

## Teaming Vignettes

# 1 You serve on a four-member team that is struggling with one noncompliant member. This faculty member is responsible in her classroom, but is unwilling to work on most team projects. She opposes interdisciplinary unit development and feels she should have her own policy on grading student work. She is also frequently late to meetings and seems distracted while meetings take place. No one wants to confront her directly. *How can this be resolved in a respectful way? And in a way that will not intensify hostility? What steps would you recommend be taken and by whom?*

#2 You are on a team that has a history of success. This year the team feels they have a particularly challenging group of students and are struggling with student behavior issues on a fairly regular basis. They have agreed upon the team's rules and then reviewed these rules with the students right up front, and but now wonder what went wrong. *Consider.... What might have gone wrong? How might your team regroup?*

#3 Your team is a cheerful group of faculty who like each other. They spend much of their planning time discussing students. While they are hoping to talk about the curriculum, instruction, assessment and even student work, that always seems to fall by the wayside of "just too much to do". *How might you lead this team towards more talk about teaching and learning?*

#4 Team planning time is about 45 minutes daily (or 90mins EOD), and the team is holding regular team meetings during this time. They often meet with parents who have asked to come in or they call in parents to attempt to help a student who is having difficulty. These parents meetings, however, well intentioned have two perilous implications: they take way too much time, and the results in terms of real student change are short lived. *What can this team do to expedite more efficient parent conferencing and focus on results?*

## **Ground Rules and Operating Procedures**

### **Ground Rules (Samples):**

- Only one person speaks at a time.
- Agree on what important words mean.
- Keep team business inside the team.
- Everyone participates.
- No “Zingers”, put downs or cheap shots about others’ ideas.
- Open disagreement is okay.
- Listening is important.
- Respect one another, respect the team.
- It’s okay to enjoy the process.
- Celebrate achievements.
- Share all relevant information.
- Every idea is grist for the mill.
- Keep agreements.

### **Operating Procedures (Samples):**

- Arrive on time for meetings.
- Attend all meetings.
- No smoking in meeting room.
- Take regular breaks.
- Clarify roles at each meeting- rotate facilitating, recording, timekeeping.
- Set an agenda.
- Come prepared to meetings.
- Make decisions by consensus.

# **Guidelines for Handling Controversy on Our Team**

**(Sample)**

- **Promote a Cooperative (not competitive) environment**
- **Criticize ideas not individuals**
- **Emphasize achieving team goals**
- **Focus on coming to the best decision**
- **Identify disagreements**
- **Encourage everyone to share ideas**
- **Respect one another's viewpoints**
- **Listen to all ideas**
- **Don't personalize conflict**
- **Paraphrase or restate for clarity**
- **Disagreeing members work to understand other's perspective**
- **Analyze pros and cons of each side**
- **Change your mind when evidence warrants it**
- **Work to combine several positions into a new creative position**

## Questions to Use in Team Planning

*Developed by Nancy Doda*

### A Team/Teacher Vision

- Have we discussed and determined what we hope to accomplish for children as a team?
- Have we asked students what they hope for in their life as a team?
- Have we created a set of specific, reasonable goals for this year of teaming? First semester?
- Do we have a plan to share our vision with the kids?

### A Plan for Planning

- Do we have a plan for planning that we will use to conduct our team meetings? Groundrules? Procedures?
- Do we know the critical non-teamed faculty with whom we need to communicate?
- Do we have a plan to communicate with them?
- How will we manage our team's meetings? (eg; agenda, records, roles, etc.)

### A Safe, Caring Team

- What do we believe a caring community should look like?
- How can we cultivate a team community that is a safe haven for every child?
- How can we come to know our students really well?
- How will we use this knowledge in our teaming and teaching?
- How do we build a collaborative student culture?
- How do we engage students as custodians of their own community?
- How can we embrace and involve our team families?

### Support for Improved Learning

- What do we do to help students with management, organization, habits of mind and homework?
- What is our approach to supporting healthy student behavior?
- How will we address difficult discipline dilemmas?
- How we can help students develop responsible behaviors?
- What common skills, habits or dispositions can we emphasize all year? How will we do this?
- What can we do to encourage quality work?

- How we define quality work?
- What is our approach to assessment; grading?
- What can we do to support and assist our struggling learners?
- How can we support our Special education students? ESL?

### Interdisciplinary, Integrated Curriculum

- What will our curriculum be? Big Picture?
- How do we embrace student voice in our planning for the year's curriculum?
- How do we organize our concepts, content and/or standards into meaningful chunks relevant and meaningful to students?
- What essential questions will frame the quarters/year's curriculum?
- How do we communicate with the Encore/Specials teachers?
- How do we incorporate these subjects in our planning?

### Methods of Teaching

- How do we design lessons and learning activities that meet the varied needs of our students? And needs of young adolescents?
- How can we insure that lessons and learning activities address key understandings we hope to teach?
- How do we infuse literacy skills throughout our instruction?
- How do we assess our students' learning?
- How will we monitor our effectiveness in reaching students?

*SAMPLE*

Dear Parents/Guardians:

On Tuesday, December 18, from 10:05-11:15, your child's projects for the second thematic unit of "Back to the Future: How do Our Choices Affect the Future?" will be on display in the lobby of the auditorium. You will be able to see and learn about the following items that your child has created:

- 1) An artifact from an ancient civilization-social studies
- 2) A newly created civilization from the past, present, or future-social studies and science
- 3) A persuasive letter, arguing to help save the environment-English and science
- 4) A written and video poetry portfolio-English, science, and social studies
- 5) A "futureography": a biographical sketch, a scrapbook, a diary/journal, a board game, or a paired letter project-reading
- 6) An "alphabiography" about him/herself and a character from a book-reading
- 7) Circle graphs from a survey taken in science- math and science
- 8) A pamphlet that describes the dangers of global warming-science

Team Phoenix teachers will be available during this time to discuss the work that your child has done so far. We look forward to seeing you again. Be prepared to be amazed- your child has been working so hard. In addition, from 10:55-11:15 some students will be available to discuss their projects. Later this week you will get a sheet that lists out "student teachers" so that you might plan accordingly.

If you have any questions at all about this, please feel free to e-mail me at

Yours truly,

Daniel -Team Leader and English

Kathy-Math

Betty- Reading

Seth -Science

Lynn-Special Education

Susan -Special Education

Michelle -Social Studies

Sheila -Reading

## The Pig in Everyone

Directions: Get a blank piece of paper and draw a picture of a pig on it; just a basic drawing, don't spend all day on it!

**Please do not read below until directed to do so.**

Ok, now to the interesting stuff...

The pig serves as a useful test of the personality traits of the draw-er.

If the pig is drawn:

A: Toward the top of the paper, you are positive and optimistic. Toward the middle, you are a realist. Toward the bottom, you are pessimistic, and have a tendency to behave negatively.

B: Facing left, you believe in tradition, are friendly, and remember dates (birthdays, etc.)

Facing right, you are innovative and active, but don't have a strong sense of family, nor do you remember dates. Facing front (looking at you), you are direct, enjoy playing devil's advocate and neither fear or avoid discussions.

C: With many details, you are analytical, cautious, and distrustful. With few details, you are emotional and naïve, you care little for details and are a risk-taker.

D: With less than 4 legs showing, you are insecure or are living through a period of major change. With 4 legs showing, you are secure, stubborn, and stick to your ideals. If there are more than 4 legs, you are stupid.

E: The size of the ears indicates how good a listener you are. The bigger the better.

F: The length of the tail indicates the quality of your sex life!!!! (And again more is better!)

Ok, who didn't draw a tail?

# 10

## **Ways Teachers Can Prepare Themselves for the Role of Advisor**

- 1.** To be an affirming advisor, it is more important to listen than to give advice. Don't feel frustrated if you can't instantly solve a student's problems. Realize that you *are* helping – by listening, and by responding positively to the student.
- 2.** It takes time for an atmosphere of trust to evolve within a group. Don't expect too much too soon. Allow time for trust to develop.
- 3.** An atmosphere of trust can be established only when the adolescent believes that confidences will not be betrayed. It is important to respect the privacy of your students. Discuss also with your colleagues those circumstances under which it might be in the child's best interests to reveal a confidence, as when the child or another is in danger.
- 4.** Develop and practice good observation skills. Be sensitive to student attention spans, health and social habits, mood swings and body language. Use anecdotal records, checklists, and other quick-and-easy recording devices to gather data that will help you know students better.
- 5.** Teach yourself to facilitate discussions that are not simply question-and-answer sessions. Learn to ask the kind of open-ended question that stimulates thinking.
- 6.** A sense of humor will get you through the year. You may not be a comedian, and that is perfectly alright. A fine and useful sense of humor simply means that you don't take yourself too seriously, and that you choose to see humor in a situation.
- 7.** When working with young people, it is much more effective to *model* good coping skills than it is to give lectures. Attention to your own personal growth may be the best gift you can give to your students.
- 8.** Give students *time* to think. There is nothing wrong with a little silence as a child is groping for a way to express a feeling or idea.
- 9.** Learn to be tolerant of the values of your students if they differ from your own.
- 10.** If you can make a special attempt to understand the uncertain, often bewildering, position of an adolescent, you will become more accepting and non-judgmental – two traits that truly might make a difference in a young life.

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

### **Purpose:**

Connections is a protocol that is used to bridge the interval between what has happened at home over the weekend and what happens at school. It is a way for students to clear their minds, acknowledge personal problems, announce an achievement, or share how they are feeling or why. The Connections protocol can also give teachers a deeper understanding of their students and/or advisees, alerting them to problems, challenges, or triumphs in their students' lives.

Therefore, it is important that every student participate.

Insist that all students sit in a circle facing each other and that desks are clear.

### **Rules:**

- This time may not be used as a study hall or SSR.
- This time is not for use as just a “gripe session”—if students have a genuine concern, ask that they share it appropriately. Sometimes people just need to get things off their chest, so you’ll notice that many of these activities require that listeners not respond immediately.
- Do not allow students to sit in isolation or visit with a good friend – even paired-sharing should be an attempt to pair students who do not normally talk to one another.
- Do not allow students to listen to ipods.
- Do not allow students to leave the room for any reason.

### **Basic Check-In Protocol:**

1. All participants must sit in a circle.
2. The advisor says, “Connections is open” or gets things started by offering his/her own check-in.
3. Students take turns sharing in either a go-around, which begins with one student and then goes around the group in a clockwise formation, or popcorn-style, with students who are seated anywhere in the group speaking.
4. Follow these NORMS:
  - Everyone must say something (even if it’s just “good morning”).
  - Speak only once until everyone has had a chance to speak.
  - Listen actively to what people have said but do not respond. This includes verbal and nonverbal communication such as nodding/shaking head, smiling/frowning, or giving any type of reaction. “Connections” is not a time to engage in discussion.

NOTE: If any issue comes up that the group wants to respond to, the participants can decide to make time for a discussion after “Connections” is over. You can then use this time as a “teachable moment” and ask students to try to see the other side of a situation or ask the group to help problem-solve.

(See CPR alternative)

### **Alternate Check-In Activities:**

1. What's Your Weather? - Each student checks-in by explaining his/her current "weather condition" (e.g., "stormy", "cloudy", "sunny", "hurricane's a brewin'", etc.) Everyone must offer a weather condition, although they may choose not to share an explanation.
2. Four Corners - Create four possible check-in reactions (e.g., four "weather conditions", four emotions, one – four stars); then ask each student to choose a corner and then share with everyone in that corner why they are there. One option is to have the group come back together and each person share-out one thing they heard someone else say.
3. Pair-Up - Students check-in with a partner. Since the point of this activity is to encourage students to get to know each other, you can also
  - Have students create "appointment calendars" so they are sure to pair up with everyone else at least once throughout the year. If students create an appointment calendar without specific dates, you can have them use them once a month, checking-in with several others each time.
  - Create name cards and randomly/selectively pair-up studentsNOTE: The Advisor could pair-up with a student if there is an odd number, specifically checking-in with a particularly troubled student.
4. "Dear Advisory" – Advisory begins with students being given 3x5-inch cards on which they can write a dilemma they are having, a question about a difficult situation they are in, or a problem for which they need advice. Students can write as little or as much detail as they would like, but they do not write their name on the card unless for some reason they wish to do so. The advisor collects the cards and takes a moment to look through them. The advisor should note if any themes emerge (so that he or she does not pick similar problems) and choose four or five cards to read aloud. After reading one aloud, the advisor asks the group for advice on the problem. Advisors can encourage student discussion by asking questions such as, "What do you think about \_\_\_\_\_?" or "What would you do if this was your problem?"

Some alternatives:

  - Circle-Up and Light a Candle - This is similar to "Dear Advisory" but without the anonymous factor, so it should be used with students who feel comfortable with discussing problems together. Students simply take turns sharing out problems or frustrations; it is the job of the circle to find the "Buddhist gift" or "silver lining" or possible solutions.
  - Can You Relate? - Students take turns sharing a frustration and students who can relate share a similar situation/frustration. The point of these is not to look for solutions, just "vent" and seek common ground.

### **Activities for Getting to Know Each Other:**

1. Human Safari – Each student writes down an interesting or unique fact about himself or herself on a piece of paper. The advisor collects and mixes them up and redistributes them so that each person gets a card (not his/her own). Then each person tries to find the person who matches the information on the card. At the end of the time allotted, each person introduces the person they found and gives an interesting fact about them. NOTE: If someone did not find their person they can share the interesting fact and that person can step forward.
2. Fact or Fiction – Each student writes down two things about themselves, one factual and one fictitious. Then each student takes a turn sharing one (they may choose to elaborate); then the others try to decide whether it is fact or fiction being shared.
3. Loaded Questions -- Pass out quarter sheets of paper. Each student will need a pencil or pen. (It works best if all students use the same type of writing utensil.) Ask a question; each student writes down an answer on a piece of paper. These are collected and one student goes through the stack, trying to match each answer to the writer. Some possible questions:
  - What 3 adjectives describe you the best?
  - What is the one thing that always makes you laugh hysterically?
  - If you were guaranteed an honest answer to any question from any person in the world, who and what would you ask?
  - What are you most proud of?
  - What song do you keep hearing over and over again?
  - What is the most annoying show on television?
  - What is the nicest feature of the person on your right?
  - What is the last movie that made your eyes tear up?
  - What one object in your home are you most embarrassed about owning?
  - What is your most annoying habit?
  - How many minutes does it take you to get ready in the morning?
  - What is one thing you always wanted as a kid but never got?
4. Speed Interview (“NASCAR Journalism”) Divide the group in half; create an inner circle and an outer circle, facing each other. In one-minute intervals, rotate the inner circle. Some possible interview questions:
  - Each person creates an interview question (without sharing it out), and then asks that question of each person he/she interviews, noting the answers. When the interview is over, each person figures out a way to summarize the “data” collected and shares it with the class. (For example, if a student decides to ask, “What’s your favorite movie of all time?” they may report out the information by offering titles or by categorizing films into genres: “A third of this group offered horror titles and two-thirds preferred comedies.”)

- Each pair talks for the allotted time before rotating. At the end of the interview period, each student tries to write down 1 fact they learned from each interviewee. Then they can share out lists to check for accuracy.
5. Commonalities - Form small groups of 3-5. Each group will need a piece of chart paper and markers. Ask each group to list things they can observe that they may have in common; then ask each group to list things they may have in common but cannot be seen. After five to ten minutes, ask each group to select 3 – 5 favorites to share out.
 

Debriefing questions:

    - What cliques do we have at school?
    - Do you consider cliques good or bad?
    - How might being part of a clique be helpful or limiting to us?
    - What does it mean to stereotype?
    - How might we stereotype people?
    - What efforts can we make to learn about what people are like on the inside?
  5. Venn Diagrams - Form small groups. Each group will use a piece of paper and markers to create a Venn Diagram that depicts all the things they have in common with everyone in the group and with one other and all the ways they are unique.
 

Debriefing questions:

    - What surprised you?
    - Did you have more in common than you thought?
    - What do you think are the reasons behind your commonalities?
    - In what ways were you unique?
    - What contributed to your uniqueness?
    - What did you learn about someone else you didn't know previously?
  6. Human Bingo – Give each student a copy of the “Human Bingo” board (see attached). Instruct students to fill in their bingo sheet by asking other participants if they have any of the things, qualities, or accomplishments on the sheet. If the answer is yes, the student signs his or her name on the bingo game sheet next to the answer. Each person may only initial one box on the bingo card. To win the game, participants must make a row in any direction. (The teacher may decide to offer a “free” box before the game begins.)
 

Debriefing questions:

    - What surprised you?
    - Was there any question that no one could answer?
    - What was the one thing that people most often checked off about you?
  7. Circle Scramble – Each person says his/her first name so that everyone can hear it. Then, without any verbal or nonverbal communication, the group must attempt to organize into alphabetical order. Once they think they have it, each person says his/her name to see how close they came. Go for further rounds if necessary. You can also try this with:
    - Middle or last names
    - Birthdays

- Addresses
  - Names of pets
8. High-flying Spirits – Give everyone in the group an index displaying a name associated with a theme (Batman, Robin, Batgirl, Chief O’Hara, The Joker). Participants find other people in their theme. When all groups are formed, they must create and present a cheer related to their theme. (The advisor will want to create enough themes that enable him/her to divide the advisory into small groups of 4 to 5)
  9. Twenty Questions – Each participant needs pencil and paper. Instruct each advisee to complete the sentence, “I am” twenty times, listing all the “roles” they fill (such as “I am a daughter”, “I am a baseball player”, “I am a driver of a red car”). Encourage the listing of roles or positions/activities, not personal characteristics/adjectives. Each participant then shares his/her list with the group.
  10. Show and Tell – Just an old-fashioned game of “show and tell”. If you want students to bring in an item, let them know ahead of time.

|   |   |  |                                       |  |  |   |                                  |
|---|---|--|---------------------------------------|--|--|---|----------------------------------|
| Has created a web page.   | Enjoys running                                | Doesn't like beach.                            | Has played a team sport               | Listens to the music of Hannah Montana         | Has baked cookies.   | Has seen the sun rise in the last month.              | Can say a sentence in Pig Latin. |
| Has a piece of his or her own artwork framed in his or her house. | Is fluent in Spanish. Doesn't like chocolate. | Isn't scared of bees. Knows how to do origami. | Sings in a choir at least three cats. | Knows the capital of Canada. Knows how to rap. | Is able to recite a version of the chicken Milky Way joke. | Doesn't mind the sound of his riddle on a chalkboard. | Has been bungee jumping.         |
| Watches less than one hour of TV per week.                        | Has a dog whose name begins with a vowel      | Has twins in his or her immediate family       | Has seven or more aunts and uncles,   | Is a vegetarian.                               | Is left-handed.  | Is proficient at a musical instrument                 | Enjoys reading.                  |
| Has ridden on a motorcycle.                                       | Likes to cook.                                | Has been to New York                           | Has been scuba diving.                | Has run in a 5k race.                          | Can name at least 20 states and capitals                   | Knows how to use a compass.                           | Gets seasick.                    |
|   |   |  | Has played                            | Listens to                                     |  | Has seen the  | Can say a                        |

# TEACHER ADVISORY ACTIVITY OPTIONS

## PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

AFFECTIVE ART  
STORY TIME  
DISCUSSIONS  
GOAL SETTING  
AFFECTIVE EXERCISES

## INTERPERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

DIALOGUE DIARIES  
COMMUNICATION EXERCISES  
CELEBRATIONS  
GAMES  
INTRAMURALS  
CONTESTS  
SCHOOL PRIDE  
PROJECTS

## ACADEMIC

DEBATES  
PANELS  
STUDY SKILLS  
CONFERENCES  
CONTRACTS  
PARENT CALLS  
AFTER-SCHOOL  
ASSISTANCE  
MINI-CLUBS

## ENRICHMENT