While college is focused around learning, it doesn't take long to find opportunities where teaching is required of you. I have been able to apply the EDGE model to teaching anything from physics to cooking and much more. At first, I was shocked to how well this model works for any topic.

Start to look deeper into the areas outside Scouting in your life where you may be able to find visions being created or EDGE being used to teach a skill. Another easy thing to do is to read books about leadership, management, and team or self development. Many of them will have examples, stories, and personal experiences that fall into the teachings of NYLT. This will help you gain a further appreciation of where these skills will be able to take you and show the importance of teaching these skills to others. Regardless of what specific path you find yourself on after staffing NYLT, the skills and tools you have now will only help you flourish.

Self Evaluation by Matt Maley

Self evaluation is something that takes a long time and a lot of practice to get right. It involves taking a serious look at yourself, and occasionally it's not what you wanted to see. Now, before you start the process of evaluating yourself, you should get practice evaluating others, from your own NYLT course, Scout Troop, or even speakers at your school or workplace. Often times the focus of evaluation is directed toward a formal presentation, but don't limit your learning to just presentations but also evaluate individuals' abilities to lead themselves and teams.

The first step that anyone needs to take as a self evaluator is to learn how to effectively evaluate. When watching someone present or speak, look for anything that engages or bothers you. Make a note about a really catchy turn of phrase or engaging hook. Conversely, pay attention for any bad habits or repetitive wording that draws you away from the speaker. Once you have practiced this enough, you will eventually begin to discover a voice in your head that analyzes the speakers rhetoric and style. In addition to analyzing presenters, look at leaders that you encounter and evaluate their styles and methods. Watch their demeanor and how they apply the NYLT tools. Considering this, how could they improve? As soon as you are able to absorb the information and the style, you can begin practicing on yourself.

For presenting, try speaking in front of a full body mirror. Give a speech or presentation watching your body language and your verbal language. Make notes for yourself, and compare those with presentations that you have seen before, both good and bad. Self evaluation can be tricky to do and

NYLT Quick Tip

Fitting Styles to Presentations

1. **EDGE always fits.**
2. **A great time to practice is during staff development.**

Skits are a great way to test how well the audience can apply the information by having them plan and perform their skits. Role play, while similar, needs to be planned before hand.

Games can be a lot of fun and a great way to break up a long presentation. While it is nice to involve as many people as possible, some games only work with a few in a small group, but remember to make it so that the game is entertaining and informational for everyone, regardless of the size of the audience.

Buzz groups are great in large groups and gather a lot of ideas quickly. Remember to give clear direction before you begin and talk with the groups during the exercise to tackle questions and stir up new discussion.

Lectures require the presenter to have a strong knowledge of the material and are best used to explain the basics. Don't be afraid to ask questions to discover what the audience knows. Similar to lectures, discussions require significant preparation. The discussion leader must be ready with guiding questions for any level of participation from the audience.

can often take your attention away from the actual presentation, so always remember to evaluate after a formal presentation. While leading a group or accomplishing a task, self evaluation is just as important. Remember to review the original vision, group performance, and your personal performance regularly.

Keep in mind that it is important to compare your self evaluation afterwards, for both presenting and leading, to the feedback you get from others. Once you are comfortable in front of people you can work on self evaluating, and you will often find, as I have, that the adrenaline of being in front of people changes the way you present and lead, and being able to evaluate yourself is one of the most useful tools for becoming a better public speaker, giving fantastic presentations, and developing as a confident leader.

Course Directors and NYLT Staff - Register now for summer programs to build the skills of your staff!

The Youth Staff Development Course (YSDC) is designed to train youth staff to be world-class presenters, evaluators and leaders of their council NYLT course. Learn more about this course and registration for summer 2009 at www.nylt-ysdc.org.

National Advanced Youth Leadership Experience (NAYLE) will provide you with a Philmont based wilderness encounter that motivates you to follow a life of helping others succeed based on the values expressed in the Scout Oath and Law. Learn more about NAYLE at www.nayle.org.