Center for Democracy and Citizenship

A Coach's Guide to Public Achievement

A Coach's Guide to Public Achievement, third edition, is designed to help coaches, teachers, team members, principals, and parents in the Public Achievement experience.

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Building Ownership: A Coach's Guide to Teaching Politics, by Fraser Nelson and Rebecca Breuer.
Leadership in Bloom, by Harry Boyte, Joyce Yamamoto, Nan Skelton, and Annette Patel.
Making the Rules, third edition, by Melissa Bass.
Reinventing Citizenship The Practice of Public Work, by Harry Boyte and Nan Skelton.

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What you do, what each of us does, has an effect on the country, the state, the nation, and the world.
-Hubert H. Humphrey, II

Table of Contents



PART THREE: THE COACH

PART FOUR: THE PROJECT

Public Achievement

Welcome to Public Achievement

Public Achievement is an international civic empowerment and learning initiative launched by the Center for Democracy and Citizenship, at Augsburg College. Its goal is to educate young people to become powerful civic and political actors – to think and act as citizens who co-create their worlds – and to deepen democratic education and democratic societies.

The Purpose of this Guidebook

The Coach's Guide to Public Achievement is specifically written to help coaches and others work more effectively with their team members and host institutions. However, this guidebook also provides a general introduction to the theory, practice, and process of Public Achievement. It can be used by any person, group or institution that wants to experience the power of public work to create better communities, better education, and better societies.

This book is not a typical guidebook in the sense that it tells you how to do Public Achievement. It is intended as a toolkit to aid in your endeavor, not a step-by-step recipe for public life.

Public Achievement: A Public Narrative

Today, in the face of mounting problems, most people feel like spectators to the world's events; from local traffic signs to climate change, people feel powerless to do anything. It is time for everyday citizens to move from victims or spectators and reclaim their roles as the main agents of change.

Harry Boyte started Public Achievement in 1990 with the purpose of teaching young people the grassroots and empowering citizen politics he had experienced from the Citizenship Education Program during the Civil Rights Movement. This meant being the "change we want to see," as participants in the movement put it. Such politics is also called civic empowerment, or civic agency. It also meant aiming at a democracy "which includes everyone and every relationship," in the words of Septima Clark, one of the key leaders in the movement.

Dorothy Cotton, Director of the movement's Citizenship Education Program, expressed this in a song, "We are the ones we've been waiting for." People learned the idea in citizenship schools – informal training groups organized in clubs, beauty parlors, church basements, as well as at the Dorchester Center, where people came from across the South for five days of training.

As they learned how to make change and talked about what citizenship means, transformations occurred in outlook and identity among young people and people of all ages. As Martin Luther King put it in his famous *Letter from a Birmingham Jail*, everyday citizens were "bringing the whole nation back to the great wells of democracy dug deep by the founding fathers [and mothers]."

The First Discussions

Public Achievement was launched in 1990. It started with a series of 21 house meetings with teenagers led by Harry Boyte and Carol McGee Johnson, working in partnership with the newly elected mayor of St. Paul, Jim Scheibel. Although conventional wisdom in the United States held that youth were apathetic, it became clear that young people had major problems in which they worried about. These issues ranged from violence, teen pregnancy, drugs, gangs, racism and bullying, to depression, lack of recreational opportunities, school curriculum that seemed to not make sense (and were seldom explained), as well as lack of time with their families. Issues varied somewhat with area, class, and race. **Young people also expressed that no one had ever asked what they could do about such problems.**

The flagship for Public Achievement was St. Bernard's K-8 elementary school in St. Paul, Minnesota. The principal, Dennis Donovan, who became the national organizer for Public Achievement, had undergone what he calls a "personal transformation" through his involvement in a broad, church-based community organization called SPEAC. Donovan saw Public Achievement as a way for students who often voiced lack of purpose and despair, new hope, courage, confidence, and skills of effective citizenship. He also was convinced that Public Achievement could help teachers learn a better way of engaging their students' interests and passion, as well as their role as teachers, to become powerful agents of educational change – citizen teachers.

In hundreds of communities in a growing number of countries, Public Achievement has proven to be a powerful way to bring back an empowering politics of the people and a vision of a reviving a democratic society, far more than elections, with young people often taking the lead.

Today, Pubilc Achievement is happening in K-12 schools, universities and colleges, faith-based organizations, after-school programs, non-profit organizations, and community centers. People of all ages are making a difference in the world.

Public Achievement is not only taking place in the United States, people around the world are working together to solve public problems in their societies. There are active Public Achivement groups in:

United States
Arizona
Colorado
Connecticut
Georgia
Kentucky
Michigan
Minnesota
Missouri
New York
Ohio
Texas
Vermont
Wisonsin

Other Countries
Albania
Azerbaijan
Bulgaria
Czech Republic
Gaza
Georgia
Hungary
Japan
Kosovo
Macedonia
Mexico
Moldova
Morocco
Poland
Romania
Serbia
Scotland
Slovakia
South Africa
Turkey
Ukraine
West Bank

How to Use this Book

You can use this book in any way that helps you and your teams engage in public work. As we said earlier, **this book is not designed to be a how to manual for Public Achievement.** This guidebook is only meant to offer suggestions to help you and your team. Although, most part of this book is written to target young student groups doing Public Achievement at school sites, this book is still applicable for adult Public Achievement groups.

This does not mean that you should approach Public Achievement in a passive or haphazard manner. Engagement in public life is serious business; it takes passion, commitment, foresight, planning, critical thinking, assertiveness, creativity, courage, and hard work. These are things that you and your team will need to develop through the course of your experiences. Therefore, it is important to always think in long and short term strategies that will offer the greatest opportunities for learning and the successful engagement in the public world.

There is probably more information in this book than you will need to do Public Achievement. We have provided more information so that you can have options and choose alternative courses of action.

Before starting your Public Achievement experience, we suggest you read the first three sections to acclimate yourself to the theory and context of Public Achievement and what it means to be a coach.

Then, peruse the fourth section so you have an idea of what a Public Achievement project is like. You can come back to sections when they are applicable to the work that your team is doing.

PART ONE gives you a theoretical and conceptual introduction to the process and practice of Public Achievement.

PART TWO explains Public Achievement in historical context and compare it to other modes of civic education.

PART THREE describes some of the dynamics of coaching.

PART FOUR outlines a framework for a typical Public Achievement experience.

The chapters in Part Four are roughly presented in a chronological progression from the start until the finish of a project. This way, you can have an idea of how to organize your entire project over the allotted time frame. Practical exercises are also provided at the end of the chapters in Part Four to help you and your team to make progress throughout the experience.

More suggestions on how to use this book:

PICK AND CHOOSE

When coaching, you should use appropriate exercises and concepts that will help you and your team progress in your work. In some cases, certain public skills or exercises may not be appropriate for your group.

AMEND, CHALLENGE, AND CHANGE

This guidebook is a guide for citizen action. Once its ideas are used in your work, you and your group may want to modify them, for it is only by relating them to your own experience in public work that they gain meaning.

LOCATE

Use as a reference point to determine where you are, and where you need to go in your projects.

MEASURE YOUR TEAM'S WORK

Use the book to test whether or not your team's work is public, democratic, based on participants' interests, etc. Also, the book can be used to measure learning, developing skills and capacities, and changing identities.

COLLABORATE

Public Achievement is part of a larger process of making constructive change in education, our communities and our society: take notes concerning what does and does not work with this book, and share them with your fellow coaches, site team, peers, or Public Achievement staff.

CREATE

Try your own ideas. Experiment with your team to devise a new way to do Public Achievement.

Coach's Roadmap for Public Achievement

Public Achievement usually takes place during an academic school year. As mentioned during the early chapters, coaches are required to meet with their Public Achievement groups at least one hour every week. This will then add up to about 22 one-hour per week meetings with your team for the entire school year.

This roadmap serves as a guide to give you an idea of the work your team should be doing and a timeline in order to complete an action project by the end of the year. Adjustments will need to be made if your team will only be meeting for a semester, or if you will be involved with the site helping participants identify public issues.

NOTE: This roadmap assumes that issues have been identified, and Public Achievement teams are formed by site leaders and participants before the coaches arrive (Issue Development; pages 94-95). Your coach coordinator will help you navigate the roadmap for your particular site and situation. Be proactive as a coach and use your own relationships and resources whenever possible to move your team in positive ways.

PHASE 1 should take about three meetings.

- Get to know each other;
- Icebreaker activities;
- Uncover self-interests of team members in the issue;
- Recognize diversity in group and broader world;
- Establish rules and consequences for working as a team;
- Set expectations;
- Introduce core concepts of self-interest, politics, and public work;
- Find out talents of team members;
- Let team members share information about their school, neighborhood, and community;
- Team building exercises and activities;
- Discuss what is Public Achievement;
- Introduce a timed agenda and public evaluation;
- Establish a routine of team members sharing Public Achievement roles, such as notetaker, timekeeper, encourager, and eventually facilitator and evaluator;
- Develop a name for your team's identity.

PHASE 2 should take place within six meetings.

This phase is about researching the issue in order to focus on a specific problem within the issue that will be addressed (Defining Problem/Project; pages 96-101).

- Power mapping (Power Mapping; pages 107-111);
- Contacting people and/or organizations on your power map;
- Visit and/or invite people to your meetings;
- Practice what you will ask or want to know;
- Analyze the information,
- Figure out who might collaborate with your team;
- Take a field trip;
- Make a resource list,
- Initiate discussion about possible problems to address and possible projects to address them;
- Develop a team mission statement.

PHASE 3 should take about two meetings.

- Reflect on what your group has done so far;
- Brainstorm possible projects;
- Prepare for public presentation and celebration;
- Have your team present in a public setting what work they have done and what they have learned;
- Finally, celebrate.

SEMESTER BREAK

PHASE 4 takes about three meetings.

This phase is all about taking public actions (Taking Public Action; pages 118–126).

- Review work from previous semester;
- Stay focused;
- Wrap up research to decide on a problem that the team will address inside of their issue;
- Visit people and/or invite people to meetings;
- Identify action project ideas to address problem;
- Develop an action plan and timeline to complete the project.

PHASE 5 should be completed within seven meetings.

- Work on project;
- You should have collaborators working with you and your team;
- Make sure that the project is clear and makes public contribution;
- Team members should be learning the core concepts as they work;
- Keep people on-site informed about your team's work;
- Find ways to make your team's work public;
- Have team members perform on public stages;
- Complete project;
- Evaluate the entire year's work;
- Prepare for the final public presentation.

PHASE 6 should be end of the Public Achievement project.

Takes place during the last meeting.

- Final public presentation and celebration.
- Say goodbye to the team.

What is Public Achievement?

Public Achievement is not a new youth organization. It is an experience-based civic education initiative, especially with young people, based on the idea of civic empowerment, or civic agency. Civic empowerment is developed and expressed through public work. Existing youth organizations, schools, and community agencies (Public Achievement Sites) form partnerships with Public Achievement coaches and staff around the ideas of civic agency, public work and citizen education. Once in place, these partnerships generally develop so that Public Achievement becomes closely integrated into the cultures and practices of the sites.

Through this process, young people can positively impact their host institution, surrounding community, and society in general. Even though the focus is centered on the teams of young people, everyone who participates in Public Achievement should also be thinking of themselves as citizens, co-creators of communities and society, engaging in public work. Public Achievement is more than an activity that one does once a week; it is a way of life. It can influence careers, work and worksites, the nature of education, as well as the direction of society. The experience can be transformative for everyone involved.

In Public Achievement, participants voluntarily choose the issues that they want to work on, and then work with other similarly interested individuals in teams to solve public problems. These teams work on projects of their own design and creation, pursued in a legal, non-violent, and respectful manner.

The work of teams is undertaken with the help and guidance of adult coaches. Coaches can be undergraduates, AmeriCorps members, or people from the community (including parents, church members, business people, etc). Coaches are there to guide students/participants along as they try to solve problems or address the issues that they have identified. Equally important, coaches are there to empower team members to learn from the experiences, use core concepts, and develop identities as civic co-creators.

An important part of the coaches and sites' development is the debriefing session. After each team meeting, all adult participants at the Public Achievement site get together for an hour to evaluate, problem-solve, give support, and get administrative information, as well as engage in training sessions.

Public Achievement is not just about public work; it is a practice that is grounded in a theory and history of politics. We emphasize that all participants think critically about how their public work fits into the larger public world as well as engage the big questions of modern life. Public Achievement stresses a shared set of concepts and terms that enable us to think about and discuss the implications of our public work. Conceptual and reflective thinking is essential to effective public work.

Public Achievement is also a collaborative and cumulative process. Like other forms of experiential education, the learning in Public Achievement comes from doing. However, we emphasize that such learning comes from working together with other citizens to make a real difference – hence it is collaborative. It is also productive and is part of a larger process of continual development – hence it is cumulative. In order for Public Achievement to be cumulative and collaborative, it is vital that all the various actors have the opportunity to share and learn from each other's respective experiences. Conferences, debriefing sessions, and public workshops are organized as forums for the exchange of ideas, problem-solving techniques, and the sharing of general experiences. These forums not only help us continually improve Public Achievement, they also foster the sense of Public Achievement as a national movement.

This guidebook, along with Public Achievement, is a work in progress. It is continually being revised, altered, and improved based on everyone's experiences. We actively seek input from everyone who is involved in the program. Let us know what worked and what didn't, and what you think should be done to improve Public Achievement.

Thanks in advance and good luck!

Core Elements in the Practice of Public Achievement

While it may take on different forms at different sites, through the years, the Center for Democracy and Citizenship has come up with a set of core elements of Public Achievement.

1) PARTICIPANT ELEMENTS

- Team members are, typically, ages 8-18.
- Youth choose to participate.
- Youth participate as teams; leadership roles are rotated.
- Youth choose issues, with coaching, through a deliberative process. Issues are...
  - pursued in a legal and nonviolent fashion;
  - grounded in participants' passion, values, and interests;
  - have a public quality – they make a public or community contribution;
  - can be acted upon.
- Team actions are real work – they take place over time (several months or longer), involve many steps, and have identifiable results or products.
- Young people use evaluation to learn from experiences, including successes and failures.
- Teams meet formally at least once a week.
- Youth work with coaches who are guides and facilitators, but not leaders, mentors, or directors.

2) COACH ELEMENTS

- Coaches work as a team, with at least one debriefing (with a goal of an hour); the coach's time commitment is typically about 3-5 hours a week.
- Coaches are tied to a course or some other process in which they discuss theory as well as practice.
- Coaches help teams to do their public work, learn from their tasks, and identify key concepts through their work (e.g. like democracy, public work, and citizenship).
- Coaches participate in training sessions that involve skills, methods, site orientations, and theory.
- A Coach Coordinator (faculty member, AmeriCorps coordinator, community organization leader or organizer, etc.) coordinates, supports, and supervises the coaches' work; creates an accountability structure; and works in partnership with the Site Coordinator (see next section).

3) SITE ELEMENTS

- Sites see Public Achievement as a way to implement or pursue core mission and values. The more Public Achievement is integrated into core purposes and identities of a site, the stronger is the impact.
- There is a Site Coordinator who integrates Public Achievement into the site culture, coordinates logistics, helps teams continue their work all week, and makes the work visible.
- Sites see themselves as leaders in the national Public Achievement initiative and the emerging civic renewal movement to strengthen and invigorate democracy.

Learning Expectations

While Public Achievement does not expect every group to succeed in accomplishing their goals, we do have high expectations in terms of what each individual team member should learn during the process. It is essential to the Public Achievement learning process that young people/participants have a central part in the planning and design of the work, and accordingly, they should take responsibility for the success or failure of their project.

Public Achievement can also be seen as a vibrant, ongoing story of young people and people's empowerment for democracy. Knowing some of the history of Public Achievement and its roots in the Civil Rights Movement is important, so is asking the question, "What am I contributing to the ongoing story of Public Achievement?"

Through working on a Public Achievement project, young people/participants should learn to:

- Understand the history of movements for young people's empowerment;
- Define a community problem and identify their stake in it;
- Work on an issue with a diverse group of people;
- Map the political environment so that they build strategic relationships with resourceful people to accomplish their goals;
- Develop problem-solving strategies and take action;
- Evaluate their work and roles to further develop their capacity for effective action.

As teams work on their issues, their understanding of the problem will change and their goal may change. They may or may not solve the problem they defined. The important part of Public Achievement is the lessons that will be learned from the group's successes and failures. Nobody said that changing the world is easy, and often you learn the most about political reality when you fail to accomplish your goals.

The Components of Public Achievement

This is a list of all the different people, roles, and organizations that constitute Public Achievement at a site. As you can see, it takes a lot of work to support the teams and coaches.

TEAMS: The youth teams/participants are the basic organizing unit of Public Achievement. The teams engage in public work, with coaches, to solve public problems that are important to them.

COACHES: Coaches can be college students, adult leaders of youth organizations, teachers, or community volunteers who act as guides for the youth teams as they engage in their public problem-solving work. They work closely with their professors, community organizers, Public Achievement staff, and their host institutions to ensure that their teams gain an understanding of, and practical experience in, public work.

HOST INSTITUTIONS/ PUBLIC ACHIEVEMENT SITE: Host institutions are the sites where Public Achievement happens; they can be schools, churches, community centers, or neighborhood organizations. They create and maintain teams of young people/participants, work with and support their team's coaches, participate on the Site Teams, and provide leadership in integrating citizenship and public work into their institution.

SITE TEAM: This working group is composed of the Coach Coordinator, Site Coordinator, Public Achievement Liaison and any other leaders involved with Public Achievement including principals, university professors, or community leaders. It makes decisions regarding the structure, implementation, and emphasis of Public Achievement at the particular site.

COACH COORDINATOR: Coordinates, supports, and supervises the coach's work; creates an accountability structure; and works in partnership with the Site Coordinator. Leads the debriefing sessions to meet training needs of coaches.

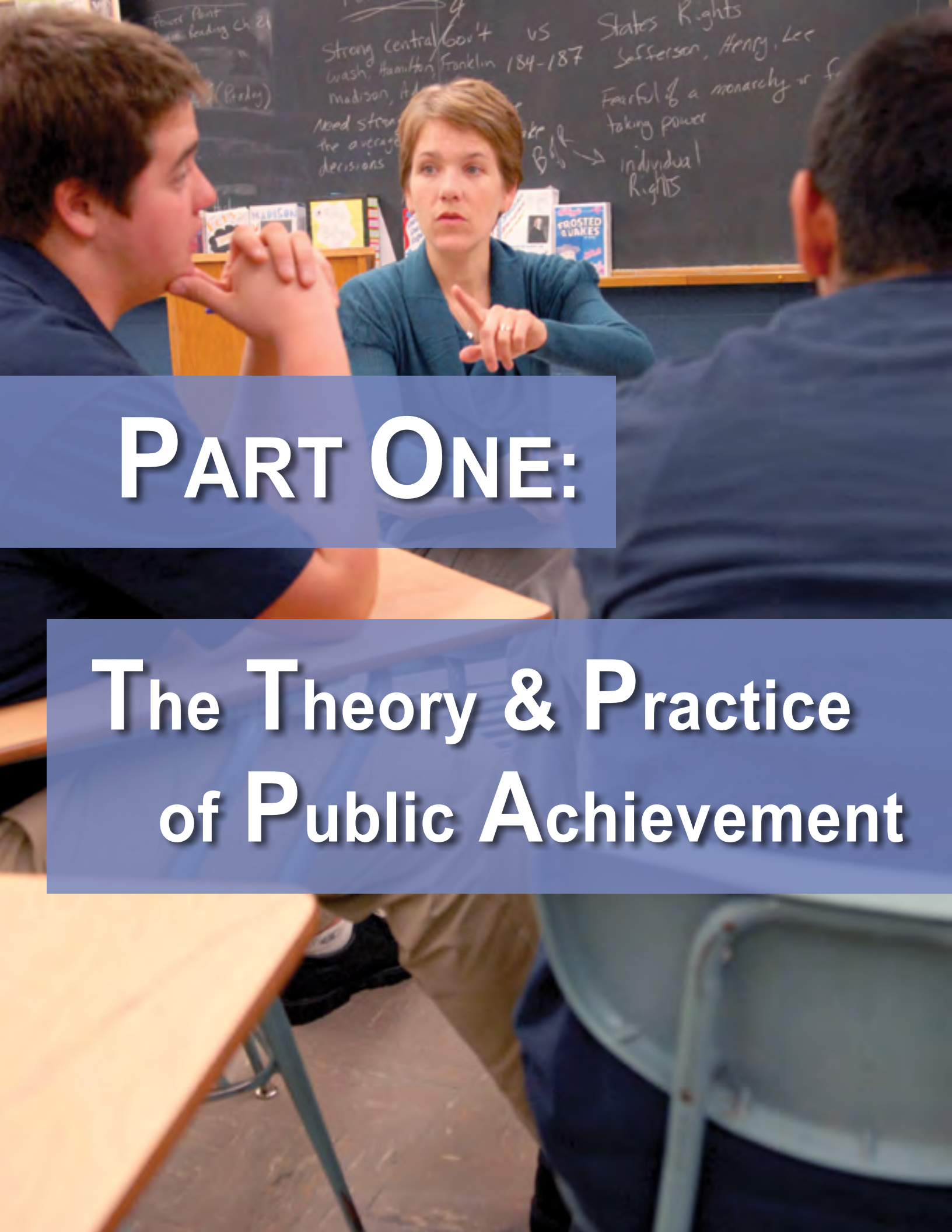
SITE COORDINATOR: Integrates Public Achievement into the site culture, coordinates logistics, helps teams continue their work all week, and makes the work visible.

PUBLIC ACHIEVEMENT LIAISON: Maintains contact between Public Achievement sites and local office, insures accountability at site level, and provides support for sites and coaches.

COLLEGES: As colleges look to create and expand their citizenship and service learning programs, many are finding that combining academic work with Public Achievement coaching provides their students with important conceptual and practical experience in public life.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS: Community organizations are finding that Public Achievement provides an excellent framework to get their members more active in working in the community.

TEACHERS/ PARENTS/ COMMUNITY: While these people may not be formally involved in the work of Public Achievement, they are crucial partners in making Public Achievement successful.



Part One:

The Theory & Practice of Public Achievement

Chapter 1: Introduction

This part of the guidebook introduces you to the theoretical and conceptual framework of Public Achievement. It details public work, the method and organizing framework of Public Achievement. Public work enables citizens to build worlds, transform lives, and make history.

Civic Agency through Public Work as the Organizing Framework of Public Achievement

What do you think about when you hear the word politics? For many, politics involves the actions of politicians and government – they make laws, pass bills, give speeches, and sometimes solve public problems. There is a pervasive notion that politics is something done to us or for us, not something that citizens directly engage in.

As we move through the early decades of the 21st century, many people agree that politics is not all it should be. People feel dissatisfied with the traditional political structures. Many people feel that no single person – certainly not a young person – can make a difference.

Education itself often suffers from similar problems. Today's education often seems like a highly competitive sports event, aimed at selecting the winners. Teachers and students alike feel driven to teach to the test. The larger point of education – as preparing citizens who can be responsible leaders in a democratic society – is lost.

A different story of education, in which young people and people of all ages learned to be citizens who can solve problems and build a democratic way of life was once widespread. The story took root in neighborhood schools, land grant colleges, religious schools, community colleges, state colleges and universities, historically black colleges and universities, and tribal colleges. The City College of New York, once seen as the nation's intellectual powerhouse, admitted all students from New York high schools and graduated 11 future Nobel Prize winners. The different story also found expression in religious education, settlement houses, and the citizenship schools of the Civil Rights Movement.

This alternative story is the democratic genius of American education, based on cooperative excellence, not meritocratic excellence. Cooperative excellence is the principle that a mix of people from highly varied backgrounds can achieve remarkable intellectual, social, political, and spiritual growth and can learn to make a difference in the world if they have the right encouragements, resources, challenges, and calls to public purpose.

Public Achievement seeks to renew this democratic story of education, as well as empower and educate young people to make a difference. This does not merely mean that citizens will begin to be more active in institutional politics – writing letters to elected officials, going to city council meetings, supporting particular causes, or even voting. It also means that citizens take responsibility for the society they live in. Public Achievement's focus on the empowering public work of citizens comes from the idea that society's problems, challenges, and opportunities are everyone's responsibility.

It also involves renewing the idea of citizen teacher, and citizen principal, as well as citizen parents and citizen community members, who can also participate in public problem solving and making change.

Building Worlds: The Empowering Politics of Public Work

Public Achievement is grounded on the faith that ordinary people of all ages have the insights, capacities, and talents to solve society's problems, however large or small, and to build a common world. This goes against the grain in an age of consumer culture where citizens are thought of as making market choices, not solving problems. It also runs counter to the current tendency to bash public things of all kinds– from parks to schools, libraries to youth centers. We are convinced, however, that the importance of public work speaks to a widespread and powerful need in our time.

Public life, thus understood, originates and is undertaken at the level of citizens. Decisions are not made from the top down. Rather, citizens themselves work together to identify issues, diagnose problems, develop strategies, form coalitions and work on problems to effect political change, as well as to create things of public importance. To adapt a famous line of Abraham Lincoln, public work is work for the public, work of the public and work by the public.

Public Achievement enables people of all ages to learn the skills and concepts to combine their passionate ideals and interests with a healthy realism in their efforts to engage the public world. At its most effective and productive, public work joins ideals, practicality, and flexibility to problem-solving and public creation. It makes us aware of the gritty, real-world differences in power, interests, and points of view that actually exist. We do not have to completely accept the way things are in our daily lives, but change needs to be integrated into our everyday realities if it is to be lasting and really democratic.

Empowering public work is also about understanding and working with a diversity of interests, and increasing the role everyone can play in solving major societal problems. It is a real challenge to learn practical strategies for working with others with whom we may disagree. This involves looking at the public world as a space of different ideologies and approaches. People engaged in public work should move beyond the easy moralizing stance of who is right and who is wrong. It requires finding a larger common goal that most can agree on and recognizing that the insights and participation of many different people are essential for significant public work to occur. Public Achievement focuses on solving public problems and public co-creation, thus guards against the politics of special interests.

The countless examples of successful Public Achievement projects – from painting graffiti-covered bathrooms to building playgrounds – serve as concrete reminders that public action is important and possible. Public Achievement aids in the political development of those who have decided to make a difference and be heard.

Transforming Lives: Civic Education for Active, Effective Citizenship

Public Achievement is unique because it develops public skills and public identities in young people/active citizens. It is civic education in a truly political sense. We do not teach how a bill becomes a law or run mock elections or debates. Young people/active citizens learn about politics and citizenship through the actual experience of productively engaging the public world.

Public work is not just about finished products; it also entails the learning process of working on a public project. The work itself has potential to transform worlds and people. By thinking politically and acting publicly, team members learn about political processes, diversity, alternative approaches, important issues, structures of power and interest, and themselves. Through the practice and learning process of Public Achievement, all participants should develop an identity as a civic producer, someone who takes responsibility for and helps build our common world.

We cannot stress enough the importance of young people learning to see the connections between their immediate work, larger issues and institutions. Such connections enable people to engage the big questions of public life, and to get a deeper understanding of the world and their role in it.

Public Achievement thus offers an alternative to the ways people normally think of citizenship. Conventionally, citizenship is viewed in narrow, legalistic terms – citizens are formal members of the nation, born or naturalized in the United States, and protected by certain rights guaranteed by the Constitution. These are important ideas, and citizens of other countries often aspire to them, but there is more. Public Achievement understands citizenship in a broader way in which the citizen is a public co-creator.

Such co-creators, regardless of formal status of citizenship, accept the responsibilities and opportunities to contribute to and create public life. Becoming effective and active citizens involves a variety of skills, capacities, and insights. Active citizenship means developing the arts of listening, speaking in public, deliberating, understanding power, and knowing what the rules are for being in a public environment. Effective citizenship entails learning to exercise power responsibly, and to hold others and yourself accountable. Active, effective citizenship thus depends on people thinking of themselves as productive participants of society who can build things and do things, who come up with ideas and resources, who are bold, and who are accountable.

Making History and learning Citizenship

Often, young people are taught that history is something in the past; and that, when they grow up, they can do great things in the future. They are rarely told that they can make history themselves. The simple idea of Public Achievement, that ordinary people (including young people) are serious public actors, is revolutionary. Moreover, we have found that this is not something that needs to be told to the younger generation, they just need to be given the space and opportunity to act in public.

In a very tangible sense, Public Achievement teams make history every year. Time and time again, teams initiate and carry out projects that have never been undertaken by young people (and sometimes adults) before. In some cases, the impact on communities and schools is sustained and far-reaching. In all cases, there is an emphasis that projects should be accessible, visible, sustainable, and memorable. In other words, projects should be public, and live on after the group's work is done. Projects represent the visible marks that proudly put the team's signature on the face of their community.

When Public Achievement is integrated into schoolwork and class assignments, it can also be a powerful way of bringing new life and motivation to education itself.

Example of Public Story

Skateboarding in Marshall

A couple of years ago, Greg Baartman was in eighth grade in Marshall, Minnesota. He was also in detention again. Greg and school don't always get along very well, but that spring afternoon gave Greg a chance to show the town of Marshall exactly what is important to him.

Greg is an avid skateboarder, or skater. In Marshall, he's a leader in the sport, and is respected even by kids older than him. So the topic of a skatepark was a natural choice for him when, in detention, he was assigned to write an essay about what would make Marshall a better place for youth.

Greg decided to send his essay to the city council and to the Parks and Recreation Community Education director, Justin Engels. It explained that skaters are often misunderstood and that more importantly, they're in need of an appropriate place to skate. "The idea some people have about us," he wrote, "is that we're bad people who find fun in stealing and vandalizing things. Well, it's not true. Skating is a way we express ourselves...The reason skaters have a bad reputation is because we don't speak out." He wrote about the problems that skaters have with the police and about new equipment that makes the sport safe. The need for a park for skaters was his main point, and he made it loud and clear.

The difference between Greg's letter and the others that were written during detention that day is that Greg actually sent his – and started a movement.

Not only did he get city council members to sit up and take notice, but when the Community Education office put together a youth council, Greg got on it and brought his idea with him. He talked with that group of 7-12 graders, and also with other skaters. Soon there was talk of a skate park in Marshall.

Then, Justin Engels reports, "there's a group of local, vocal kids of all ages that wants it." There are plans for a new 51-acre park, and now there's talk of making it accessible to skaters. Greg and others who agree with his idea have made a commitment to "hire themselves out" to work on events for local organizations like the Jaycees and Kiwanis, and to volunteer in the parks. Money that would have been used to pay individuals instead goes into a kitty on behalf of the skate park. They also keep up on grant awards.

Engels says that Greg has "learned to use power to finagle and bargain, but not in a deceptive way... now [the kids] know that you have to earn power and learn from the process of thinking through a plan."

Chapter 2: An Overview on Core Concepts

Core Concepts

Many people do not take time to think about the concepts they use everyday. They might use words such as power, politics, democracy or public in conversation without ever examining what they mean. Public Achievement provides people with the opportunity to think about basic concepts of public life in order to think about, debate, and examine underlying principles. Concepts are not just words and their definitions; they are ideas and ways of thinking. Public Achievement not only introduces young people to immediate practical political skills, it also encourages them to engage intellectually the big questions of politics and public life.

Why are core concepts important?

Concepts are not just words and definitions; they are ideas and ways of thinking about the world. Concepts are the foundation for imagination, flexibility, transformation, and engagement with the world. They provide the tools to discuss, debate, and reach mutual understanding with other people. The ability to generalize or conceptualize from one's personal experience gives all people, not just an educated elite, but the power to link their work to broader categories, issues, and goals. Without this ability, people are stuck in their immediate experience and knowledge.

A basic conceptual background helps citizens to express their own interpretations and personal theories of politics and social life. Theories allow people to understand the problems and issues they face in a more explicit, systematic, and organized manner, as well as to critically engage the theories of others.

Public Achievement is unique because it is not action for the sake of action, or speech for the sake of speech. It is action that has been discussed and thought out in advance, and is evaluated once it is done. Concepts enable us to consider the broader implications of this work, to situate it in a larger public sphere, and to compare it against other forms of action. At the same time, the actual work done informs one's understandings of political concepts. There is a mutually enforcing relationship between action and concepts in the work of Public Achievement.

In short, concepts are important for two related reasons.

1. Making work public/ political

Concepts provide a way to analyze the world and our work. For instance, simple questions like, "how is our project public?" and "what power does the principal have over this issue?" can go a long way in helping teams be more effective.

2. Making Public Achievement a learning experience

Concepts make great teachable moments. By reflecting on concepts, team members can understand the meanings of their experiences in different ways.

Core Concepts as an On-Going Discussion

The following is a brief discussion of some of the many core concepts that are relevant to the politics of public work. Please note that these discussions are preliminary and partial. Moreover, all of the following concepts are essentially contested, meaning there is no one common agreement about their true meaning. In some cases, our account may seem different from the way you normally understand these concepts. This section is intended to encourage debate and discussion about the conceptual framework of politics. The parentheses reference later chapters with extended discussions of these concepts.

Civic Agency

For many today, education, health, community safety, and a variety of other services are done to them – they are not activities in which they act. We have an empowerment gap along with an achievement gap. Civic agency changes this around. It is the power to manage your life, to have real input on the decisions that affect your life and to work with others, often people who are very different, to solve public problems and to shape the world in which you live. Working with others across our differences, it gives people a sense that they can make a difference.

Public Work

Civic agency is practiced and developed through public work. Public work is the visible effort of ordinary citizens who cooperatively produce and sustain things of lasting importance in our community, nation, or world. It solves common problems and creates common things. It is the action of producing and taking responsibility for the common world in which we live. It creates a sense of ownership and pride in a place one is helping to make and sustain.

Politics

Politics refers to the practice of power, governance, and co-creating our common world; it is the art and science of how public decisions are made and how we solve public problems, working with people who may be very different than us – whom we may disagree with, or even dislike. This means that politics is not only the domain of politicians, but is also understood as the everyday processes of deliberating, negotiating, bargaining, making decisions, and thinking strategically.

Citizenship

Citizenship often refers to the status of being a member in a community. Sometimes, it also means the quality of the individual's rights, responsibilities, and contributions to his or her community. Public Achievement looks to broaden the formal ideas of citizenship by viewing any individual (of any age or legal status) as a co-creator. Citizenship in this view involves working to create and sustain the community (at whatever level) of which you are a part.

Democracy

Democracy comes from the Greek words *demos* (people) and *kratia* (power). It is not only elections, but more broadly a way of life, in which people work together and make decisions in schools and businesses, congregations and communities. It is not a destination, but rather a journey. Public Achievement teaches people the skills, concepts and values so that citizens can exercise that power, and build and sustain democracy in all facets of public life (more in Chapter 4).

Freedom

Freedom can be referred to freedom from oppressive conditions. Human and political rights like the freedom of speech and freedom of worship are intended to help protect such freedoms. Freedom is also a product of collective power our capacity to act. In other words, we are free if we live under the laws, society, or world that we have made for ourselves. These two meanings are in tension with each other because the collective will of the community could conceivably pass laws that violate the rights of individuals.

Public

There are three related meanings to the concept *public* that are relevant to Public Achievement: a group of people (a public), a space that is open and visible (in public), and a common purpose (for public). For young people, relating their experience to others outside their immediate school or group can be difficult; but the connections are there, and finding them can be very powerful (more detail in Chapter 9).

Free Spaces

The concepts of public and freedom are combined in the idea of free spaces. In free spaces, people gather, have the capacity to self-organize and have ownership. Public Achievement provides that space, and presents an opportunity for citizens to free their own public spaces for action (more in Chapter 4).

Interests

Interests are a crucial element of politics. They involve people's passion and personal concerns – their why – taken into public life. Interests range from your personal self-interest to other's interests, to a broader conception of the public interest. A basic premise of public work is that people are more likely to become active on an issue that they feel strongly about (more in Chapter 7).

Diversity

Diversity is a fact of public life. In the public world, one encounters a variety of people, ideas, histories, and cultures. To effectively solve public problems, one must learn to listen, appreciate, and work with others who, while different from themselves, are also affected by the same issues and problems of public life (more in Chapter 7).

Power

Power is the ability to influence other people, institutions, or processes. Public Achievement views power as a dynamic, interactive, and multi-directional relation. By communicating, organizing and working together, citizens can build power to affect change and solve public problems (more in Chapter 10).

Accountability/ Responsibility

Accountability and Responsibility are both public skills and concepts. The skill centers on being accountable for one's actions or words. In the context of public work, one is accountable to his or her self, group, site, and community. The concept has to do with the realization that every individual is a significant actor in society, and that each individual is in some sense responsible for the world in which they live (more in Chapter 13).

Application of Concepts

It is not enough to just know these concepts. If they are to have any relevance and meaning, they must be incorporated into the work of Public Achievement. We recommend that you and your team to familiarize yourselves with the core concepts at the beginning of your Public Achievement experience, and use them throughout.

By naming and discussing the connections between concepts and practice, it deepens understanding of public work and the big questions of public life. You may find that some of our conceptualizations are inadequate to your experience and need to be modified. Throughout your coaching experience, review with your team to see how the meanings of these concepts may have changed and to assess what they have learned. Here are a few tips to include in your weekly meetings:

- Always use concepts in discussions with your team;
- Ask team members what ideas like democracy and public work mean;
- Whenever a concept connects with your group's work, name and discuss that connection;
- Have a concept of the week;
- Try some of the exercises on concepts.

Throughout the rest of this guidebook, extended discussions of some of the core concepts are mixed with the practical suggestions for public work. This way, the organization of this guidebook reflects the process of Public Achievement. The way the text moves back and forth from concepts to skills mirrors how teams should constantly integrate concepts and theories into their practical public work and use their experiences to redefine the concepts they use.

For exercises that reinforce core concepts, see Chapter 7.

Chapter 3: An Overview on Public Skills

The following is a list of public skills for team members, and a list for coaches that may be practiced or developed during the course of a Public Achievement experience. While a discussion about how to develop each of these skills is beyond the scope of this guidebook, this list will make you aware of the great number of skills that may be used in Public Achievement. Many of these important skills are addressed in-depth in the second part of this guidebook.

The development of political and public skills is a major component of the Public Achievement program. In most instances, these skills are learned through the simple process of practicing them. As a coach, it is important to name the skills that are being (or need to be) learned. Make participants aware of the fact that they have learned a new skill, and emphasize its importance in other facets of life. Coaches should also challenge their teams to perform each of these skills well. This could mean making sure that the letters your team writes are grammatically correct and are in the proper format, or it could entail helping your students prepare for public speaking.

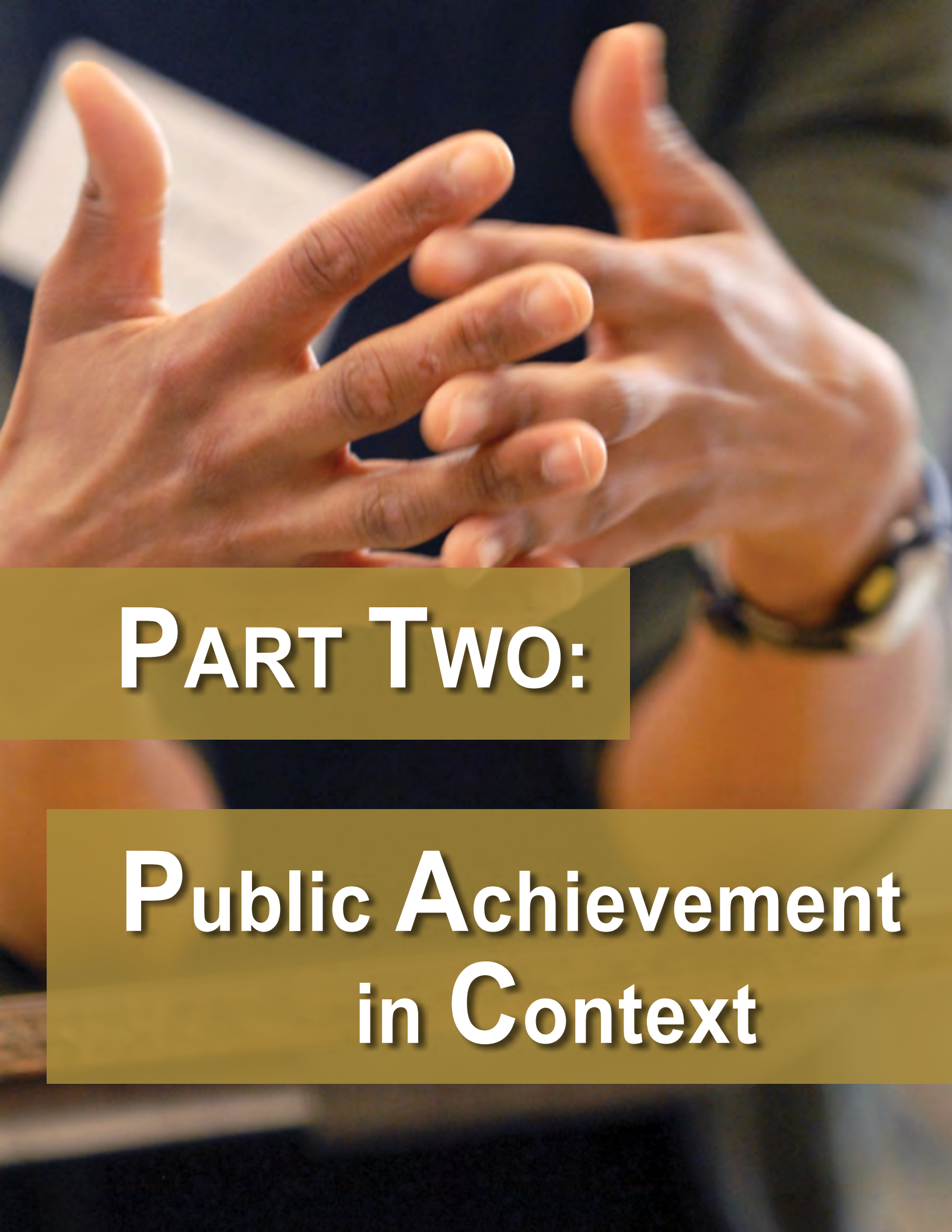
Here are some of the public skills your team may use/develop during their Public Achievement experience:

1. Active listening (Ch. 7)
2. Being imaginative and creative
3. Civic organizing
4. Connecting problems to larger issues (seeing the big picture)
5. Consensus building
6. Constructive criticism (Ch. 8)
7. Creating strategies for action (Ch. 11)
8. Critical thinking
9. Defining a problem (Ch. 9)
10. Defining a project (Ch. 11)
11. Deliberating (Ch. 8)

12. Evaluating public work, individual transformation (throughout, esp. Ch. 8)
13. Exercising public judgment (Ch. 8)
14. Facilitating meetings (Ch. 8)
    - Setting an agenda
    - Taking records of meetings
    - Taking different roles: facilitator, timer keeper, record keeper, evaluator, encourager
15. Fact finding (Ch. 9)
16. Fundraising
17. Having an open mind (suspending pre-judgment) (Ch. 8)
18. Holding others accountable (Ch. 12, 13)
19. Interviewing (Ch. 7, 9)
20. Learning and creating public language (throughout)
21. Learning proper protocol for acting in public (Ch. 9)
22. Learning to overcome setbacks (discipline frustration) (Ch. 6)
23. Making a mission statement (Ch. 11)
24. Mapping out stakeholders' power and interest in problems (analyzing a political culture) (Ch. 10)
25. Negotiating
26. Professionalism (writing business letters, making phone calls, dealing with automated phone systems, public speaking, interviewing, preparation for all of the above)
27. Public celebration (Ch. 14)
28. Public evaluation
29. Public speaking
30. Recruiting people around public work
31. Responsibility (to self, to others, for work in group, for work outside of group, for problem solving, for assessing situation and coming up with a plan of action, to school, to community (throughout, esp. Ch. 13)
32. Sharing stories
33. Storytelling
34. Taking strategic action (Ch. 12)
35. Teamwork (willing to work with others, flexibility, ability to listen to others, ability to work with adults, ability to work with peers, encouraging, supporting, ability to share ideas) (Ch. 7,8)
36. Using the media strategically (Ch. 12)
37. Working with and through diversity (Ch. 7)
38. Writing (minutes, proposals, formal letters, journals, grants, etc.)

Skills that coaches develop:

1. Adapting to new environment
2. Communicating with colleagues
3. Communicating with students
4. Conceptualizing project through guiding
5. Conflict resolution skills
6. Encouraging progress
7. Facilitating
8. Holding self and others accountable
9. Learning responsibility to youth
10. Modeling positive behavior
11. Problem-solving skills
12. Professionalism
13. Recognizing when something is not working, and figuring out how to change
14. Reflecting with a group
15. Strategic questioning
16. Teaching students new skills, and development of skills already attained
17. Thinking about the meaning and direction of their own life work
18. Working with a different age group
19. All of the above skills for team members



Part Two:

Public Achievement in Context

Chapter 4

The Past, Present, & Future of Public Achievement
The Opportunity to Renew Democracy

A long time ago
An enslaved people heading toward freedom
Made up a song:
Keep Your Hand on the Plow! Hold On!
That plow plowed a new furrow
Across the field of history.
Into that furrow the freedom seed was dropped.
From that seed a tree grew, is growing, will ever grow.
That tree is for everybody,
For all America, for all the world...

- Langston Hughes, *Freedom's Plow*

Introduction

What do we mean when we say that Public Achievement's ultimate goal is to renew democracy? It implies that democracy is diminished, and that we should look to the past for stories that can inform, inspire and educate us. It also implies that we have the ability to renew, reinterpret, and revive the spirit of democracy today and for future generations.

During the 2010s in America, notions of productive citizenship have long been replaced by consumer-oriented versions of democracy. Marketplace language and categories have spread through every crevice of society. Students are now defined as consumers of education. Virtually every government agency boasts a mission of customer service. Even activists ask, "what can we get?" or "are we getting our fair share?"

The work of creating any far ranging change will require retrieving older concepts of citizens as producers and democracy as the work of the people. For this task, the legacy of the ancient Greeks, the founding Documents of the United States, and the African American freedom struggle offer invaluable resources.

The Distant Past

Greek in origin, democracy combines demos, which meant either all citizens of a city-state, or alternatively, the mob, rabble or lower orders; and kratos, which meant either rule or power. Basically, it means rule of the common people. In the early Greek democracies, the people would literally rule, as all citizens would directly participate in citizen assemblies, counsels, and/or juries.

The Not-So-Distant Past

The American Revolution represented the first instance in modern history in which the authority of government was exclusively derived from the people. The Declaration of Independence exclaims that all men (and women) are created equal and endowed with certain inalienable rights. Governments, according to the Declaration, are instituted among men and derive their power based on the consent of the governed. The Constitution begins with the words "We the people," signifying that it is people who create their own governments. During the gravest hour in the American history, Abraham Lincoln sought to recapture the spirit of American Democracy with his immortal words "that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth."

The Recent Past

The concept of public work has taproots in the African American Freedom Movement, especially as it took shape in the southern Civil Rights Movement of the late 1950s and early 1960s. The movement expressed an understanding of *freedom* far different from the current, dominant understandings of freedom as freedom from constraints of all kinds or freedom as the choice among different consumer goods. In the movement, freedom meant making real the promise of democracy long denied to blacks. It also meant returning the nation to the idea that democracy is an active, ongoing process. The struggle of blacks in Tuskegee, Alabama, according to Charles Gomillion, had always been an effort to achieve "civic democracy...a way of life in which all citizens have the opportunity to participate in societal affairs."

Work, especially work that makes public contributions and strengthens communities, is a vital source of authority and standing in the African American freedom tradition. Work is also a wellspring of endurance, determination, and hope. Productive labor created a sense of ownership, a right to full participation in the nation gained through blood and sweat. If the world is created by labor, it can be changed and molded anew by labor.

The work of freedom was put into practice in what was called citizenship schools (and, related, freedom schools) across the south. The Southern Christian Leadership Conference undertook an enormous program called the Citizenship Education Program, which was adopted from a smaller program at Highlander Folk School in Tennessee. The Citizenship Education Program sponsored citizenship schools in small southern communities, held in beauty parlors, barbershops, church basements and other settings.

Citizenship schools taught a concept of citizenship as full participation in democracy. As the Director of the Citizenship Education Program, Dorothy Cotton put it, they taught "a whole new way of life and functioning." The Citizenship Education Program also included a key session on *What is a citizen?* Cotton recounts,

> *"I'd begin by asking the group, 'What is a citizen?' People would say things like 'it's somebody who is a good Christian,' or 'if you don't break the laws you are a good citizen.' Then the conversation would evolve, as people raised new topics.*
>
> *We'd talk about the constitution as guaranteeing rights but demanding responsibilities as well. We'd move from immediate ideas to larger issues. In these discussions people started to get a new awareness of their power. There's the First Amendment – the idea that people have a right to assemble, to petition the government for redress of grievances, to act in their own behalf. 'What does that really mean in the context of our lives?' people would ask. People learned what owning these documents could mean."*

Most importantly, the citizenship school experience taught a view of democracy as the ongoing work of the people. Ordinary people, even people who were very poor, who were uneducated in a formal sense, and who suffered from long histories of abuse and oppression, moved from a sense of victimhood to becoming bold, confident agents of change. "The citizenship program was about teaching people to free themselves," says Cotton. "People learned new ways of functioning as they learned to think in different ways about themselves and each other. For instance, they began to own the statement that 'it's supposed to be 'government of the people, by the people, for the people' – but it's true only if you make it so. They could no longer sit back and wait for someone else to do it."

The Present

Public Achievement seeks to renew the democratic spirit embodied from the Greeks and founding documents – the spirit that people hold power equally, and that they work together on shared civic projects to build our commonwealth. We are also carrying on the tradition of the Freedom Movement (and other great social movements) who used these ideals in their work for freedom, equality, justice, for the expansion of definitions of who and what is a citizen, and for a deepening of democracy.

Like those movements, Public Achievement looks to the ideals of the past for inspiration, but is careful not to romanticize it. The Athenian and early American polities defined the people (citizens) in extremely narrow terms. In both cases, these societies were supported by systems of slave labor. It is evident that ideals, in and of themselves, did not bring democracy to all people. Rather, it is the combination of ideals and hard work that are absolutely necessary for liberation.

Public Achievement provides the space and structure (free spaces) that enables all people to engage the world in a democratic manner. This means that all participants are contributors, that decisions are made democratically, and that people work together to solve common problems. Democracy does not merely refer to a system of government; it is a way of life. This way of life can only be learned through the experience of living it.

Therefore, our ultimate goal to renew democracy does not necessarily mean that we are advocating for electoral reform in order to make our system of government more democratic (though some Public Achievement groups might). Our hope is that an increasingly greater numbers of individual lives are transformed through the process of participating in Public Achievement. Our hope is that these people work together to make their school, neighborhood, nation, or world a better place.

The Future

The renewal of democracy comes when citizens start seeing themselves as part of a broader movement. The various teams will no longer think of themselves as working in the isolation of their site or city, but as working in common, through their different projects, to renew democracy. The world-view and philosophy that guides the approach of a Public Achievement team's work, will guide the approach to our nation or world's work.

A work-centered perspective on citizenship and public action brings us back to the insight that people produce our world and public affairs, not simply through government, but through an array of institutions, groups, and settings where they create and sustain free spaces, exercise and develop civic muscle. It will also mean breaking out of the disciplinary, conceptual, and cultural boxes that limit and diminish people's sense of what they can contribute and create. Finally, it will involve generating wide experiences of work in which people of all ages, backgrounds, and cultures gain the sense again that we can create the world anew.

The challenge ahead is to invent a politics appropriate to our future – a politics that is open, productive and relevant to people's lives. There are no blueprints, no final answers; but we can begin to forge new traditions, to build new public spaces, to repair and create the world around us.

For more on the connection between the African American Freedom Movement and Public Achievement, please contact the CDC for Harry C. Boyte's essay, "A Nation of Producers: Democracy, Work and the African American Freedom Movement."

Chapter 5
Public Work Compared to Other Approaches for Civic Engagement

Despite the widespread cynicism about politics today, there are countless different individuals, organizations, and institutions that are engaged in citizen politics. To help you better understand what public work is, we compared it to the civics and communitarian approaches for public engagement.

None of these approaches are wrong. Each responds to certain inadequacies in modern public life. Each approach has its own distinctive understanding of democracy, citizenship and citizen education. It is important to remember that these modes are not isolated from one another. Often, an institution or group combines two or more approaches in its practices, though one will usually predominate.

Civics Approach

The government-centered civics approach focuses on building knowledge about government. In civics, people learn about things like how a bill becomes law, separation of powers, elections, and how to influence government. Often, practices like model state government or model UN are used to teach these processes. The model citizen in the civics approach is the informed voter.

One problem with this approach is that it is oriented to the allocation of resources. The stress is on what can I/we get. Accordingly, civics embraces partisan politics and the competition for power. The result is that people are left outside of actual public problem-solving. While citizens may influence legislation, the actual work is still done by experts.

Communitarian Approach

The civil society or communitarian approach holds that the model citizen is a volunteer. The emphasis is that citizens learn to be responsible members of a community and develop habits of voluntary involvement. Practices like community service help develop the citizen's sense of contribution, empathy, and participation. Communitarians stress the need for a moral community, and the teaching of a common set of values.

There is the danger that the communitarian approach can be exclusive and parochial. The focus on community ignores some of the larger issues of public life, and may even be reactive in the sense of "not in my backyard." There is also the danger that the benefits of volunteering are focused on the volunteer. Instead of civic engagement, the focus is on charity, or feeling good because you gave something back.

How is Civic Agency Public Work Different?

Civic agency expressed through public work is unique because it emphasizes the serious, life-changing work of citizenship, enhances the power and authority of ordinary people, and directly challenges the marketplace conceptions the citizen-as-consumer that now greatly weaken democracy. It views civic education in terms of creating multiple opportunities for people to do public work with others.

Models of Democracy, Citizenship, and Civic Education

	CIVICS	COMMUNITARIAN	CIVIC AGENCY
What is democracy?	Representative institutions, the rule of law	Representative government and civil society	Democratic society build by the work of the people
What is politics?	Distribution of goods, services (who gets what, how, when)	Generating a spirit of community	Public work engaging with people who are different to solve problems and negotiate a way of life together
Citizenship	Voter	Volunteer	Co-creator
Source of citizen authority	Voting	Communal wisdom, values	Contributions to commonwealth
Government role	For the people: to provide services, guarantee rights	Of the people: to express and promote civic values	By the people: to catalyze public work; provide tools for public work
Civic Education	Programs that teach about laws, elections, how a bill becomes law Example: Youth in Government	Programs teaching values of civic responsibility, Example: Community service, service-learning	Projects teaching skills, habits, and intellectual concepts of public work Example: Public Achievement

Part Three:

The Coach

Chapter 6: What it Means to Be a Coach

Introduction

Coaches make Public Achievement happen. They can be college students, youth workers, community volunteers, teachers, or other committed adults.

Coaches perform groundbreaking work in a number of different ways. In many cases, coaches help young people design and carry out public projects that have never been done before. Coaches and teams must experiment with different strategies, resources, and institutions in order to accomplish their goals. Often, coaches and teams must learn about issues or processes in which they know little or nothing about (such as zoning laws, liability insurance for events, acquiring transportation, etc.) in order to proceed with their work.

Equally important, coaches are part of a larger movement of redefining what it means for young people to become active citizens and, in the process, renew democracy. Public Achievement is not solely about educating young people to think and act as citizens; the coach also needs to think and act as a citizen in the course of his or her Public Achievement experience. Coaches should constantly reflect upon the skills they developed and the lessons learned about citizenship, public life, and themselves throughout the experience. Remember, Public Achievement can be transformative for everyone who participates in it.

What it Means to be a Coach

Defining exactly what it means to be a coach, and what the relationship is between the coach and his or her group, is one of the most difficult things that coaches face. This issue is especially important in the first couple weeks. A chief difficulty lies in determining what kind of approach the coach will take.

Coaches must mediate between two contradictory aspects of Public Achievement. On one hand, this is the participants' project; team members decide what issue or problem they want to address, what project they want to do, and how they want it to develop. On the other hand, coaches are adults in charge of their groups, and they bear part of the responsibility for the their success and failure.

It is evident that the job of the coach is no easy task. Unfortunately, there is no formula for what being a Public Achievement coach is all about. It is up to the coaches to discover how their group interacts with each other and with themselves, and to quickly devise strategies for a positive and productive working relationship.

One way to think about it is to compare a Public Achievement coach to a sports coach. Coaches are there for guidance and encouragement, but cannot be on the field or court playing the sport. They make sure that the team does all the necessary preparation work (practice) so that they are ready to achieve excellence when they step onto the field. However, there are a couple of crucial differences between a sports coach and Public Achievement coach.

1. Team members and the coach create the game plan in Public Achievement democratically.
2. For Public Achievement coaches, winning is not the ultimate goal – learning the process and having everyone participate are more important than successfully completing the project.
3. Public Achievement coaches often work behind the scenes in the group's work.

In short, a Public Achievement coach acts as an educator, group facilitator and project manager within the team.

As an experiential educator, coaches need to integrate the experience of working on a Public Achievement project with the core concepts of Public Achievement through meaningful evaluation and reflection.

As a group facilitator, coaches are expected to facilitate the group's development as a team, manage individual and group behavior, and negotiate conflict as it comes up.

As a project manager, coaches need model skills and habits of civic engagement, help the group focus on their issue, develop an action plan and implement it.

Time Commitments and Expectations

Being a Public Achievement coach requires a commitment of three to five hours per week. This includes time to meet with the teams (usually once a week for an hour), debriefing sessions and preparation, meet with other coaches, record experiences, and any work outside of the weekly sessions.

For Public Achievement to be successful, it is essential that there is continuity and stability with the coaches. Coaches are expected to work with teams for the duration of the allotted time commitment (usually the academic year). Coaching Public Achievement is a big commitment, and coaches must dedicate themselves to see projects through to their conclusion. Even though Public Achievement empowers team members to do the work for themselves, they rely on coaches for guidance and structure. Groups have reported being totally let down if a coach misses a single session. In addition, coaches are expected to attend all orientation sessions, Public Achievement public workshops, and team debriefing sessions.

Coaches are also expected to take an active role in the debriefing sessions after meeting with their team. These debriefing sessions are facilitated by the coach coordinator. They are the primary place for coach development and learning where coaches work together as a team to solve problems.

Coaching is fun, but it is also serious business. Coaches should be accountable to their groups and model positive public behavior at all times.

Coaching Elements

The following are important elements that will help you become an effective coach. They are not prescriptions for a coach to follow, but are time-tested suggestions for you to consider as you think about how you will coach your team. Of course, you cannot be or do all of these things at once, but as a coach, you need to be ready to take on different roles in different situations.

1. BE A CITIZEN

Public Achievement is not just about the young people/participants; it is also about coaches, teachers, staff, professors, and community persons thinking of themselves and acting as citizens. The only difference is that in Public Achievement, the coach's role is to empower others to think and act as citizens.

There is a seriousness and commitment to thinking and acting as a citizen, and coaches should reflect this when working with their teams. Coaches are expected to be engaged beyond their weekly sessions with their teams – this means actively participating in debriefing sessions and workshops, and speaking openly and critically with an eye toward improving Public Achievement, the school, and community.

2. BE PRO-ACTIVE

We have consistently found that effective coaches take a pro-active role in their group's work. Being pro-active does not mean doing the work or dictating what the groups will do. Rather, it means having your own vision for the group (in addition to the team's game plan), and constantly thinking of and implementing strategies designed to help the team in the short and long terms. In this way, the coach becomes a partner in the team's work – a partner who is engaged and empowers his or her team to do the work themselves.

For example, a coach might bring in someone who they know to be a great speaker at a Public Achievement meeting. By being pro-active, the coach gains a sense of having an invested stake in the team's work. A coach is a person who leads by the example of acting as a citizen.

Being pro-active also entails being ready to intervene at the right moments in order to maintain an environment conducive to public work. In certain instances, a coach needs to assert his or her authority, and by being pro-active, the coach is better prepared to intervene. Like a sports coach, a Public Achievement coach needs to be thinking three or four moves in advance. Being pro-active also involves actively working to solve the internal problems of the group. This could mean talking to other coaches, teachers, or staff; finding outside resources; or changing the way meetings are run.

3. BE A POLITICAL EDUCATOR/ LEARNER

While the coach is not a teacher in the formal sense, an absolutely critical element of Public Achievement is to help your team learn from their experiences. Public Achievement is not just about the projects, it is also about learning the process of public problem-solving, as well as learning to think and act as a citizen. Coaches should carefully mediate the tension between process and project so that learning and work happen simultaneously.

In Public Achievement, learning should be relational. This means that each person is an active participant in teaching and learning – it is not a one-way transfer of knowledge from coach to student. Knowledge is co-created through dialogue as coaches and team members learn with each other and from each other. Bernice Robinson, a teacher in the Citizenship Schools of the Civil Rights Movement, is a great example that coaches should learn from. She always began each new class by saying "Now, I'm not a school teacher. I'm here to learn with you."

Much of the learning in Public Achievement also comes from doing. A key aspect of being a political educator is seizing upon teachable moments. These are those unexpected moments that may contain a political lesson or have significance for your group's work. Take time to discuss the ramifications of what happened with your team, as it is often at these times when individuals begin to see their work in new ways. It is always important for the coach to name the lessons, skills, and concepts learned.

An important component to learning through practical experience is the skill of evaluation. Evaluation is not something that a coach and team only do at the end of the lesson or the end of the year – it is an on-going process. The public evaluation of the team's work ensures accountability, clarifies roles, keeps a project moving forward, provides space for critical thinking, and enables people to learn from their successes and failures. It is important to evaluate both the learning as well as the project.

The coach also needs to help his or her team make connections between their work (which focuses on solving a specific public problem) and the broader theoretical and conceptual issues, different perspectives, local and global issues, surrounding institutions, and society in general. In short, your team needs to be able to see the relationship between their work and the bigger picture. One simple tactic a coach can use is to make sure that the problems and solutions worked on are also discussed in public and political terms (use of core concepts).

4. BE A FACILITATOR

One of the main roles that a coach carries during each session is to facilitate his or her team to be productive public actors. This is important to empower young people to learn about political matters and act in public on their own.

The coaches are there to guide their groups, help them set realistic goals, make thoughtful decisions, organize their work, and help them be prepared when they act in public. Often, engaging the public world can be frustrating as your team is certain to run into setbacks and minor failures. As a coach, you need to help your team to exercise disciplined anger. This entails redirecting anger toward positive productive work. Being a facilitator also includes assuring that sessions are run in a respectful manner, and that logistical arrangements have been made.

Many coaches found that as they progressed in their work, their team members learned to facilitate themselves. One coach commented that as she and her team got to know one another, her role changed and her team members "asked me for my opinion rather than asking me what they should do."

5. BE A CHALLENGER

It is the coach's job to challenge team members to bring out their civic best. This means making thoughtful decisions and developing capacities and talents to act effectively on a public stage.

A coach must establish and make explicit high, but realistic, expectations of respect, hard work, and excellence in all areas of Public Achievement. This heightens the possibilities for outstanding work, and also makes teams accountable for their actions.

It is equally essential that coaches challenge students to question their ideas and to critically examine their decisions and actions. Encourage discussion and argument – ask students to respond to one another's ideas and review conversations to reinforce the important issues that were discussed/resolved. Sometimes, people need to be challenged in order to think and act in innovative and productive ways.

Being a challenger can also mean planting seeds – passing on small bits of information to your team that will enable them to see problems in new ways, recognize different strategies, utilize diverse resources, or realize greater possibilities.

Although Public Achievement is all about public work that is designed and undertaken at the level of your team members, a little encouragement now and then can be very encouraging for the learning process. Thus, coaches need to motivate their teams to carry on with their project when the work becomes difficult. Finding creative ways to get a team to act on their own and achieve excellence is one of the most difficult and rewarding aspects of being a coach.

6. CREATE A POSITIVE WORK ENVIRONMENT

Coaches are responsible for maintaining an orderly environment for the group. Coaches are the authority in the groups and need to be prepared to exercise that authority to keep things in control. At some Public Achievement sites, discipline has been a problem and no positive public work gets done when people are being disrespectful or fooling around. Ideally, team members will make their own rules and will then agree to abide by the rules set by the group. However, this is not always the case.

- For more on management techniques, review the Public Skills section of this chapter.

7. ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

The art of asking questions is one of the most important skills a coach (or any citizen) can develop. It is by asking the right questions that the coach can be pro-active, direct discussion, and insure high standards for work without being pushy or overbearing. Questions enable students to be co-creators of knowledge, not just passive recipients of information. Questions are also crucial to making sure that issues and problems are researched and developed in a fair, comprehensive, and public manner.

- For more on questioning, review the Public Skills section of this chapter.

8. BE ACCOUNTABLE

Just as team members are expected to be accountable for the work they do, coaches are likewise accountable for fulfilling their duties as a coach. Most importantly, coaches are responsible to and for their team. They are responsible for attending every session, being prepared, being supportive, and ensuring that the group is learning from their experiences. Team members rely on coaches for stability, commitment, and as positive role models. In some situations, the coach is one of the few positive adult role models in the students' lives. Many groups have said that they were extremely let down when the coach missed one single session. Even though we teach young people/participants to take responsibility for the success or failure of their projects, coaches are also responsible; but their responsibility is greater, for they are responsible for ensuring that team members learn, develop and grow as public co-creators.

Beyond their teams, coaches are also accountable to other coaches, the host institution, and Public Achievement. This means being supportive, actively participating in all sessions, and taking initiative on projects and upcoming events. In sum, being accountable is another facet of thinking and acting as a citizen.

9. BE PREPARED

Preparation goes a long way toward making the coach and his or her team's Public Achievement experience more disciplined, flexible, and, most importantly, effective.

One of the best tools to be productive and ensure discipline in one's group is to always have something for the team members to do. This requires some thinking in advance and a level of flexibility on the coach's part. When the coach (and group) devises the agenda for each Public Achievement session, the coach should also have an alternative plan (or even multiple plans) ready if things do not go accordingly to plans. Flexibility is very important since the group should democratically determine the direction of their actions, and thus things may take an unexpected turn.

Due to shorter attention spans of younger students, coaches should try to keep the agenda constantly changing so that they do not get bored. Having accomplishable tasks with specific time limits during each working session will enable the group to be more effective and efficient.

- For more on setting an agenda, see Chapter 8.

10. USE RESOURCES

We strongly suggest that coaches use the variety of resources they have at their personal and public disposal to make both their and their team's experience more successful.

We encourage coaches to work with one another not only in debriefing sessions, but also outside of meetings. The knowledge or expertise of other coaches is probably the most important resource in Public Achievement. In addition, teams have often benefitted working collaboratively with different teams in their own school or with teams from other schools.

It is also important that coaches meet with their host institution regularly. A good working relationship between these institutions and coaches is critical to Public Achievement's success. Provide them with periodic updates on what your team is doing, ask them how your work is impacting the institution, and use them as a resource. It is vital that everyone is aware of what the other is doing or expecting. Finally, check in with the Public Achievement staff to provide updates, ask for help, or make suggestions.

11. RECORD AND SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES

We ask that coaches join the cumulative and collaborative effort of Public Achievement by recording their experiences and sharing them with fellow coaches, teachers, students, peers, and Public Achievement staff. While Public Achievement emphasizes team problem-solving, being a coach is also a new avenue for (young) adult political participation. Who the coach is, what he or she does and learns, are all important elements to the growth and development of this new youth political process. Usually, recording your participation in citizen history making is as simple as keeping a weekly notebook (specific record keeping requirements may be dictated by your host institution, college class, or volunteer agency).

12. HAVE FUN

Most importantly, the coach and group should have fun in Public Achievement. While the work that one does is serious business, there is no reason why the experience should not be enjoyable for everyone involved. Think of ways to incorporate fun activities into the work or, better yet, find ways to make the work itself a fun experience. Also, take a break once in a while – fun days, treat days, or field trips – to help break up the routine and keep everyone fresh. And remember, enthusiasm is contagious.

13. THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU ARE CONTRIBUTING TO THE STORY OF PUBLIC ACHIEVEMENT

Public Achievement is a story with deep roots, a vibrant unfolding set of experiences, lessons, struggles, accomplishments, and a future. Everyone who participates in Public Achievement contributes, in different ways. What are you contributing to the Public Achievement story? What do you want to contribute?

14. THINK ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS OF PUBLIC ACHIEVEMENT FOR YOUR LIFE AND WORK

Public Achievement has large ultimate goals – to carry on the effort of building democracy and deepening work of the Civil Rights Movement, and other great chapters in the work of democracy. It can provide many insights and skills for coaches to use in thinking about their own future lives and work – what difference you want to make in the world.

In Their Own Words:
What Makes a Good Coach?

Our role is to tap the energy of young people to help them place their interest in a larger public framework, to learn how to work together, and recognize their own power.

- Dave Van Hattum, Coach

Coaches should listen to kids, help them when they need it, but let the kids do the work.

- Chelsea Fuerstenberg, Team Member

As a coach, you have to set realistic guidelines to make them realize that there are limitations.

- Gregg Aamott, Coach

Coaches need to be strict, so we can get things done.

- Alicia Wichlacz, Team Member

A good coach tells you how she feels and is honest with us. She helps you think things through a little more, and changes attitudes, and lets me know I can do things.

- Chou Vang, Team Member

It is frustrating not to jump in and say "this is what we are going to do, this is the agenda". It is really hard to know when to keep your hands off. You learn through trial and error. I try not to get in the way - it's part style and part Socratic method. I prompt them to have their own thoughts, and help to steer their thoughts and actions.

- John Lund, Coach

Good Coaches treat us as equals; they also challenge us to look at the bigger picture.

- Erin Lothian, Team Member

A combination of self-discipline, patience, and a love of what you're doing. Self-discipline is necessary if you really want these kids to learn something, you have to sometimes take a step back. If you don't enjoy this, the kids will suck the energy right out of you. If you just relax and have fun, you'll help the kids learn, and you'll learn a lesson yourself.

- Nathan Jensen, Coach

Good coaches let us do the work and they do not let us goof off.

- Mike Jensen, Team Member

What makes a good coach is one who lets the kids control the group. Let them know it's their group, and whatever they want to accomplish is up to them. Don't be a lecturer, be an observer.

- Ryan Wood, Coach

A good coach listens and asks questions, rather than talking and running the group. I have learned a great deal from my students simply by asking "why?"

- Heather Redmond, Coach

Tips from Other Coaches

Be open-minded

It will be an experience like no other, and if you allow it, a life changing experience. Go into the experience wanting to learn from the students, their past and dive deep into their ideas and thoughts of their community. You are not the expert of their community, no matter how much research you do. When you have an open mind, students will be more willing to share their thoughts and ideas with you. The idea is to work together, but allow them to do as much work on their own and to encourage and teach them how to make and build connections with people in their community.

Communication

Don't worry about over-communicating with your co-coach(es). The more every knows the better and the more time you make to plan together outside of Public Achievement, the better your project will be. Make sure everyone is on the same page and is a strong team prepared for the students.

Make time to plan (set agenda)

You'll always need at least an hour to plan for Public Achievement. Don't assume that you'll be able to whip it together in a few minutes on your way to Public Achievement. A good project takes effort and the students need you to be a well-prepared resource for them.

Be flexible

Walk into Public Achievement with a general idea of the direction things need to go. Then, set an agenda with the students but don't think that means it'll be set in stone. Remember, kids change their minds often and don't have the same attention span as adults.

Frustration

Sometimes you will go the whole hour with students acting out, talking about what they saw last night on TV, or coloring off by themselves, getting little to nothing accomplished. Remember that, Public Achievement is a process, it's not always about the final project; it's about what they do as they work toward the outcome. Try to teach them the Public Achievement terms and help improve their personal and public skills throughout the process. Always evaluate at the end of a session, and allow you and the group to voice frustrations and come up with a solution to help improve progress.

Don't take it personally

Part of being a coach is to find the line between being the student's friend and being an authority figure. Sometimes, in order to maintain your group's productivity and that students are behaving, you are going to have to make some decisions that may not be the most favorable to the group and not produce the most ideal reaction from your students. Don't take it personally. The reaction is toward the situation, not toward you.

Make it fun

Public Achievement is supposed to be a different kind of learning. Make sure that the group is having fun. If you realize that students are becoming lethargic or uninterested, it's important to take a break and play a game or activity to lighten up the mood. Students are more likely to be productive when they are having fun and they look forward to your meetings.

Tips provided by

Andrea Batt, Megan Kelz and Kara Underberg
Coaches from Augsburg College

Public Skills

I. Discipline And Management Techniques

Coaches report that group management and discipline are often the biggest challenge they face at the beginning of Public Achievement. Coaches are the authority in the group, and need to be prepared to exercise that authority to maintain a positive learning environment.

This can be very difficult as the open and democratic nature of the Public Achievement team meeting creates the possibility for disruptive behavior. After all, Public Achievement gives people power and freedom, which may be unusual in their lives, and they may not know how to react.

There is no one simple or easy way to maintain discipline. Discipline is developed through a variety of techniques and practices in conjunction with each other. Moreover, much depends on the personality of the coach and the dynamic of the group.

Here are some useful ideas to ensure everyone in your group treats each other with respect:

1. Make it clear that you are not there to be their friend, but to help them do Public Achievement. You can build a friendly working relationship without being their friend. A coach, whose team was rambunctious from day one, said that the one thing he would do differently was to not try not to be their friend.

2. Be explicit about what you expect from your team members from the beginning – demand excellence and respect in all aspects of Public Achievement. That means team members should respect you and each other.

3. Have your group make their own rules and consequences, and make sure that they are enforced. If a rule is broken, bring it to the attention of the group and ask them what should be done. Remind them that they chose to do this project and that they made and agreed to abide by their own rules. It is difficult, but you can exercise your authority in a democratic way.
   - For more on making rules, see Chapter 7.

4. Address disruptive or disrespectful behavior immediately. Once team members know they can get away with things, they will keep pushing you.

5. Establish a structure and routine to meetings.
   - For more on creating an agenda, see Chapter 7.

6. Always have something for them to do. Discipline is not just behavioral issues; it is also being on task and working within the allotted time frame.

7. Establish yourself as a presence in the meetings – exude confidence, be enthusiastic, be interested in the students, show them respect, and let them know that you are here to help them achieve their goals.

8. Be sensitive as to when it is better to address problems with the group or when it is better to pull people aside and address them individually (think of the public/private distinction).

9. Methods for addressing behavior:
    - Use "I" statements
    - Describe the behavior rather than making personal statements about the person
    - Make requests rather than demands
    - Name the behavior and its effect on you (and/or the group). Say what you want to happen. For example, I feel (adverb) about (describe behavior) and I would like you to (substitute behavior).

10. Be sure to include team-building activities, especially in the early meetings as well as throughout Public Achievement. Discipline becomes less of a problem when all team members are comfortable with and trust each other.

11. Ask the Site Coordinator, Coach Coordinator, teachers, or principal to help you with discipline. People at the school know the students better than the coach and can intervene during the week to address problems. Also, ask other coaches for their opinions and/or advice in how to deal with similar/certain situations.

12. Remember that conflict and disagreements are part of doing politics; the difficult part is to channel this conflict to engaging in productive public work.

II. Strategic Questioning

Listening and questioning are two of the most important and most difficult skills for coaches to develop. Through questioning, coaches can intervene and assert their authority with their group in a democratic manner. Questions help team members re-direct conversations, re-think and sharpen their project, and deepen their thinking/learning. Coaches can develop this skill through practice and conscious attention to themselves in the moment of coaching.

In Public Achievement, we found that the pro-active coaches ask pro-active questions.
These coaches can:

- (Re)direct discussion in positive ways;
- Challenge students to think more critically, broadly and deeply;
- Develop seriousness in the team's work (and let the students know they are taken seriously);
- Open up new options for action;
- Enable people to overcome being stuck on a problem;
- Engage big ideas like "what is public work?"

How to Ask Good Questions

The key to being a good questioner is to know how to link questions together and to continually dig deeper. The goal is to get at deeper questions, not better answers. Thus, any answer, no matter how good, can be followed by another question. Good questioners should also restate the answers so that everyone in the group understands, and then ask further questions to the entire group. This requires the ability to actively listen, so you can link questions together in a coherent manner.

Another key is to not ask questions that will stop discussion (yes/no, right/wrong questions). Ask open-ended questions, for example, "what kinds of things can we do to address this problem?" These types of questions open up alternatives, encourage more thought, and are empowering. They are invitations for the respondents to co-create options. Rather than giving knowledge to people, asking the right questions enables them to take what they already know and work with it.

The following is eight different kinds of questions, progressively moving to deeper levels of thinking, which will be helpful for you as coaches. These questions can be your guide as you lead discussions with your team members, keeping in mind that the skill of linking questions together takes practice.

1. Focus Questions

These questions have to do with identifying an issue and understanding some of the facts about it. The key to asking focus questions is to be open and non-partisan.

- "What aspects of our school/ community concern you?"
- "Of those things, what concerns you most?"
- "What do you think about pollution?"
- "How has violence affected you?"

2. Observation Questions

These questions inquire information someone has already seen or heard about an issue.

- "What do you know about this issue?
- "What have you seen, heard, or read about this issue?"
- "What sources do you trust and why"
- "How has this issue affected others?"
- "What do you know for sure, and what are you uncertain about?"

DIGGING DEEPER

Remember, the goal is to get at deeper questions, not better answers. Build upon each response/previous question and push team members to think about deeper issues.

3. Analysis Questions

These questions analyze the meanings that people give to events. Here, you are trying to find out how a person thinks about an issue, what is his/her motivation. Why questions are appropriate here:

- "Why are you interested in this issue? What are the reasons for your interest?"
- "Why is this issue a public issue?
- "Who is also affected by this issue? How are they affected? How might their views be different?"
- "What other sources of information are there for this issue?

4. Visioning Questions

These questions have to do with one's ideals/ dreams.

- "How would you like it to be?"
- "How would you describe this issue, and your ideal solution to this problem?"

5. Change Questions

These questions deal with moving from our present state to future change. It is an examination of future alternatives.

- “How could the issue or problem be changed?”
- “What exactly needs to be changed here?”
- “How might those changes come about? Name as many ways as possible.”
- “What projects might address this problem?
- “What other projects addressed this or similar problems? How did those changes come about?”

6. Consider Alternatives

In Public Achievement, it is always important to consider alternative perspectives and strategies when engaging in public work.

- “What are all the different ways that could accomplish this same goal?”
- “How would you reach that goal? Are there other ways?”

7. Consider the Consequences

- “What would happen if _____?
- “What would happen if we tried something else?”
- “How do these consequences affect other people?”
- “How would you feel doing _____ alternative?”

8. Consider Obstacles

- “What keeps your team from doing _____?”
- “What prevents others from getting involved?”
- “How could your team overcome that obstacle?”
- “What other alternative courses of action might we use to accomplish our goal?”

III. How to Choose/ Write-Up an Exercise

At the end of each chapter of Part Four, there are suggested exercises for coaches to use. Coaches must use discretion when picking exercises in order to make sure that they are relevant and helpful to a team's work. These exercises are designed to help with certain steps or problems, reinforce concepts and skills, teach new ways of thinking/working together, or as supplements to work.

PLEASE NOTE: Just because an exercise is at the end of a certain chapter, it does not mean it is only relevant at that stage of a group's work. Many exercises can be employed at different times for different purposes.

Writing up exercises is an excellent way to make sure they are relevant, to think about them in advance, and make them more organized and effective. In this book, exercises are detailed in short paragraph form. We strongly suggest coaches to expand this paragraph into the following format before using them with their groups.

EXERCISE FORMAT

Lesson of this exercise:

_____

_____

Core Concepts:

_____

_____

Public Skills:

_____

_____

It relates to public work because:
(write a short paragraph on how it relates to public work/ your project)

_____

_____

Instructions:
(include time for entire activity, descriptions of each step, time limits, materials, etc.)

_____

_____

Evaluation/ Follow-up Questions:

_____

_____

Example: Writing Up An Excercise

Here is an example to help coaches and team members become better at strategically asking questions.

Activity: How to Get from Point A to Point B

Form a fishbowl with two people inside a circle of the remaining group members. Have one of the participants inside the circle use only questions to give the other directions from one familiar point to another. If the participant gets stuck, they can change places with someone in the circle who will continue questioning until the destination is reached.

Analyze after each destination is reached. Did anyone have any different questions that would have worked better? What types of questions did you use? Repeat so that different students can participate.

A write up may look like this:

EXERCISE: HOW TO GET FROM POINT A TO POINT B

Lesson of this exercise:
To learn how to ask questions more effectively.

Core Concepts:
Interests

Public Skills:
Interviewing, Critical Thinking, Active Listening

It relates to public work because...
Public work involves asking questions. You must ask the right questions before even getting to the point of providing answers. Being a skilled questioner also allows people to go deeper into an issue, to gather more information, to discover other's interests, and to facilitate discussions.

Instructions: (30 minutes total)

- Explain to group what they are doing and why (3 minutes).
- Form a circle, have two participants volunteer to be in middle to form a fishbowl (2 minutes).
- On index cards, have the names of two familiar locations in the school or community.

Give one participant in the circle a card. They can tell the other person the starting point, but then must use only questions to direct them from one familiar point to another. If the questioner gets stuck, they can switch spots with someone in the circle who will continue questioning until the destination is reached. Repeat again so that different students can participate (5 minutes per card).

Evaluation/ Follow Up Questions (10 minutes)

Analyze after each destination is reached.

- At what point did someone make a wrong move? Did anyone have any different questions that would have worked better? Did anyone use questions that were unexpected? Did they reveal new ways of thinking?
- What did it feel like for the questioner when they were in the middle? What about when they had successfully directed the other person?
- Why is listening important?
- How might these questions be used in an interview about public work? You may want to repeat this exercise, only now use questions to get information from someone.

Part Four:

The Project

Chapter 7: The First Day(s)

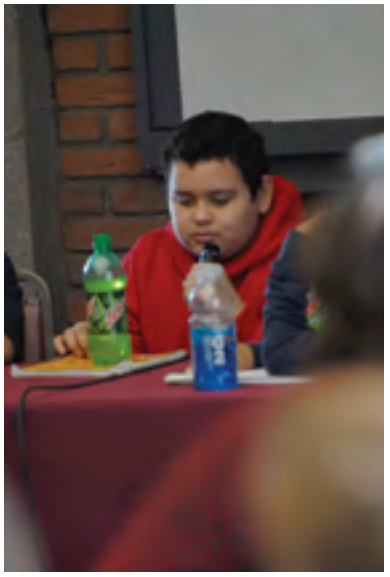
Introduction

The first few sessions involves laying the groundwork for your team's entire Public Achievement experience. These sessions can set the tone for your group, so establish high expectations for conduct and work, engage issues on a theoretical and practical level, introduce core concepts, practice team-building, and establish evaluating procedures. By being organized, positive, enthusiastic, and in charge at the beginning, it will be much easier for you and your group to define your problem, devise your project, and begin working in the public world in the weeks to come.

There is no right way to do the first day(s) of Public Achievement. Be aware of the different levels of maturity and experience among your team members. Some will want to move immediately to defining their problem and getting to work, while others may be new to Public Achievement and will need to have a more general orientation to the process, concepts and practice of Public Achievement. In any case, everyone is new to your particular team, so work together with all team members to create an inclusive team spirit that allows everyone to be actively involved in all facets of your work.

Example of Public Story

Making Differences Count



Tiana Hampton-Newbauer is tired of hearing people say, “Young people can make a difference.” She says, “Well, start letting them!”

Tiana is one of the two young staffers of the Minneapolis Youth Organization (MYO), a program out of the mayor’s office that has put a legion of the city’s and surrounding suburbs’ diverse young people to work as community resources. For example, a group of teenagers led an AIDS-awareness discussion among fourth and fifth-graders in the Minneapolis schools.

When the Minneapolis City Council was considering building a youth recreation center to address rising violence among young people hanging out downtown, MYO members started a petition in support of the idea. The front of a t-shirt hanging in the MYO office reads “I’m part of the downtown youth problem...” on the back it says, “...and its solution.”

When people call asking for a teen to give a young person’s point of view at a conference or meeting, MYO sends a crowd. “We don’t want to send a token kid, which is what they want,” Tiana explains. “If we want to have a voice, we’ve got to send numbers.” It’s a reminder, too, that young people are, too, diverse for one to be representative of all.

MYO plans and sponsors events that help young people handle and make use of the diversity in the metro area. A Unity Jam features speakers on prejudice and a dance party with many different styles of music. A weekend camp to discuss racial issues had a speaker on black history, a simulation of the Underground Railroad – and a big turnout of young African-Americans.

Tiana says that young people learn in situations where they’re side-by-side, exchanging information about their lives. “You see how different you all are in how you grew up, in your expectations, in the kinds of knowledge you have. You recognize that everybody has different problems; divorce, for example ... schools just aren’t places where you talk enough about who you are.”

There’s plenty of room for young people with ideas. “Youth has become a big issue for people in political office. But this society needs to start using youth not for marketing, but to know what’s going on. New roles are being found, and the potential is already there – we just need to realize it,” she says.

A big part of what MYO does is to help young people view themselves as part of the broad public diversity of the area. Young people are all different from one another, but they’re also becoming more active participants in communities that have different genders, cultures, classes, and ages of people with things to offer.

Before You Start

A little preparation before you initially meet with your team will go a long way toward making your first couple of weeks easier and more productive. While this is a new experience for you, it is important to be prepared with an agenda before each meeting. The confidence and assurance that comes with such preparation will prevent wasting time on institutional questions, improve your standing with your team, and allow you to enter into a more sophisticated discussion with your team members concerning what Public Achievement is all about.

As a coach, you need to be respectful of the institution that you are working in. Groups are expected to make institutional change, but in a respectful, legal, and non-violent way. To be respectful, it is important for you to get to know the school/organization, its rules and philosophy, as well as the community.

The Orientation Sessions should help familiarize you with Public Achievement. We suggest that you pay special attention to the following three areas:

Orient Yourself to Public Achievement

Before you begin, think about what Public Achievement is, what your role is in the process, what you expect from your experience, and how it relates to your life experiences. Try to craft your own vision of what you expect to accomplish and learn in your experiences. Imagining what kind of coach you expect to be, and how you plan to interact with the group will give you more confidence on your first day. Confront your own fears about working with kids, diversity, or in schools.

Orient Yourself to the Site

On one level, this means learning about the philosophy of the school, and how Public Achievement fits into its mission. Teachers, Principals and Site Coordinators are excellent resources to learn about levels development, socio-economic background, and history of Public Achievement at the school. It is also important to learn about the students because you will be working directly with them during the Public Achievement experience. We suggest you to learn about the structures of power and authority in the school.

Some questions that will help you through this process are:

1. Who is supportive of Public Achievement and who is not, and why.
2. What are the students like?
3. What resources are available at the school/site (supplies, phones, technology, transportation)?
4. How do you access those resources?

On another level, this means being familiar with the institutional rules and administrative procedures of the host institution. Here is a list of questions that will guide you to better understanding of the school before beginning Public Achievement:

1. What are the administrative procedures?
    - Hall passes, phone use, general rules of your institution, sending letters home, announcements, etc.
2. What are the accepted disciplinary procedures?
    - What if problems arise?
    - Can students be dismissed from Public Achievement? How is that handled?
3. How does Public Achievement fit in with the regular schedule of the host institution?
    - Does the entire school participate?
    - Is it an elective, part of a class, separate activity time?
    - What is your time frame for work?
4. How did your team members choose your group?
    - Issues convention, as part of class, what was the range of choices?
5. Where do students go for formal approval of projects, field trips, events, and transportation?
6. Who is in charge of reserving rooms?
7. Has your issue been a past Public Achievement project?
    - What did they do?
8. What are the rules for coaches at the host institution?
    - Dress code
    - Eating, drinking, chewing gum
    - Visiting team members during non-Public Achievement time
    - Transporting team members

Orient Yourself to the Community

You may be totally unfamiliar with the community where you will be coaching. It is important to learn its history, issues that affect the community, and how it has/ does respond to problems. Also, find out resources in the community your group might want to tap into in the course of their work.

The First Day(s)

1. Why are We Here?

Generally, the first day is a time to get to know one another. It is a good idea to discuss team members' knowledge about Public Achievement, why they chose to do Public Achievement, and why they chose this particular issue. Be up front with your team as to why you are here, and what your role is within the team. Make sure to emphasize that Public Achievement is serious work and that it will be a fun experience.

2. Identify Interests and Recognize Diversity

Initial team meetings are also an excellent time to introduce and have discussion about interests and diversity both within the group and in the broader public world. Find out what each student knows about the concept of self-interest. Relate the conceptual discussion to each team member's self-interest in this particular issue and focus on the fact that people with different interests all want to work on the same issue.

Each individual may bring special talents or unique perspectives to your team's work. Focus on the fact that while each team member is different, what links them together is a common concern about a public issue. Have a discussion about the core concept of diversity. Discuss how each individual's special talents, background, or perspective can help your team be more successful in their public work. Remind your team of the importance of acknowledging and drawing upon the strength of diversity, within your group and in the public world, while being sensitive to the challenges and problems that it may bring.

- For an extended discussion on interests and diversity, review the Core Concept section of this chapter.
- For exercises on interests and diversity, review the Sample Exercises section of this chapter.

3. Make the Rules

Another good activity to do on the first day(s) is to have your group make their own rules for the weekly sessions. Sometimes it is better to introduce the idea of making rules during the first meeting, and make them on the second meeting. It may be necessary to first discuss with the team the purpose and function of rules in society. The process of making rules is also a good opportunity to discuss the concept of freedom. For instance:

- How are rules related to freedom?
- Don't rules restrict people?
- What is the significance of your team making its own rules?
- Are the students free because they follow the rules they have made?

Emphasize the importance for Public Achievement in having an environment where people are respectful of each other. While the rules should be made by the members of your team, challenge the team members to make a workable set of rules – make sure that they are simple (no more than 4-5), coherent, can easily be followed, and are enforceable.
For example:

- Should people raise their hands?
- What happens if someone is disrespectful?
- How will the team ensure that work gets done?

To make sure that everyone is on the same page, it may be a good idea to have your team members give examples of what constitutes breaking a rule.

Also, make your team know that because they made these rules, they are expected to follow and enforce them as a group. You need to create a set of consequences if the rules are broken. Finally, write the rules on flip chart or poster paper so that everyone can see them and you can put them up again and again.

Have each member of the group sign the rules – publicly demonstrating that he or she has agreed to abide by them.

Example: Creating Set of Rules

Rules

1. Only one person talks at a time
2. Everyone should participate
   (people should not do schoolwork in Public Achievement)
3. No hitting, poking, or bothering other students
4. People should respect each other (if this is a rule, go over with group what it means)

Consequences

1. Team Members will ask rule breaker to stop;
2. If keeps breaking rule, will be given warning;
3. If keeps breaking rule, will give probation;
4. If keeps breaking rule, will hold vote to remove from group.

Signatures

We the _____ Public Achievement Team have made our own rules and agree to follow them.

4. Establish High Expectations for Work and Conduct

We have mentioned several times the importance of explicitly establishing high expectations for your group. You may be asking yourself, "what does this actually entail, and how do I go about establishing high expectations for a group that I am meeting for the first time?" Here are some tips for establishing high expectations:

- Be up front with your team at the beginning. Tell them that you expect them to do great things in this group and that they will treat everyone involved in Public Achievement with respect.
- Share with your group why you are interested in coaching them and what they can expect from you.
- Let your team know that you are serious about helping them achieve their goals and that you believe in the creative capacity of young people, but that you do not want to waste time dealing with people who are fooling around.
- Explain that the work they do will be challenging, difficult, and fun; but it is not time to play or hang out with their friends.
- Be explicit about what you expect from your team members on individual or group assignments. Making the expectations and goals explicit (and in writing) before work begins enables you and your team to evaluate how successful the team is in accomplishing their goals when they finish.

5. Team Building

We have found that it is a good idea to work on group dynamics during the first part (and throughout) your team's Public Achievement experience. The team members may or may not know each other and their needs to be at a level of comfort and trust among team members in order to be successful in Public Achievement. Within the meeting structure, make sure to continually reinforce the importance of mutual respect and try to prevent one person or a clique from dominating the group. Incorporate all members as you develop an identity as a group. Think of ways that highlight how the group or team meeting sessions are special. There are several games that help develop team building.

Another way to foster team spirit is to make your Public Achievement hour unique. Place the responsibility back onto the team members as to how they want to take ownership of this hour, but a coach can help to create some traditions that are special to your meeting time. A group identity could be established by beginning your session by checking in or always taking a break in the middle of the hour for a team building activity.

Also, if you have any extra tablecloths or decorations to set up for your session, this is one mechanism to alter the normal school surroundings into your team space. Some other examples may include keeping and posting all completed work and art from week-to-week. Although it may be a chore to lug all these things around, the group is able to see its growth and "culture" while also celebrating these things as a group. It may also be a good idea to come up with a team name, song, rap, or credo.

- For Team Building exercises, review the Exercises section of Chapter 7 and 8.

Sample 60-minute Agenda for the First Day

1. **Introductions** (10 mintues)
   Choose an activity/ icebreaker where all members of the team can share a piece of who they are. This can establish a degree of mutuality and shared power in the group from the start.

2. **What is Public Achievement?** (10 mintues)
   Ask the group what Public Achievement is about:
   - What is supposed to go on here?
   - What do you all think of Public Achievement?
   - Why are you here?

3. **Role as a coach** (5 minutes)
   Set expectations around your role as a coach and establish that you listen to every team member.
   - This is what I understand Public Achievement to be…
     - Ask the group about their expectations of you as a coach
     - What do you expect of me as a coach? How do you want me to be a coach?
   - This is what I understand my role to be…

4. **Expectations for the group** (15 minutes)
   - Set up ground rules and consequences
   - Discussion of expectations of work, respect, learning

5. **Meetings, agendas and roles** (10 minutes)
   - Discuss running meetings, agendas and roles
   - Discuss issue – what people know about it, why they chose this issue

Your first day should have limited focus on the issue. Today is a day to get to know your team and for them to get to know you. The greater emphasis you place on building the team, in the first few weeks, the stronger your public work project will be.

6. **Finally, evaluate with your group** (10 minutes)
   - What do people think of the meeting?
   - Are you excited about Public Achievement?
   - What do we want to do next week? Build the agenda for next week, write out on large butcher paper and bring back for Week 2. You may want to suggest that you will bring another activity or game and recommend the team to spend some time talking about the issue they have chosen and why.

   How to evaluate?
   Leave 5 to 10 minutes at the end of this segment to evaluate how the coaches feel about the team's getting-started plan. Questions can include:
   - How do you feel about the plan you have developed?
   - What are you looking forward to on your first day?
   - What do you think will be a challenge?

Core Concepts

I. Interests

Interests are a crucial element of politics; they signify why a particular party is connected to or interested in an issue or problem. They are also a window into different people's cultures and histories – everyone has specific strong interests that come out of their backgrounds and experiences. Interests range from your personal self-interest to other's interests, to a broad conception of the public interest.

Self-Interests

Self-interests are your motivations, preferences, needs, background, hopes, and dreams – they are what matter to you. What you do, whom you associate with, and what issues are important to you are all tied to what you are interested in. Interests cover a broad range of wants, preferences, and choices that can be privately oriented, publicly oriented, or oriented toward moral standards.

While this may sound simple, understanding self-interest is actually an art that needs to be developed. Too often, people do not spend enough time thinking about what their interests are, why they act or believe as they do, or what perspectives they bring to a particular problem. Discovering your self-interest means finding out what is important to you.

A key skill for engaging in public work is to recognize how your self-interests overlap with the public interest of the larger community. Moving beyond the narrow definition of self-interest as private wants and needs, Public Achievement stresses a broader understanding of this concept by helping people identify the relationship between themselves and their communities. In fact, the word *interest* comes from the Latin root *interesse*, which means *among others*. Self-interests are things that matter so much to you that they become reasons you take action and stay engaged with public life.

Your interests are shaped by your personal experiences and the social world in which you live. It can be argued that self and interest is actually one and the same thing. There is no such thing as a fixed or given self onto which interests are attached. Our interests change as our selves change. As the philosopher John Dewey says, "The self is an ongoing process." The practice of public work will prompt you to be more aware of your changing interests and how they relate to the changing public world.

Other's Interests

Likewise, other people have their own self-interests concerning what issues they feel strongly about. It is important to recognize that there are many different interests that compose any issue. Consequently, when engaging in public work, it is vital that you identify, take into account, and build upon other's interests. For instance, one team member may be interested in the "Stop the Violence" group because one of her family members was a victim of crime; while another may be interested in this group because of his moral disdain for suffering. The fact that different people have different reasons why they are interested in a particular issue or problem gives perspective, flexibility, and imagination to problem solving.

If the problem-solving process begins by identifying people's interests, an open, participatory environment is established that makes space and opportunities available for many more people to join in the work. This understanding of interests can lead to clarity and refinement in distinguishing team members' roles, recruitment strategies, problem definition and strategic action. It also helps to engage the talents of the entire team.

Public Interest

Finally, when engaging in problem solving, it is important to keep the public interest in mind – that is how your efforts contribute to the overall betterment of your community. While there is not, nor ever was, a single common agreement about what the public interest is, work that aims for the broader public good is preferable to the politics of special interests.

Some simple questions that are useful in thinking about the public interest are: How will this project make our community/larger society a better place? How does this work affect others? Does it affect anybody negatively? Does it promote a special interest?

II. Diversity

Diversity is a fact of public life. Out in public, you find people who are different from yourselves – people of different backgrounds, cultures, histories, religions, ethnicities, races, regions, skills, genders, ages, sexual orientations, physical abilities, and perspectives. Though everyone is different, often what brings people together is the shared concern about a common problem.

Presuming diversity changes the way you think about problems and go about problem solving. To practice effective public work, you must draw upon the diversity of people with their different ideas, abilities, and perspectives to both define and solve public problems. This means that all people involved have something important to offer to the process, making the group's work a truly collaborative effort. The challenge of diversity requires that you identify the importance of your interests, those of your teammates and those of others, to solving problem. Diversity also means entering into public relationships with people whose interests are very different from your own, and with whom you may not agree, for the sake of solving the problem.

Diversity is not just a nice thing to celebrate; it is the key to recognizing that politics is never about perfection, but always involves give and take, uncertainty, and sometimes, contention. Often, the other sides bring unique insights to specify problems or bring a necessary ability to solve the problem at hand. Understanding diversity is essential to building the types of coalitions that are more effective in tackling society's complex problems.

While Public Achievement emphasizes how diversity makes public problem-solving more effective, it is still important to be aware of the challenges and problems associated with diversity. Our nation has a long and painful history of intolerance toward people who are different on the basis of race, gender, class, ethnicity, religion, age, political affiliation, physical ability, and sexual orientation. It has also made great strides toward making America a more tolerant and pluralistic society. Movements such as the Abolitionist, Woman's Suffrage, and Civil Rights have made concrete and systemic advances toward political and social equality. Intolerance, however, does still exist. As a coach, you must make sure that it has no place within your group and be prepared to openly and tactfully deal with instances where your team is confronted with intolerance in the public world.

In Their Own Words:
Advice From Former Coaches on the First Day(s)

Hang in there! At first it seemed so hard, but once it got rolling – it was great!

- Charles Teague

Be assertive. The kids can sense a "push-over" right away. They will try to test you.

- Ryan Wood

First, don't get discouraged if it does not happen the first week or even the first ten weeks. Use the skills you have. Listen to the students and work with them at their levels. There is no formula. Be flexible. Use a lot of evaluation skills on your own after each meeting to see how your work relates to the basis of Public Achievement.

- John Lund

Put a lot of energy and enthusiasm into teamwork.

- Dave Van Hattum

I asked a lot of questions initially and just bounced questions at them. I helped them raise issues and then tried to get them to run it in their own way.

- Mike Hatting

Relax. Don't expect to change the world or to define every aspect of your project on the first day. Try to get a feel for your students and try to instill your expectations of them. If you get through the first day and learn the names of all your kids, that's pretty good.

- Nathan Jensen

Make sure your team makes their rules very clear. Don't try to be their buddy because you will lose control of them. Get to know them individually to see what they are like, the strengths and differences.

- Shaghayegh Ali

Relax, chaos is to be expected. But try to establish yourself as the coach right away. Also do some fun "get to know" activities like the name game.

- Heather Johnson-Ross

Sample Exercises

I. Getting To Know You/ Discovering Self-Interests

Name Game with Ball

While standing in a circle, everyone goes around and shares their name. Someone throws a kush or tennis ball to another person and says that person's name. The person who receives the ball responds by saying the name of the person who threw them the ball and the name of the person to whom they will throw it. For example, while I, Anna, throw the ball to Ahmed, I say, "Here Ahmed." Ahmed replies, "Thanks, Anna, here Mia," and so on. The ball goes around the circle until everyone has a turn. Some variations might include going as fast as you can without dropping the ball or throwing additional balls into the circle.

Name Game with First Initial

A group of people sits in a circle. Each person will think of an adjective that begins with the same letter as his/her first name. Person A volunteers to start, and this person will share his/her name combination. The person next to Person A must remember Person A's name combination, and then shares his/her name until the circle is complete. For instance, jolly Jerry, awesome Andrea, bouncy Boulevy, and so on. People in the circle are able to help others and you can vary the 'first initial and replace it with favorite food or leisure activity, etc.

Nametags

Have paper and markers available for all the group members to make their own nametags. They should include hobbies, favorite colors and foods, and tidbits of information about themselves. Have everyone present their nametags and make sure to be wearing the nametags every time you meet as a group.

Life Stories

Provide paper and drawing utensils and have the group individually work on a drawing or representation of their life. It could be a timeline with significant events or a picture of their favorite memory. Some groups may need more direction than others so be prepared with some basic questions you are interested in knowing. For example, how many people are in your family? If you were an animal, what kind of animal would you be? What do you think aliens look like? etc.

M&M's

Have enough candy so that everyone in the group can take few to a bunch. Start at one end of the circle and tell people not to eat the candy until everyone in the circle is able to get some. Have someone volunteer to go first and have them share one thing about themselves for every piece of candy they took. Another variation is having a roll of toilet paper and telling the group to take enough pieces to last them for a three-day camping trip. For every piece they share something about themselves.

Balloons with Questions

Put a variety of different get-to-know-you questions into balloons that are blown up. Have each team member pick a balloon and sit in a circle. Let the group pop the balloons at the same time and proceed around in a circle, one person at a time, letting each individual read the question and answer it. A variation on this could be that everyone has the same questions, and team members write down their responses on a sheet of paper anonymously. Each person will then fold up the answers and put them into a balloon, blow it up and then tie it. Mix up the balloons and everyone picks a different one from their own. Have everyone sit in a circle and pop the balloons at the same time. One at a time, the responses are then read, and guesses are made to see who wrote what.

Affirmation circle

All those in the group form a circle. A leader will throw out get-to-know-you questions, and everyone that the question applies to goes into the middle of the circle for a high five; while all those standing out of the circle clap. For example, everyone who speaks another language, anyone who is under age 10, anyone who is the oldest in their family, etc.

II. Diversity

The Un-common Denominator

This exercise uses the skill of interviewing to discover diversity. Pair up in a way that matches people who are as different as possible. Have them interview each other and find as many differences as they can in how they view things. After all, it is only in relation to someone else that you can see how different you are. For instance, questions like “Where were you born?” “What places would you like to visit?” “How do you spend your time?” “What is you favorite or least favorite subject at school?” “What public issues interest you?” “What do you think about....?” “What is one thing that you are good at doing?” Once the team members have interviewed one another, they will introduce their partner to the whole group. Comment on the differences you have discovered.

The Common Denominator

Divide the group into groups of three. They are assigned to find one similarity that all three in the same group have in common, and one thing that makes each member of the threesome unique. For example, everyone in the group has a dog at home, but they each have a favorite class that is different from one another.

III. Concepts and Skills

Create a Citizen (this exercise is also a good evaluation tool)

Prepare some butcher paper and markers and discuss what makes a good citizen. Ask one of the team members in the group to lay on the butcher paper while somebody traces their image. Have the group, each using their own pen color, fill the inside of the tracing with desired characteristics of someone who thinks and acts civically, and fill the outside of the tracing with characteristics of bad citizens. Upon completion, discuss each individual's contribution, and how the group has already exemplified these characteristics or could strive to be more civic-minded. The group should see that each of them has the characteristics of a citizen, despite their age, income, social status, etc.

Memory

Have the group look through a variety of magazines to find pictures that represent terms like coach, team, community, self-interest, diversity, leadership, public, private, power, mapping, problem, issue, action, accountability, and evaluation. Cut and glue the pictures onto one side of 3x5 note cards, while writing the term on an accompanying note card. Then discuss and define the terms and how they are represented in the pictures. Shuffle all the note cards turn them face down. Have the group try to pair up their picture and definition.

Collage

Split up the group and assign them on the following terms: coach, team, community, self-interest, diversity, leadership, public, private, power, mapping, problem, issue, action, accountability, and evaluation. Have them look through a variety of new sources for pictures that represent their respective terms, and have them paste their findings on butcher paper or flip chart. Discuss as a group what people learned and how the definitions are defined through their art collage.

Scrabble

Use a home version of Scrabble to have the group create words associated with citizenship. As they form the words, they have to defend its connection with their issue and work in Public Achievement before gaining points.

Citizenship Land

Create a board game where the object is to learn from experience, and exercise the skills and concepts behind Public Achievement. For example, everyone has a game piece and they roll the dice to see who goes first. Group members advance in squares according to the numbers on the dice. The squares may be as follows: you didn't do the work you promised the group – go back four spaces; you rehearsed your interview – go ahead three spaces; go ahead one space if you can give an example of public; and etc.

Public Achievement Bingo

Design bingo cards with words associated with active citizenship. Choose a person to read out loud the definitions or examples of these words, while students silently put markers on their bingo cards if they have and know the answers. When one line is completely filled, they yell “BINGO!” and recite their list of terms to ensure they coincide with what was previously defined.

Hangman

Create blanks for the number of letters in a word or phrase that associates with Public Achievement. Give each individual a chance to guess a letter until they miss. Take turns suggesting the words and phrases.

Charades

This game may be challenging for younger team members. Brainstorm as a group themes, words, or phrases that are related to the work of citizens. Divide the team into pairs and have them pick one of the suggestions out of a bowl and act it out.

Scenarios

Think of scenarios that could be improved through the skills and concepts discussed in Public Achievement. Use a public forum in your group to solve these scenarios and debate the issues. For example, a Public Achievement group has one member who is incredibly shy and never speaks out or voices her opinion. What should the group do?

Civics

Tie in current events, government processes with the group’s chosen topic. Cut out newspaper or magazine articles that relate to your work. Ask the students what they think and show them how it relates to their lives. Teach the group how to learn their congressional district, who their representatives are, and how to contact them. Quiz them on branches of government and political leaders.

Public Achievement Jeopardy

Just like the television game, except that the categories are related to your public achievement project. Suggested categories can include: core concepts, public skills, public or private, names of stakeholders, or things we need to do to accomplish our project.

Make up five answers (questions) for each category on index cards with their corresponding values. On the board, draw in the category titles and dollar amounts just like the television show.

Chapter 8: Running Meetings

Introduction

While we have gone through some elements that are particularly important in the early meetings, it is also vital to devise a structure and routine that allows your team to work efficiently and effectively on a week-to-week basis. This structure and routine will create a model that, as your team progresses in their work, will enable the members to gradually take the responsibility for running the meetings themselves.

In this chapter, we cover five important elements that are applicable to your work within the structure of the weekly sessions (as well as in all facets of public work) – Setting an agenda, and public skills like developing teamwork, fostering democratic leadership, deliberation, and evaluation.

Setting an Agenda

Team meetings give you the chance to engage in the practice of public work. Since you only have the chance to meet once or twice a week, you will want to make the most out of your time and energy. You need to be explicit about what you want to achieve during your time together. Getting into the habit of having an agenda, which details what you will do during each session, is a good first step. Write the agenda on a flip chart or the board before each meeting (or the group may decide upon it at the beginning of the session).

By getting into the routine of working from an agenda, your team will have a better idea of time constraints, what is expected of them, and the status and progress of their work. It will also make discipline less of a problem since they know what is expected of them at every juncture of the meeting.

Here is a sample agenda that you could implement as part of every Public Achievement session:

PURPOSE Clearly state what the meeting is about and goals for the day.
ROLES Assign or have team members volunteer to be the facilitator, recorder, timekeeper, etc, for the meeting.
REPORT Check on any news or work that has been done since the last meeting.
TO DO Activities (with time limits) that you will do today
EVALUATE Restate meeting purpose, identify that worked and didn't work, and why.
PLAN Meeting, assign tasks, and discuss agenda for next meeting.

Some additional tips for successful meetings:

- When everyone contributes, you see the importance of interests and diversity, and it benefits the whole team.
- During meetings, check to make sure that everyone understands what you are doing and why. Is there a consensus when it comes to decision-making? Does everyone have a voice?
- When assigning tasks, does everyone understand his role or her assignment, its importance, and how it contributes to the greater goals of the group?
- Evaluation helps to clarify what has and will happen, creates accountability, encourages everyone to participate, and helps the group to visualize what has been accomplished and learned thus far.

Public Skills

I. Developing Teamwork

Team members repeatedly told us that one of the most important things they learned in Public Achievement was the importance of teamwork. It is one of the vital lessons of public work – you cannot solve big social problems alone. However, developing teamwork among a diverse group of people is no easy task.

A good way to start is to simply have a discussion on the importance of teamwork, and emphasize that different people bring together different abilities that are able to perform different roles in a team's public work. For instance, what would happen on a football team is everyone was a quarterback? How about a band where everyone played drums? It doesn't matter if you have all the best quarterbacks in your team or the best drummers in your band, the football team would not win any games, and the band could not play many songs. The same is true on your Public Achievement team – there are many roles/positions that need to be filled if you want to be successful.

An easy way to introduce different roles to the group is to divide up the work within the weekly meetings. This structure will give your team members practice working in public and taking on different roles, as well as providing the opportunity for everyone to contribute to the project.

Some weekly roles could be:

FACILITATOR
A facilitator agrees to guide the meeting. He or she makes sure that everyone gets a chance to speak, and that the team keeps its agenda in mind. This person can be the adult coach or someone on the team.

RECORDER
The recorder agrees to take notes on what happens during a meeting. These notes will become a public document that can be reviewed at the end of the meeting and will serve as the team's collective memory of their work.

TIMEKEEPER
A timekeeper agrees to watch the clock. He or she helps keep the team on track by reminding everyone how much time is left for the meeting. The team can then modify their agenda so that the necessary decisions get made and the evaluation gets done.

ENCOURAGER
An encourager looks for positive things that happen during the sessions, gives report during evaluation.

EVALUATOR
An evaluator is in charge of leading evaluation at the end of the session. During the session, they are to keep a watchful and critical eye on the group's work.

These are important skills for everyone to learn and develop. It is important to rotate these roles so that everyone gets a chance to practice and contribute to the work of the group.

Nonetheless, these weekly roles are only the first step. You need to make sure that everyone on your team is involved and working together in all aspects of public work. Many coaches found out that if they only asked for volunteers for specific jobs, the same people would inevitably do all the work. To counter this, split up the work and assign different team member to work together and take on different roles. Also, always encourage shy members to participate. Use the more-experienced team members to peer coach the less-experienced members within your group. Sometimes, reluctant team members just needed a chance to succeed; once they have tasted the thrills of engaging in the public world, they will become more engaged.

II. Developing Leadership, Democratically

Leadership can mean different things to different people. However, it is most often connected to the idea of a positional leader – someone who controls resources – has public authority and recognition, or someone who can direct or inspire others to do things. Breaking free of the traditional one leader-many followers idea, Public Achievement urges the development of leadership democratically. This simply means that every team member should develop leadership skills through their team's work.

This type of leadership combines a focus on the process and the products of public work. Leaders in public work are many different kinds of people with different talents and capacities who bring others together to create things of use and beauty.

Your role as a coach is to approach leadership as a process and facilitate the development of leadership skills in all your team members. Challenge every participant to lead meetings, mediate conflict, and build a spirit of community and teamwork. Hopefully, by taking leadership roles, they will encourage others to do the same.

When people, specifically young people, help to build something, they experience it as their own. Volunteering for a specific job and then doing it empowers individuals to gain a sense of authority, have confidence to act, and be motivated to learn. Their participation will result in them having a stake in the project, a visible mark that proudly "puts their signature" on the face of the community.

Individual leaders will naturally emerge within your group, and hopefully, you can facilitate all members to take leadership roles. Keep reminding your group that everyone plays an important part in the project, and everyone has special talents that are needed in doing public work.

Public Achievement is an opportunity to try new things and to improve on what is already known. This can be scary, especially for young people. Calling someone they do not know, speaking in public, and using conflict in constructive ways, are all positive examples of practicing leadership and effective citizenship. Encourage your team members to set goals for themselves, develop new skills, and evaluate their own and others' progress in these skills.

Here is a sample of other leadership skills:

- Taking initiative
- Stepping back to let others lead
- Stating one's opinion
- Facilitating meetings or activities
- Helping others to work as a group
- Maintaining focus and keeping your eyes on the prize
- Preparing presentations
- Learning new things or ideas
- Writing a letter to a public official or company

If we want a vibrant democratic society now and in the future, and if we want the younger generation to begin feeling important and acting upon their own stake in the community, we must cultivate their leadership skills for public work.

For exercises on Leadership, review the Exercises section of this chapter.

III. Deliberation

Deliberation is an essential part of Public Achievement; it is the discursive process through which differences are negotiated and group decisions are made. In Public Achievement, deliberation is always oriented toward taking action; it is not the practice of discussion for the sake of discussion. If you are serious about working with and through diversity in your group, deliberation is an excellent process to negotiate and incorporate differences. In some cases, different people will view problems in totally different ways, while others will disagree on whether a particular problem is a problem at all. Ironically, coaches must often take a more assertive role to ensure that deliberation will be inclusive and democratic within their groups. It is important to discuss with your group both the purpose of and some of the guiding principles for democratic deliberation.

In addition to the general rules of respect, we suggest the following:

- Criticize ideas, not people
- Focus on making the best possible decision, not on winning
- Encourage everyone to participate
- Restate what someone says, or ask for more information if something is unclear
- Listen to everyone's ideas, even if you don't personally agree
- Try to understand all sides of an issue before making a decision

From David Johnson and Roger Johnson, "Critical Thinking Through Structured Controversy," Educational Leadership (May, 1988).

Suspending Pre-Judgment

The last two suggestions center on what we call suspending pre-judgment, and it is one of the most difficult public skills to learn. While it is impossible for you to put aside your particular opinions/perspectives when deliberating a particular issue, we encourage you to actively listen to others and keep an open mind. Only after everyone has contributed their input and listened to each other's ideas, can the group make informed choices for taking action.

IV. Evaluation

Evaluation is one of the more vital skills a coach or team member can obtain from Public Achievement. It helps you operate smoothly on a week-to-week basis, examine how your work is progressing, prevent misunderstandings, clarify roles, and assess the overall impact of your project. Evaluation is also the time to identify things that the group has learned from sessions, work, or events.

Evaluation improves the quality of your team's work because it ensures that team members are staying true to their initial goals; provides space for learning and strategic thinking; and develops accountability within the team. It requires that you think critically about what you have done, personally, and then collectively as a team.

At times, we think of the process of evaluation only at the very end of a project; however, for evaluation to be truly effective, the team should do it every step of the way. We suggest that you use evaluation at the end of every session, at particular events or teachable moments, periodically as you progress in your work, and at the end of your project to assess its overall impact.

The coach sets the precedent; if you reinforce the importance and practice of the skill of evaluation, your team will learn its importance. However, if you inconsistently evaluate, your team will not take its practice seriously. Establish the precedent by evaluating the team's first meeting.

- For evaluation worksheets, see Appendix 4.

Weekly Evaluation

Leave at least 10 minutes at the end of every meeting to have your team sit in a circle and answer a series of evaluative questions every week. Have team members evaluate their individual and collective work as well as the impact of their project on the community. You can also have one team member ask the questions and another record the answers to the lessons that they have learned during that session.

Putting evaluation on the agenda elevates its position to that of other useful tasks, skills, and concepts learned in Public Achievement. Recording your team evaluations will give you an ongoing record of your team's progress.

Here are some sample questions:

- What did we set out to accomplish today? Did we complete that? Why or why not?
- What part of our strategy worked well and what didn't? How can we build on the successes and minimize the failures?
- What can we do differently? Are there any needed changes?
- What did I learn about Public Achievement, myself, the community? What political lessons did I learn today?
- What do we need to do for next time? What is the agenda for the next meeting?

Evaluating Specific Instances of Public Work

It is also useful to evaluate how individuals or your team performed specific assignments. Such a practice not only reinforces accountability, it helps you improve future work. Remember, public critique can be very emotionally jarring if it is not artfully done. In particular, the work, problem, event, or goal needs to be the focus of the critique, not the character of the person being evaluated. It can be enormously freeing for the individual to have a public discussion of their actions. This way, everyone's views are out in the open, which reduces unspoken criticisms and unresolved tensions. We suggest the following questions:

- Did we accomplish our goals or meet our expectations? Why or why not?
- What were the power dynamics, interests those we dealt with?
- What could we do better next time?
- What needs to be done to follow-up?

Evaluating the Work as a Whole at Different Stages

Once your team gets going and begins their public work, it is also useful to periodically evaluate your project in broader terms. It is good to go back to the project criteria and mission statement (Chapter 11), and evaluate if you are on the right track.

Use this same method for evaluating your work as a whole when you complete your project. Focus on assessing what you have learned both conceptually and practically, how successful you were in accomplishing your goals, how your work impacted society, and what you can do to carry on in the spirit of public work.

Challenge the direction of the team's work and end goals by asking and recording questions like these:

- What is being done or created that has long lasting civic value? Is it sustainable? Do people know about it? Is it visible?
- Are we tapping new resources and making strong efforts to collaborate in new ways? Are we building new relationships?
- What civic skills and capacities are being developed both individually and for the team? How can they be improved?
- Is real change happening on an institutional level? Are we breaking down barriers?

Reflection: The Art of Evaluating Your Work and Self in the Broader World

While evaluation helps your team move forward on their project, it is also important to reflect upon what has been learned. You need to provide the space so that individual team members can link their experiences to the broader world, ways of thinking, and ways of being.

Exercises

I. Team Building

Human knot

Everyone in the group stands in a circle facing each other. Have people take their right hand and grab the right hand of another in the circle. Continue by joining people's left hands while making sure each team member grabs right-and-left hands of two different people. There should be a tangled web of arms amongst this circle, and the goal is to unwind this knot, without letting go of hands, until everyone is once again standing in a circle still holding hands.

Team Jigsaw Puzzle

On a large piece of art paper or poster board, write the name of your team with a black marker in big balloon letters. Then, with a pencil, divide the paper up into jigsaw pieces (one for each member of your team). Cut the jigsaw pieces. At the meeting, give each team member one piece, and have them color it with the theme of your team's issue or project. Then have the team put the jigsaw back together. Evaluate, paying special attention to diversity and teamwork.

I'm Going to Mail a Letter

Everyone is in a circle sitting on chairs where there is one less chair than the number of people in the group. The extra person stands inside the circle, describing the group of people to whom he will mail a letter. All those for whom the description applies must get up and attempt to get the few chairs available. The person must move from his/her seat if the description applies and go at least two chairs away. For example, "I'm going to mail a letter to everyone who has spoken in front of a group." All those in the group who have publicly spoken, and the person who chose that particular group, volley for the available seats. The person left standing is in the middle giving a new description of the people to whom he/she sent a letter. While playing, encourage leadership skills.

Pair Up

The group begins by pairing up leaving one extra person who will be the leader. The leader will then call out two body parts, and team members will need to connect those two body parts with their partner. Every time there is a new call, group members must switch partners. For example, if the leader calls out "ear to elbow," the ear of one person should find an elbow of a new partner.

Double Statue

This activity is good to try before brainstorming as a way to get creative juices flowing. It requires each team member to create something visual from an idea, quickly and without any pressure or expectation, to create a masterpiece work of art.

An important lesson that can come out of this exercise is that what we do or say isn't always interpreted the way we intended.

The group divides into pairs; in each pair, one person is a lump of clay and the other person is the sculptor. The whole group plays at the same time, so there are several groups of two scattered all over the room. The coach says "sculpt" and the sculptors have one minute to create a sculpture out of their partner. The clay's responsibility is to remain very pliable and just allow themselves to be sculpted. There should be no conversation during the process of sculpting. After the minute ends, the coach yells "freeze." At this point, the sculptures give a good hard freeze – no eye movement or motion whatsoever.

In the beginning, stop the game here and go around and have the sculptors name their sculptures. The quicker this game is done, the more creativity it calls for.

For the double version of the game, when "freeze" is called, all sculptors will find a different statue. By guessing at what the other is supposed to be, the sculptor will become sculptures that fit with the other sculpture.

For example, I am a sculptor and I have just sculpted an anteater, and 'freeze' was called. The coach says "switch" and I will go to another statue that looks to me like an airplane. I become a double sculpture by becoming a parachuter five feet away from the airplane. Meanwhile, another sculptor sees my anteater, thinks it is a person bowling, and becomes a bowling ball. In the end, the coach goes around and asks each person (the sculptors who switched) to name the double new sculpture, and asks the original sculptors what their sculptures were supposed to be.

The game can be played twice. In the second round, the sculptors and the lumps of clay will switch, so that everyone gets a chance to play both roles.

II. Leadership

Who Started It?

Form a circle and have one person leave the area. Choose one leader who will make different motions that are repeated by others in the group. The person who left the area returns and tries to guess which person is the leader.

- What did it feel like to be the leader, follower, or the person guessing which is who?
- How is this applicable to the issue your group is working on and the role of leadership?

Blind Shapes

Clear a big area and blindfold everyone in the group. Tie rope ends together and have each person hold onto a piece of the rope. Ask the group to make geometrical shapes. Suggest they do it again without talking or with one person talking.

- How did leadership emerge in this activity and why?
- What is the correlation with leadership and teamwork?

III. Deliberation / Issue Development

Devil's Advocate

There are many occasions during Public Achievement meetings when it may be helpful for one or two members of the group to be the designated devil's advocate.

A devil's advocate is someone who brings opposing points of view to a conversation in order to stimulate debate. During the issue development stage of Public Achievement, during all of the stages in fact, it is imperative that teams look at different sides of their issue. Almost every issue has a controversy related to it, and this exercise can help the team to more completely understand the issue and the controversy. Thorough comprehension of an issue, regardless of its complexity, will give them more tools to develop an effective action project. By looking at opposing points of view, the team can more easily identify and understand potential obstacles to their project.

The devil's advocate's job is to take the opposite side of an issue or problem. Public Achievement group members usually agree that the project they are working on will help the community. It is important to consider that everyone may not agree. For example, one high school Public Achievement group chose the issue of teen pregnancy. They recognized a need to have a child care center in their school because many students with babies were dropping out of school. In this case, the devil's advocate would have to think about who might be against in-school childcare and why.

By assigning one member in the group be the appointed devil's advocate, it deepens the discussion by bringing in more diverse points of view. The devil's advocate often has to stretch his/her thinking, especially when opposition hasn't been considered. This exercise also illustrates how disagreement can be productive.

It is important to prepare the team member who will be performing the devil's advocate role, so that he/she has a chance to really think about, and even research, the controversy surrounding their issue.

Over time, the role of the devil's advocate may not need to be an assigned role. As the group sees the value of debate and develops the skills of thinking broadly, everyone in the group could raise controversial points.

Chapter 9: Issue Development

Introduction

Passion and interests bring people to issues and problems, but acting on passion alone is not a good way to engage the public world. People need to know all facets of the issue in order to create effective strategies for public creation or problem solving.

Issue development is the process of researching and learning an issue or problem. Public Achievement stresses the importance of issue development at all stages of the process, from before teams start to the final completion of projects. Issue development ensures the team is truly addressing a public problem in a thorough, well thought-out manner. This is a prime opportunity to discuss the concept of public and connect the team's self-interest to the common good. This chapter offers strategies for issue development and narrowing issues into problems that your group can devise a project around.

Example of Public Story

Building a Playground

A parking lot was the only place where students at St. Bernard's School in St. Paul, Minnesota could play during recess time. This was not only boring, but dangerous as several students were injured from falling on the blacktop. In 1993, the Parents' Association of St. Bernard's tried to turn a vacant lot next to the school into a playground. A town meeting was held to discuss their proposal, however, neighbors of the school – fearing that a playground would attract gang activity, noise, and drugs – out-organized the parents and voted down the proposal.

Then something remarkable happened. After the parents abandoned the project, students at St. Bernard's decided to take it up. Undaunted by the neighbors' opposition, a Public Achievement group was formed in 1995 to address the issue of the playground. The team began their work by exploring alternative sites for a playground for their school and neighborhood. During that first year, they concentrated on building relationships with neighbors, the pastor and parish council (of the associated church), and various city officials to establish the clout necessary to accomplish their goal. As team member Megan Cherry notes, "You need to have good connections."

"When we started, people did not take us seriously," remarks another team member, Chelsea Fuerstenberg, "but after they saw we had gotten a lot of things done and were dedicated to the project, they began to pay attention to us." Working year round, the team had to negotiate with the pastor and parish council to convert one-half of the parking lot as space for the playground. To proceed further, they obtained a waiver from the county so that the smaller parking lot would not be out of code. The group worked closely with Janice Ruttman, county commissioner, to learn of the regulations and safety issues that would make the playground possible. As team member Zach Bauman remarked, "I now know more about zoning laws than I ever wanted to know."

Plans changed in 1996 when St. Bernard's parish bought the home adjacent to the church. This house was located on a different block than the original site, but everyone agreed that this would be a better spot for the playground. Mr. Schwartzbauer, parish trustee and maintenance worker, then began to sit in on team meetings and offer his expertise in the area of construction.

A playground is a very costly project and the team needed to raise over $75,000 to cover all costs. Joe Lex, former St. Bernard's teacher and Playground coach, said, "fundraising was one of the bigger challenges they faced. It seemed a bit overwhelming to the team, especially the part that involved going out into the community to ask for donations." The group negotiated with their principal so that all the money from the school's fundraising that year would be directed toward the playground. The group worked with the School Development director, Travelle Evans-Van, as a resource in finding and writing grants. They also brought in parents and parishioners for a variety of fundraising activities including candy sales, soliciting corporate and individual donations, festivals, and change jars.

The playground was scheduled to be built by the fall of 1998. Within three years, the group raised most of the funds necessary to break ground; the house that was owned by the church was demolished in order to prepare the lot for construction and the group needed to choose a playground company that best met their needs. This decision came after weighing concerns about the environment, safety, cost-effectiveness, aesthetic, and durability issues; they chose a company that made their playground equipment out of recycled materials.

When asked how the group stayed with it for so long, Megan Cherry remarked, “We wanted it so bad, that if the playground had never come, we would have felt like we wasted all that time.”

Core Concept

Public

One of the difficult parts in the process of issue development is that people do not have a clear idea of what *public* means. Here, we offer an extended discussion so that you have a better understanding of the different meanings of the term *public* as well as be aware of the fact that there are many different publics.

There are three different meanings of public that are relevant to the work that goes on in Public Achievement.

THE PUBLIC

Public refers to a diverse group of people. It is in public that you encounter people who are different from you. In many cases, people are not linked by common interests, but by a common problem. The public is often characterized by debate, argument, and conflict.

THE PUBLIC WORLD

Public is a quality of space that is open and visible to all. This is where your actions are visible for all to see and thus you are accountable for what you do.

THE PUBLIC INTEREST

Public suggests a broad sense of a common good. The public interest is created by those with diverse interests who are engaged in problem solving with each other.

All three meanings of public – as a group of people, a kind of space, and a common good – are important to understanding what it means to do public problem-solving.

By connecting public with different groups of diverse people and spaces, it is evident that there is not one public sphere; but many different publics. In some cases, a public may be a group of people who share a concern about a common problem. In other cases, a public may be a space such as a park or street where people interact.

Publics can also be created. In the Civil Rights Movements, publics were created in schools, beauty salons, and churches. Public Achievement groups have also created a public in order to address a problem. For example, a “Stop the Violence” group asked a local police officer to talk about what kids could do to stop violence. He told them that kids could not do anything. This made the group extremely angry, but instead of becoming bitter, they exercised disciplined anger and decided to carry on with their work. Eventually, they held a Peace March where they helped the local community and the entire city know that young people were interested in stopping violence. The press, community leaders, politicians, and people from the neighborhood attended the Peace March. This concretely represents an instance in which a Public Achievement group created a new sense of the public in order to engage in public work.

Thinking Publicly

Through thinking publicly, you learn to link your personal experiences to the larger context of the public world. By doing so, you come to realize how you affect the public realm and how the public realm affects you. Even when tackling a local problem, like trash around your school, it is helpful to be continually aware of the local and global components of your problem. You may not only be making your school more beautiful, but may also be preventing trash from entering public waters via storm drains, raising the consciousness of students about pollution, instilling a sense of pride in your school, etc.

By encountering diverse people in the public realm, we have access to different ways of thinking about problems. Often, the exposure to these new perspectives transforms our own ways of thinking, as we understand our histories and identities in more complex ways. The advantage and challenge of thinking publicly is that you have a better understanding of the multiple contexts and perspectives that constitute any problem. The broader perspective one gains by thinking publicly enables you to suspend your preconceived notions of a problem, take into account diverse perspectives and interests, and pragmatically and cooperatively determine the best solution.

The Distinction between Public and Private

The concept *private* refers to the realm of close personal relations that you have with your friends and your family. For Public Achievement, it is important to remind team members that they may need to act, behave, or speak differently in public, than in private. Coaches should prepare their team members before they act in public. Make sure they are aware of the protocol (ways of behaving) for acting in public – go over such things as politeness, proper attitude, shaking hands, eye contact, introducing themselves, speaking clearly, keeping appointments, active listening, etc.

Often, the public realm is seen as opposed to the private. While they are different, both realms are always present in any situation. Can you think of times when private behavior has slipped into public work? What were the consequences?

The chart below outlines some of the important differences between private and public life. While the distinctions between public and private are not so clear-cut, this chart, like all such charts, is the basis for further discussion and deliberation.

	Public Life	Private Life
Context	workplace, school, associations, meetings	home, circle of friends
Purpose	problem-solving, agency, building power	support, friendship, intimacy
Quality of space	open, diverse	closed, exclusionary, personal
Motivation	public interests	supporting friends and family, narrow interests, selfishness
Condition of Relationship	accountable, strategic, guarded	loyalty, intimacy, exclusivity
Outcome	public creation, problems solved, citizenship, respect	love, belonging

Public Skills

I. Distinguishing Between Issues, Problems, and Projects

In order to ensure your group's discussions are relevant and effective, the coach needs to understand the differences between issues, problems, and projects; and be able to lead a discussion articulating these distinctions with his/her team. When beginning to explore these concepts, be aware of the subtle nuances of each.

ISSUES are matters of public concern and debate, good and bad, that affect society.
PROBLEMS are negative consequences or matters of uncertainty related to that issue.
PROJECTS are planned actions designed to positively impact identified problems.

For the St. Bernard's Playground team, the issue was safe public recreation spaces. The problem was that students at St. Bernard's School and the surrounding neighborhood did not have a safe place to play. The resulting project was to build a playground.

This process of distinguishing between problems and issues is challenging and may take a few meetings. It requires much discussion and deliberation. Sometimes, more information is needed, so coaches should help students identify possible means of information. Below we have included three different scenarios where these distinctions were unclear.

What if my team does not have a good idea what their issue is?

Some teams form around an issue that they may not know much about. They may have joined the group because their friends are in it, or that it sounded like a fun group. In this case, start looking at individual interests – why students chose this group, what they know about it, and what they think should be changed. From this information (it may be slight), pick up on clues for directing research.

What if my group knows their issue, but does not know their problem?

A group may have an idea of what issues they are interested in, but are unclear of what problems they specifically want to work on. For example, one Public Achievement group's issue was saving the animals. This was a big topic that included such problems: endangered species, runaway pets, and animal cruelty. The group began to investigate the broader issue to see which problems directly affected their local community. After some research, they learned of a company in their town that tested their products on animals. They decided that a problem was that not many people in their neighborhood knew this company did such testing. Their project centered on educating the greater public. Their action included using cable television as a means to get the message of animal research out. This necessitated further research about the pros and cons of product testing on animals, finding additional resources and information, and building relationships with cable and video workers to learn the skills necessary to make a public service announcement.

What if my group has a project in mind, but does not know the issue or problem?

Some teams will have a project in mind, but are unclear of what problem they want to address. For instance, one Public Achievement team wanted to hold a basketball tournament. Their coach challenged them to define what problem this would address and how having a basketball tournament would impact it. Through research, they discovered that there were no organized sports for children in the younger grades at their school. Thus, they defined their problem as a lack of extra-curricular opportunities for younger students. Broader issues may have included latch-key kids, after-school crime, or improving sports and social skills. Their action encompassed researching transportation needs for all interested participants, getting chaperones, recruiting youth, and obtaining permission for use of facilities.

See Appendix 3 for Worksheets on *Getting Started with Public Achievement* and *Let's Make History, Part I.*

Did you detect a pattern?

All of these confusions between issue, problem and project were resolved through research.

Example

The J.J. Hill Story: Issue, Problem & Project

At J.J. Hill Middle School, a Public Achievement group formed around the issue of wanting a soda machine at school. Their coach challenged them to consider how pop machine at school was a public problem. She got the team to think hard about their issue, and they eventually concluded that the reason they wanted a soda machine to have a choice of beverages at lunch. Someone later suggested a juice machine. Again, the coach pressed the team to consider why beverage choice was a public issue and who else, besides students, were affected by this problem. The team concluded that lack of a soda or juice machine was not a public problem.

Through their discussions, a question was raised as to whether they would recycle the empty cans. The team seized upon this idea, and decided to investigate how their school dealt with waste disposal. After some brief research, they found out that the school did not recycle any of their garbage. They consequently decided to start a recycling program at their school.

For this group, the environment was their issue, the school's excessive trash was the problem, and recycling was their project. Thus, this is the start of the Public Achievement Environment Team.

II. Issue Development

In order to effectively impact important issues, teams must be armed with as much information and understanding of the issues as possible. In the past, we have found team members who could not answer questions that are pertinent to their issue, were unaware of opposing arguments, or thought that they were the only group working on such a topic. An uninformed voice, particularly that of children, doesn't lend itself to credibility.

Issue development takes place at all different stages and levels of the Public Achievement process. It is a way to tap into the power of passion and interests, and direct them toward effective public work. It is also a way to guard against blindly taking up causes, or advocating for special interests.

Because issue development is not a linear process, it is difficult to lay out for coaches. They need to get an idea of where their team is coming from, what they know, and where do they want to go in order to help them develop their issue in a thorough and public way. In the rest of this section, we detail some stages and levels of issue development.

Before Groups Have Chosen their Issues

Before Public Achievement group work formally starts, the host institution, teachers, or even coaches can plant seeds to get the students/participants thinking about public and community issues. Coaches and teachers will ask students to think broadly about why these issues are important and how they affect others in and out of their community. It is also essential that you tap into individual's self-interest regarding these issues. This will help motivate individuals and maintain a healthy momentum for the future work.

When discussing issues, these criteria may help in ensuring the public nature of your issue and its potential for success. Encourage the students to keep open minds before they have considered and researched all viewpoints. Have students publicly defend their desire to work on the issue by answering the questions below.

Criteria for issue selection:

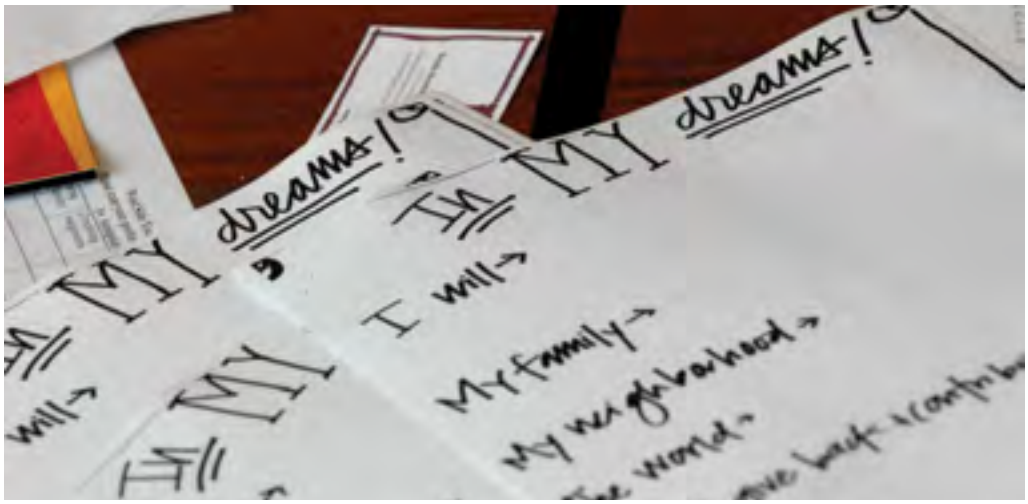
- Does the issue impact the greater public?
- Is there a potential for public work that will address the issue?
- In what ways is the issue of concern to young people?
- Are there available ways and places to do research regarding the issue?

An exercise on Issue Development is available at the end of this chapter, for participants who do not know what an issue is.

About the Issue

Before delving right into your group's project, it is important to know the who, what, where, and when of your issue from a variety of perspectives. It is vital that students have time for reflection and discussion prior to deciding their Public Achievement project. Here are some questions to consider:

- How is the issue related to your lives and self-interest?
- How does the issue affect the daily lives of other people?
- How is the issue public? How does the issues affect the school, neighborhood, city, nation, world?
- How is the issue political? What is the controversy?
- What is the history of the issue?



The Issue and the Community

Encourage team members to research their issue by interviewing key community figures, students, parents, and teachers, and reviewing the local press to see how this issue directly affects their community and its members. Taking the time to interact with the community before cementing a project will deepen the team members' understanding of the issue and associated problems, while also helping them determine an appropriate action. Meeting community members will also help the team establish a power base that can maximize their resulting project or action. An excellent way to figure out who in the community has a stake in your issue (stakeholders), is through power mapping (detailed in the next chapter).

The Public Achievement Playground group's story illustrates the importance of working with the community. Many resources in the community were utilized; the team met with neighborhood residents, their parents helped out with strategizing and fundraising, Mr. Schwartzbauer became an honorary team member through his active participation, Travelle Evans-Van connected the group to monetary resources, and Janice Ruttman led the group through city guidelines. Although the group initiated their own research, they knew tapping into existing resources and connections in and around the school, parish and greater community would help them understand everything they need to know to build the playground. The group also realized that these community officials helped them gain neighborhood support (building power). Hope alone would not have been enough to make this playground a reality. The group worked hard to organize people and resources around their mission.

Defining a Problem/Project

Once your group has researched all facets of the issue, they will be much better equipped to define the problem they want to address and the project that will address it. Because of their knowledge, they already have a good understanding of the many different problems associated with their issue. Defining a problem then becomes a matter of group selection.

A project is a little more complicated because projects need to meet certain criteria of public work (they are a form of public creation, address the needs and challenges of a community, incorporate diverse stakeholders, and are realistic within the time frame).

- For more information on defining a project, see Chapter 11.

Continued Development Throughout a Team's Project

Just because a team starts taking public action, that does not mean issue development is over. The Playground group had to continually research through all stages of their project. Using all of their available resources, the Playground group researched the zoning and city guidelines, and brought in planners and other officials to explain processes and regulations.

The problems were many and complicated. This team needed to raise enough money to build the playground, negotiate space and parking with the parish, and work with the neighbors and city departments to be in compliance with laws pertaining to the playground's construction.

The ongoing research and preparation for action, the building of relationships (including the county commissioner, city planners and zoners, parish and school representatives, and playground companies), obtaining the support of neighbors and the community, took many years and much hard work. But this work has paid off because, in the Fall of 1998, a new playground was built for St. Bernard's students, and children in the community to play on it.

III. Research

Research should prepare team members to ask good questions. This is an ideal time to practice and examine the team's self-interest and other's interests. As a group, think of questions that the group and others would want to know about their issue, and where the best place is to find the answers. It is important that the coach guides the research in a way that is meaningful to the team members.

Below is a list of some prospective avenues to help the team understand their issue better. It is important that their research is guided and specific in a way that helps the group organize this newly found information.

- Identify all perspectives of an issue and continue to question throughout the Public Achievement process;
- Read about it in books, magazines, pamphlets, encyclopedias, newspapers, etc;
- Search the Internet;
- Utilize school and county libraries;
- Talk to other students/participants, or other Public Achievement groups;
- Think of how teachers can be a resource in thinking and teaching about the issue;
- Examine the issue of power and self-interest: who decides what and why?
- Identify the controversy and the common ground;
- Research the legislative involvement on this topic;
- Interview people from inside and outside the school, community, and nation on the issue;
- Understand the issue from young people's point of view;

IV. Interviewing

One important part of the research process is interviewing to gather information and support. A power map will help to determine possible stakeholders of your issue. Interviewing is helpful because it:

- Allows you to gain knowledge from others;
- Exposes team members to different views and interests;
- Reveals other resources for information;
- Explores other's support or opposition about their issue;
- Teaches the importance of accountability in public work; and
- Lets others know about your project.

Stepping into the World

Your team members may be nervous about going out into the public world. A little preparation can make this public act a very empowering experience. Have your team rehearse interviews with each other before their public debut, as well as think about and practice the proper protocol for meeting with people in the community. For example, team members should learn how to introduce oneself, shake hands, being polite, speak clearly, make eye contact, convey conviction, etc. When your team members return from interviewing, be sure to evaluate the experience in order to improve for the next interview.

Interviews give you vital information and often lead to more questions. This is where a devil's advocate can ensure all sides are being considered and reflected upon. It is important for team members to identify additional resources that can provide them with the information and clout that are necessary to understanding their issue.

Here are some tips for conducting interviews:

- Identify information needed and individuals who may have that information;
- Think of individuals who have influence in the problem (use power map);
- Develop a list of questions as a team;
- Role play interviewer and interviewee;
- Practice active listening, pay attention to their interests;
- Pair up for interviews;
- Set up and keep appointments;
- Record all information from interviews (audiotapes are helpful);
- Ask for clarification if you do not understand something, ask follow-up questions;
- Summarize information and report back to your team without judgment; and
- Afterwards, evaluate how the interview went.

For Interview Forms, see Appendix 5.

V. Making Phone Calls

Although phone calls are made almost everyday, be aware that your team members may not know how to make professional phone calls.

Things students need to know include:

- How to use a directory;
- How to find contacts (asking for departments, individuals, etc);
- How to negotiate a automated voicemail system;
- How to introduce yourself on a phone;
- What information is appropriate to ask over the phone;
- Take notes on what contacts say;
- Be polite throughout – thank contact.

Things you and your group can do to expedite the phone process:

- Know exactly what information you are looking for. The Phone Contact Sheet in Appendix 4 can help focus the call by having all of the needed information in front of the caller;
- Role play the call a few times with varying scenarios to prepare the group for different obstacles that may arise. Remind your team members that certain individuals may doubt the capacity of youth and their first impression will be judged on their knowledge and professionalism;
    - What if an answering machine picks up?
    - What kind of information would you leave with a secretary?
    - How would one respond if the person you're looking for is rude?
- Think about the difficulties in returning phone calls within school confines and determine strategy for the contact to communicate with the group;
- Write down exactly what your contact says and ask for clarification when needed;
- Log each call and update your bio information with every new person and organization;
- Create a file for all contacts and their organizations since you never know when you may need it. This file may also be kept as a resource for future groups working on similar issues;
- Consider sending thank-you letters to certain contacts with school and Public Achievement information;

Remember to evaluate and learn from these times in the public arena. Ask team members how they felt with the experience and what they have learned to improve it.

For Phone Contact Sheets, see Appendix 5.

VI. Writing Letters and Emails

Another important skill to use while doing public work is writing formal letters or emails. Your group may need to communicate in writing for a variety of reasons – to ask for information or materials, lend or ask for support, voice opposition, or propose a possible solution to an issue your team is working on. Letters are a great way to practice good writing skills, while also getting your message out into the public arena. The time may come when team members will need to draft a letter to the editor or contact a businessman or politician.

As a group, you will determine to whom you should write a letter/email to and why, who will write the actual letter, and what is the response you're looking for. You want to talk about whom this letter will be representing. If a few are writing the letter, how will the whole group be included? If it is written on school stationary with its return address, the principal and administration should be aware of its content. What other information, if any, would you like to be conveyed in this letter? An outline is provided on the proceeding page to guide team members through letter writing.

It can be very rewarding and invigorating for a group to receive mail from someone they wrote to or have their work published in a newspaper because their material will be seen by professionals. As a coach, you want to ensure that their writing represents a youth voice on their particular issue, while also being credible, concise, and grammatically correct.

Here are some tips to consider while coaching your team in letter writing:

- To lend clout, write your letter on school stationary;
- If possible, type your letter with a computer;
- Follow other letters as examples, and use parents and teachers as proofreaders;
- Identify yourselves by name, school, grade, and Public Achievement issue;
- Use an introduction, body, and conclusion outline for the letter;
- Make your point in a way that wins you allies from all sides of your issue;
- Write your letter in a brief and clear manner; and
- Remember to include your return address and signature.

Your individual name or Public Achievement group
Name of school
Your group or school street address
City/State/Zip

Date letter is being sent

Name of person to whom you are writing
Title person to whom you are writing
Name of newspaper, organization, or business to whom you are writing
Street address
City/State/Zip

Name of Person to whom you are writing:

_____
_____
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_____
_____

Sincerely,

Your individual name or
Public Achievement group,
grade, and signatures

Exercises

I. Interviewing

Getting It Right

Use this exercise to practice active listening, discussion, and debate without getting personal. Get into groups of three. One person states his or her views on a controversial subject for about three minutes (ideally about your issue). The second person listens, takes notes, and then summarizes what was said. The third person evaluates the second person's listening skills to see how close the summary came to what was originally said. Switch off so that everyone in the group has a chance to play each role, and use a new question for each round.

Follow-up questions: Were there conflicts between people's public and private views? How could you tell? Did stories that people told from their own experience give them more authority, or did they weaken people's arguments? Did it depend on how they told they story? Can someone who did not actually put the ideas together say what "actually" got said? Are people's own interpretations the only thing that can come from a summary?

II. Public / Private

Why Go to School?

This exercise helps people recognize the public and private roles you have and what behavior is expected in both.

List no fewer than 10 reasons why you go to school. If you run out of serious reasons, feel free to be silly. Don't hesitate to put anything down. Write "public" or "private" behind each reason to show which part of your life – public or private – that the reason fits into.

or

List 10 reasons why you are involved with your community. Which reasons are public? Which are private?

or

List and describe 10 public and 10 private places. What makes them public or private? Can changing your description change whether they are public or private?

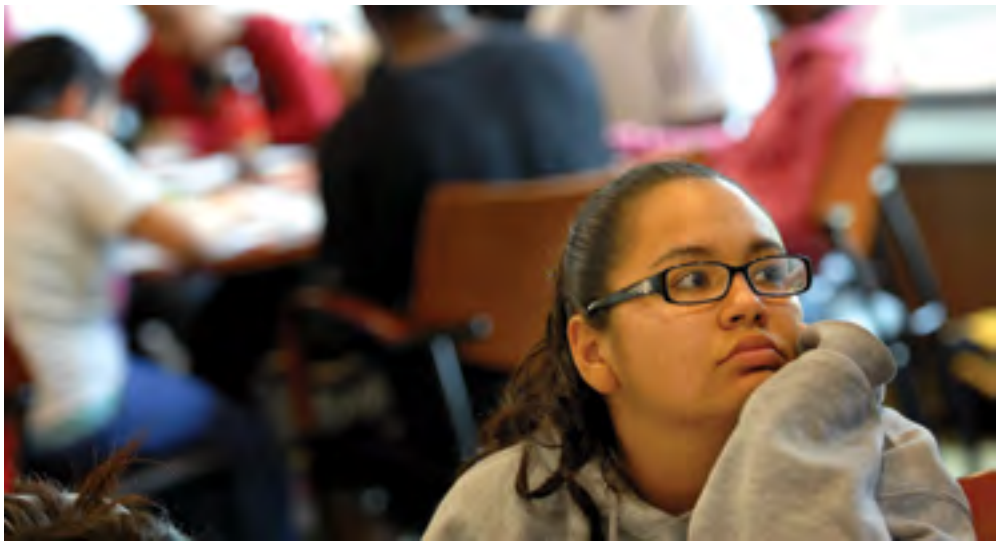
As a group: Discuss your answers, and what behavior and rules are expected in both arenas.

III. Issue Development

What if students do not know what a public issue is?

Begin by brainstorming for ideas. You can start by asking very general questions about what the students do and don't like about school, their neighborhood, or society and why? Discuss with them the differences between Issues, Problem, Stories or Project by going back to the brainstorm list, and determine whether each item is a Passion, Issue, Problem, Story, and/or Project (it can be more than one or none).

Look at the list again, have each individual identify an item that they are interested in and why. Is it an issue, problem, action, or story? What do they know about it? Does it affect people beside themselves? Does it affect their school, neighborhood, city? What can be done improve things relating to it? When you are done, have each individual fill out the worksheet *Let's Make History, Part I* (page 138).



Wait a Minute...

You might be wondering that you have read chapter after chapter, and all that seems to go on in Public Achievement is talk. When is it time to take action?

We believe it is essential that groups are prepared before they start their projects. This means spending a considerable amount of time discussing, refining, researching, exploring. This does not mean that you cannot take public action early on. Plan actions around gathering information – invite guest speakers, plan a field trip, have a forum, interview people in the community. Plan to get together with Public Achievement groups at another school that is working on the same issue, or plan mini-actions. One Public Achievement group's ultimate goal was to organize a program so that seniors could share their stories, skills, and expertise with students at their school. As an intermediate goal, they held a donut-hour so that students and seniors could interact.

Chapter 10: Understanding Power

Introduction

Understanding power, both conceptually and practically, is a crucial element in citizen education and public work. With an understanding of power, people can create a map of their political environment showing who has power in relation to an issue or a problem.

Core Concept

I. Power

Some people tend to think of power as something only a few people have and most (including themselves) do not. People feel victimized and abused because they feel they do not have power, and this tends to lead to righteous indignation, but not necessarily effective action. Others might see the ability to effect change in more positive terms. They may see power in terms of how people can work together to get things done.

A basic working definition of power is the ability to influence other people, institutions, or processes. In fact, power comes from two Latin roots *postestas* and *potentia*. *Potentia* refers to the ability or capacity of one person or thing to affect another. *Potestas* has a more political signification and it refers to the power of people acting together to achieve a certain goal. Both meanings are relevant to public work.

It is important to remember that power must always be viewed as a relation. Power is not a static property or possession that someone can have and then exercise over someone else, but is always a relation that is dynamic, interactive, and multi-directional. To give a simple example, we say that a weightlifter is powerful, but his or her power is only in relation to lifting weights off of the ground. Those same weights could be lifted by a group of people. Both the weightlifter and the group are powerful only in relation to something else.

In many institutions, there are established means for negotiating relations of power and rules that determine the decision making process. Often, the power to influence others or policy, is tied to one's role or office. When we say that someone is "in power," he or she has the ability to influence outcomes by virtue of his or her position. For instance, the President's power to send troops abroad is specific to the office of the Presidency. In most cases, power relations are not absolute; they can always be reworked. In a democratic society, there is no absolute authority of who has the final say over public matters. For instance, the President's power is under Congress' supervision, and he or she must even be accountable to the voting public.

What is important in the practice of public work is organizing people and resources to change the relations of power that constitute a particular problem. If one learns to think carefully and strategically about the relationships one needs to build power, as well as the interactive nature of power, the world begins to look far different. For instance, when Public Achievement team members learn that schools are not simply run by dictatorial individuals, but involve interplay of complex relationships, their sense of possibility changes notably. For the first time they realize, as one young woman put it, "there are many ways to do things," and that they have, or can tap into, the power needed to act effectively.

Power, therefore, is not something that is always concentrated in the government and is exercised over citizens. Instead, power relations are present in any political relationship. By viewing power as relational and diffused throughout society, it is possible to explore ways that citizens, by acting together, can build power to solve problems.

Power and Public Work

Before engaging in public work, it is important to determine what relations of power are relevant to your particular problem. In mapping out who or what has power to influence a specific problem, you come to realize how there are many different parties who possess the distinct abilities to effect outcomes. Some might have similar interests and can be allies; others might have opposing interests and may even try to block your project. In either case, your group must formulate strategies in order to deal with all the parties who have power in relation to your selected problem.

In taking action, it is useful to recall the second sense of power (*potestas*) – that people, by working together, can solve public problems and exercise power in society. This idea is similar to the notion that there is strength in numbers, but adds the important elements of group deliberation and action. Because power is a relation, a strategy in negotiating the political world is to build relationships among those key actors who have influence with respect to their particular problem.

This is not to say that public work is a simple or straightforward process. In many cases, there are conflicts among the parties involved. Sometimes, compromise is the best solution; other times, it might be necessary to approach the problem in a different way (including working outside of the existing system). The important thing is to realistically assess the dynamics of power that structure the problem and then pragmatically work toward a solution.

Public Skill

I. Mapping the Political Environment

Mapping a political environment is an extremely useful skill and tool for public work. Such maps are visual representations of all the stakeholders (any person, party, organization, or institution who are in connected to or involved in an issue, problem, or project) that constitute a problem or project. It helps you with issue development, creating action plans, and making strategies for action. These maps will change as you talk to new people, get new information, and implement your plan.

Before groups have chosen their issues, mapping is also a way to understand the cultural environment of a place (school, neighborhood, organization).

During issue development, mapping helps you understand the political and cultural resources that surround and affect your issue. Maps are useful to narrow and clarify the dynamics of a complex and broad issue into something that is concrete and workable. Likewise, mapping helps you broaden a smaller school or community topic by considering others who might have an interest or investment in your issue. This helps the team identify and distinguish between the immediate and larger public and is worth some discussion.

Mapping is even more crucial once a group has chosen a project. It gives your team a deeper understanding of the problem when they have analyzed all the stakeholders. It provides a visual representation of all the people you may have to work with, against, or through to accomplish your ultimate goal. It also helps in showing you who has power and authority over problems.

A CONCEPTUAL REMINDER: as you map, keep these conceptual points in mind.

Interests

Your map will show any number of potential allies your team can work with in order to achieve your goal. What are some resources the group can tap into? What are the interests of all the stakeholders, allies or not? What strategies are useful to enlist the support of stakeholders in our work?

Power

Who is impacted by your problem? Who has power in relation to it? Is it known how decisions are made and who makes them? What kinds of power do the stakeholders have? What kind of power does the team have? How can you access more power?

Rules

Knowing the rules of stakeholders and their organizations are very important. Does the team understand protocol and how things get done? When interviewing and gathering information, do students understand the cultural and institutional cultures that may exist with particular stakeholders and their organizations? Discuss the possibilities of negotiation.

There are three stages in mapping: Pre-mapping, Research, and Re-mapping

a. Pre-mapping

Start pre-mapping by putting your problem, issue, or project goal in the middle of the paper. Now, begin thinking about all the people and/or organizations that have a stake in this problem, and who might have the power in relation to this issue. Write the names of people and organizations in spokes stemming from the issue.

As a team, it is important that you brainstorm and think of every possible player who might have even a remote investment in your topic. Then, make an educated guess as to the interests each stakeholder, what power they have over your particular problem, and the rules for dealing with them. Later, you will research these possible players to positively determine their power relations with and interests in your problem.

Discuss how your team fits into the map, what is their invested stake in this problem, what are the team's relationships with the other stakeholders, and what are the relationships between the stakeholders themselves. Talk about how your interest to effect change may fit into or be a barrier to other stakeholders' interests in this problem.

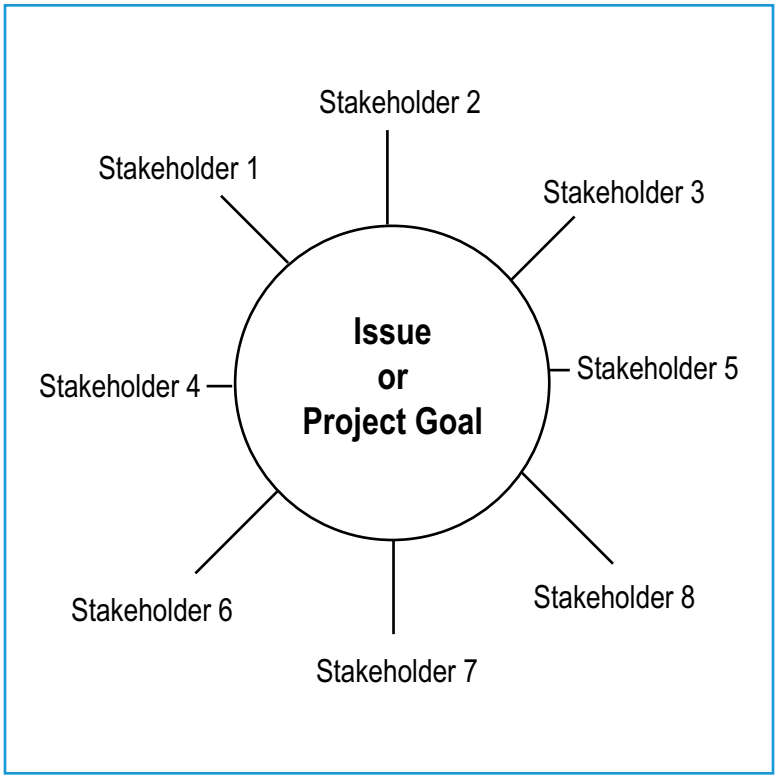


Figure 1: Pre-mapping

b. Research

You and your team can then create assignments for team members to research the actual power and interests of the stakeholders you identified in your pre-mapping. Use this opportunity to prepare team members to interview and gather information. How is the team to proceed? Are they aware of possible contacts? Do they know what to do and say when they reach them? Are they using the community as a resource and tapping into other diverse sources of power and information? Are they aware of the proper protocol for this particular public setting? Let team members role play with each other to practice gathering information, and divide up into working groups so that everyone feels a part of the team's work.

Then, have the members report their findings. Were their initial ideas correct? Have they identified any new stakeholders? What new information have they received? What are the rules for dealing with the various stakeholders? How do the stakeholders relate to each other? Challenge the students to try different things and develop new skills and then evaluate themselves and others. This would be an excellent opportunity to let the team make an evaluation of the work. Get them to think critically. Ask questions like, what were their strengths, how they could have done better, and are there more people with whom to speak?

c. Re-mapping

Next, ask the team to revise their map according to their research. Make sure to include additional stakeholders and varying strategies that affect their project. Mapping is a continual process, pin up the map at each meeting, adding to and subtracting from it as the need arises. Touch on the above issues throughout the project to fully understand the complexities of power, interests, and the rules associated with the new relationships you may make. Your map can serve as a continual reference for the team's project and reminds you of your and others' interest in the problem.

Example of Power Mapping

J.J. Hill Environment Team

Pre-mapping

The J.J. Hill Environment Team created the following power map, on the basis of who they thought would be stakeholders, in the effort to start a recycling program at their school.

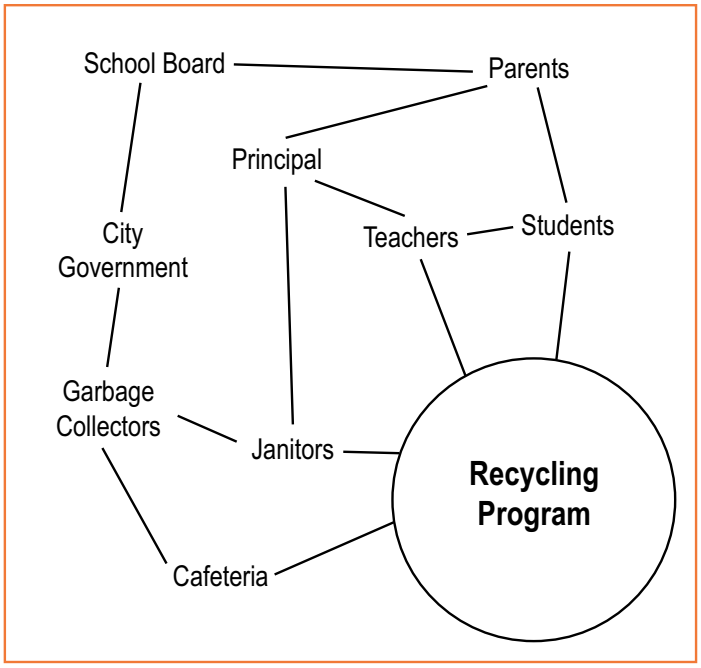


Figure 2: Pre-mapping of Recycling Program

Research

When the Public Achievement Environment Team started talking to the stakeholders that were placed on their map, they made some startling discoveries. Their principal was supportive of starting a recycling program, but said that she did not have the resources to supply special bins, did not know whether the custodial staff or teachers would participate, and did not know whether the city would pick up the recyclables.

The head custodian informed the group that due to staff cutbacks, the custodians would not have time to collect recycled materials. Many teachers were positive, but did not want to be responsible for recycling in their classrooms. The cafeteria workers offered their support.

After talking to a friend who attends another school, one team member found out that other schools do recycle. A call to the principal of his friend's school uncovered the fact that the state had a program to pay for the bins. That principal even gave them the phone number of the state agency. A call to the state recycling agency revealed that they would have to

arrange for pick-up before they could even apply for the bins. By contacting the city sanitation department, the team found out that the city would pick up recycling, but that their principal had to submit a special request.

Re-mapping

After the process of researching their possible stakeholders, the team gathered new information that led them to a new direction in the project. The team then re-mapped their stakeholders.

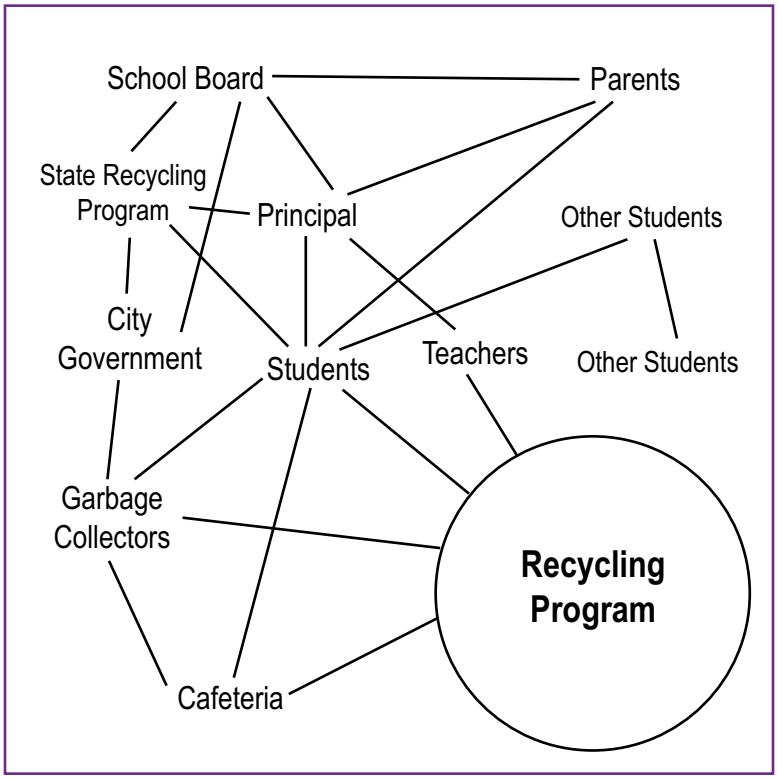


Figure 3: Re-mapping of Recycling Program

Chapter 11: Defining the Project

Defining a project that makes a positive public impact and is workable within the allotted time frame is extremely challenging for teams.

Example of Public Story

Child Labor, a Multi-dimensional Project

During the academic year of 1996-97, one team continued working on their project at Seward Montessori School in Minneapolis, Minnesota, even though Public Achievement had officially ended. The Child Labor group had five dedicated and strong leaders with a single focus – to educate others on the issue of child labor.

While other teams were finishing up their Public Achievement experiences in January, the Child Labor group continued to make a large impact on this huge issue. These young civic leaders contacted students at the J.J. Hill School who, at the time, were working on a play and a letter writing campaign to bring attention to soccer balls being made by Pakistani children. These two groups were able to exchange knowledge and resources while learning how to work together to achieve a common goal.

This team also collaborated with a local agency, Phillips Community Television, to interview everyday shoppers at the Mall of America on their knowledge and interest in the area of child labor. These five ambitious students were not very surprised to find most shoppers were ignorant and apathetic to children working in destitute circumstances in order to supply the world with such things as tennis shoes. They took their edited film footage and made a video program that was shown at a number of schools in order to raise awareness about this problem.

The team then submitted the video to a Child Labor Conference that was held in May of that year at the Humphrey Institute. Their submission was accepted, and the video was presented at this statewide conference that was sponsored by the Resource Center of the Americas. The students were very excited and pleased with this public display of their work.

As Public Achievement coach Tom Henry commented, “I was really amazed at their frame of reference outside themselves. They had the ability to really put themselves in somebody else’s shoes.” This group proved that young people do care about important global issues and are able to see how these issues affect their lives and the lives of others. They also proved that local action can have far-reaching consequences as their video was shown to hundreds of people. These five individuals will long remember the knowledge they gained through their hard work and the ways in which they were able to share this knowledge with others.

Public Skill

I. Defining The Problem/Project

After a number of meetings, many discussions, and research, the group will be ready to specify the problem they want to work on, devise a project that address their problem, and have lasting positive impact on the larger community. Remember, it is vital that your team members take a central part in planning the project and take responsibility for its success or failure regardless of whether or not the goal is ever accomplished.

Let your group think of possible projects – brainstorm to come up with lots of different ideas and write them on the board. Narrow down the options by analyzing how each one directly addresses the team's selected problem. Challenge your team to think about the desired outcomes of the project and whether it will make a lasting and positive impact on the larger community. Does the project achieve their desired outcomes or are there other ideas of how to better create change? Is the project workable and winnable within the allotted time frame? Finding a realistic focus is critical in creating a public work project that allows young people to successfully take public action.

If the scope of your group's problem is narrow, challenge them to relate their project to broader issues. Likewise, if the scope of your group's problem is broad, encourage them to identify how their work will affect their local community. The key is to understand how your project affects others on a variety of different levels. Who else may this problem, or a similar problem, impact? Is there any common ground? Could we use them as resources to help address our problems?

After the group has determined on a project, they should start to re-map and research people from the community to find out their opinions on the group's project. Making these connections will help make your team's work more political, while also creating new relationships with those who may have interests in or power over the problem at hand.

Project Criteria

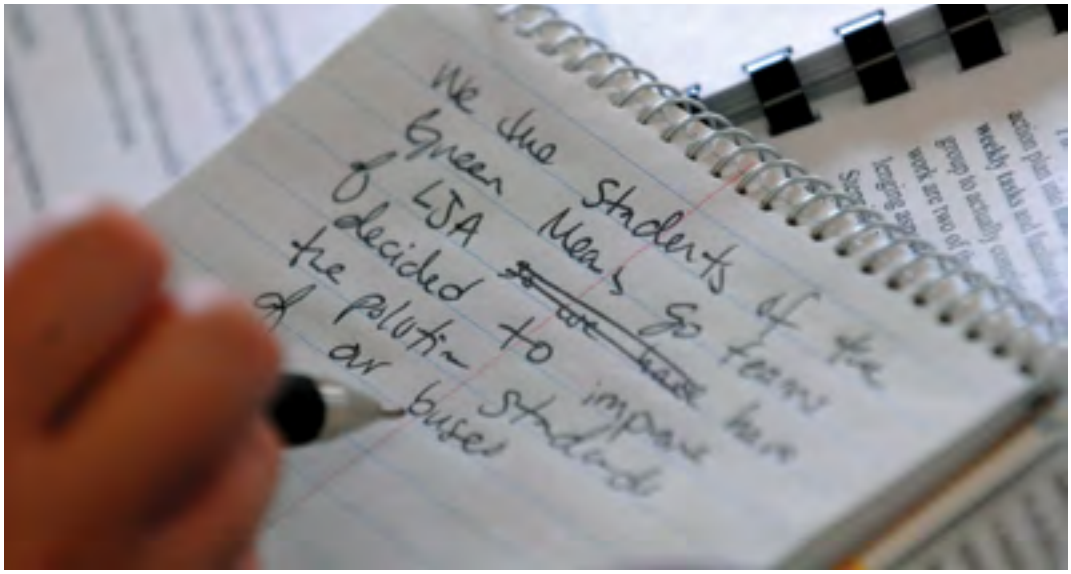
The following questions are suggested to prompt your team members to better understand the public nature of their project, and to be able to defend their interest in pursuing the particular project:

1. Will your project address the underlying challenges and problems with the goal of improving your school or community?
2. Will your project build, create, or make tangible things (including products, institutions, traditions, ways of life, and/or events)? Will these things be:
    - sustainable (meaning they will last beyond the life of your group)
    - visible (meaning the broader community knows about it)
    - accessible (meaning they are things the general public can use)
    - memorable (meaning it becomes part of the collective memory of the community)
3. Will your project identify and incorporate diverse stakeholders of all ages in their work?
4. Is your project realistic? Can you carry your work through to a successful conclusion?

If your team is unable to positively answer all of these questions, it does not mean your project is dead; but the group may need to rethink their issue, re-specify their problem, or refine their project using this criteria.

In addition, make sure that your team comes back to these questions as they progress in their work. Use the criteria to evaluate whether the team members are growing in their understanding of the skills and concepts, and to ensure that the work is staying true to its intended outcomes.

II. Mission Statement



Once your group has decided on a project, a mission statement will help them clarify their purposes and goals. This public display of your team's goals will help hold the team accountable and serve as a gauge to measure the group's progress. This is your battle cry and rallying point, so make it poignant.

Show your statement of purpose to others and get feedback and suggestions to clarify the group's mission. The mission statement should clearly state what your team intends to do. Think of this also as a public relations tool and an opportunity to recruit additional people. Explain your group's investment in the issue and use this opportunity to show where the issue is present and how it fits into a larger public concern. Remember to include concrete plans of what your team will do to change the current situation. Check to see if there is a true consensus among the members about what the team wants to do.

To form a mission statement, work with your team to:

- State clearly what general issue interests you.
- State clearly what problem you want to solve.
- State clearly why you are interested in the problem. Why do you care?
- State clearly where the problem happens and how it fits into a larger public concern.
- State clearly what you want to accomplish in your project. How will that help solve the problem?
- State clearly how you plan to solve the problem. What are you going to do?

Making It Public

A subsequent activity could be putting the mission statement on poster board and have all the members sign their names to it in a type of ceremonial kick-off to mark their commitment. Make it a celebration (remember to create other traditions along the way that will add to your team's identity as a group). In the past, some Public Achievement teams brought out the mission every time they met and had a team member read it at the start of the meetings. Others used the Mission Statement to help themselves refocus their energy later in the project when things got hectic, confusing or frustrating. At one school, every team put their mission statements on a public wall for all to see.

Remember, the Mission Statement helps you maintain focus and direction within your meetings and work at large.

Example: J.J. Hill Middle School

The Situation

A Public Achievement Environment Team at J.J. Hill Middle School was concerned about the large amount of trash they saw being collected from their school everyday, and the fact that no effort was being made to recycle.

Resulting Mission Statement

We, the Public Achievement Environment Team at J.J. Hill Middle School, will no longer stand by as our school ignores the pollution we cause in our community and the world. As a first goal to reduce our negative environmental impact, we will work with the teachers, administration, staff, and students to develop a recycling program in our school.

Chapter 12: Taking Public Action, Part I

Introduction

One of the hardest lessons for young people to learn is that they need to go through many preliminary steps before they are ready to take actions. More importantly, all the preparation work will enable your group to act more effectively as well as provide a solid foundation for learning.

Public Skill

I. Creating an Action Plan/ Timeline

After weeks of gathering information, identifying and analyzing the powers that influence your issue, the next step is to develop a strategy for action. Your team can formulate their strategy with an action plan or timeline, a long term course plan that your group follows in order to achieve their goal.

While mapping helped your team understand the power relations that constitute their problem, creating an action plan will help them organize their work and devise strategies. It will give your team an organizing framework to build upon their own power and accomplish their goals as well as deadlines to accomplish the goals. Broader assignments and specific tasks will come from further defining the problem and strategizing for solutions.

When creating a plan for action, these six things should be kept in mind:

- Your team's overarching goals and mission statement;
- The information you need to meet these goals;
- The potential barriers to meeting your goals;
- Possible alternative courses of action;
- The order in which you will go about your work;
- How much time you have to work together; and
- How you want to publicly present your work when you are done.

Ask questions to help and lead team members to take ownership and responsibility in creating the action plan. As the coach, the skills that you help instill in your team while they practice politics will create a sense of power and make them realize their ability to make changes.

Start with your map and identify which stakeholders the team needs to talk to or work with in order to accomplish their goals. Your team will most likely have to deal with almost all the identified stakeholders on your map in their work (and then probably some new ones too). Ask the following questions: Who can we influence? Who will be an ally? Who might be a problem or barrier to our work? Will it be beneficial to work with some people before others?

The next step is to determine all the things that your team may need to do in their project. Which things are more important than others? Which intermediate steps must be done first before moving onto other steps? What different strategies are appropriate to each step? Try to make a logical progression of each thing you need to do. Your team might have to come up with a series of preliminary goals that they need to accomplish in order to arrive at their final goal.

Remember, to keep the team focused and realistic, take into account how much time the team has to work together. It is extremely helpful to make a timeline with your action plan that sets deadlines for each step. Public Achievement groups only have a limited number of weeks together, you need to be sure you can accomplish your goals in the allotted time-frame.

Put the action plan and timeline on the wall each time you meet to remind the team of what needs to be done as well as to gauge their progress toward their goal. The action plan can help ensure accountability throughout your project as it places specific tasks that need to be done in the public arena of your team meetings.

Be aware that your action plan may need to be changed as new developments or problems arise. The important thing is to be flexible while keeping your eyes on the prize.

For an exercise on creating an action plan, Section VI of this chapter.

Example: The Action Plan

GOAL:

To develop a recycling program at J.J. Hill Middle School.

MISSION STATEMENT:

We, the Public Achievement Environment Team at J.J. Hill Middle School, will no longer stand by as our school ignores the pollution we cause in our community and the world. As a first goal to reduce our negative environmental impact, we will work with the administration, staff, and students to develop a recycling program in our school.

PRELIMINARY GOAL #1: Gather information

Strategy:

1. Get information about what it takes to run a recycling program;
2. Get information about current amount of garbage;
3. Identify problems that the program may encounter;
4. Develop a proposal or plan for the program; and
5. Identify student leadership to act on these strategies.

PRELIMINARY GOAL #2: Gather support from Principal

Strategy:

1. Get the Principal's thoughts about the program;
2. Gather the information she needs to support the program;
3. Modify (if needed) our proposal so that she will support it; and
4. Identify other students who have worked successfully with the principal and add them to the team.

PRELIMINARY GOAL #3: To gather support for the program among students and teachers

Strategy:

1. Get information about representative students and teachers knowledgeable about recycling;
2. Gather educational materials;
3. Develop a publicity campaign; and
4. Develop a demonstration project to excite students.

II. Putting the Action Plan into Action

Putting your strategies and action plan into manageable weekly tasks and facilitating the group to actually complete their work are two of the most challenging aspects of coaching. Stepping into public life and acting upon strategies is the best way to learn about and practice active citizenship and public work. Make sure that your team members take ownership of the work while giving them the support needed to complete the tasks at hand.

Some tips for taking action:

- Assist your team to break down bigger goals into smaller and simpler steps.
- Prioritize which steps need to be completed first, second, etc.
- Prioritize which steps are essential and which are not.
- Discuss with the group what are the best strategies for achieving each step.
- Divide up the work so that all people are contributing every week.
- Make sure that everyone knows exactly what he/she is responsible for.
- Use your mission statement, map, and action plan as constant references to ensure the group stays on task.

Learning the skills of identifying and using resources are crucial as you work to achieve your long-range goals. Do not forget to use resources within your group. Some participants will have talents they can put to use and others can learn from. Remember that, in Public Achievement, all participants are learners and all are teachers. Also, do not forget to exploit resources outside your group – enlist the support of other individuals, organizations, or companies.

Remember to discuss the process throughout; learning about your experience is just as important as accomplishing the end goal. All outcomes, successful and unsuccessful, provide opportunities to learn about public work and to practice active citizenship. This means the coach should integrate core concepts and public skills into the work of the younger students. Always encourage them to keep their work in perspective of their immediate surroundings, local community, and global environment.

Be prepared to be flexible, to change plans and goals as you progress in your work and learn new things. Just because your group is taking action, it does not mean that you should not be finding new information, creating new relationships, and finding new facts.

For more on accountability, see next chapter.

Example of Taking Action

Action Plan

GOAL:

To develop a recycling program at J.J. Hill Middle School.

PRELIMINARY GOAL #1: Gather information

Strategy:

1. Get information about what it takes to run a recycling program;
2. Get information about current amount of garbage;
3. Identify problems program may encounter;
4. Identify student leadership to act on these strategies;
5. Develop a proposal or plan for the program.

ACTION:

- Dan and Ameer will work with Bill and Katy to think of possible problems that recycling could create. They will prepare a list of questions that Bill and Katy can ask the recycling programs and the schools when calls are made. Dan and Ameer can report during the next meeting of the work they've completed thus far, but will need two additional weeks to interview others and to further research possible problems.
- Jill and Shakira will complete strategy # 1 by calling two recycling agencies and the two schools that already have recycling programs up and running and will report at the next meeting.
- Lisa and José will talk to the maintenance and cafeteria representatives from the school to check on the amount of garbage per week. They will also report next meeting time.
- Tim and Parris will make a presentation at the next Student Council meeting in hopes of an endorsement of a recycling program, while also making posters to solicit student help. They too will report at the next group meeting.
- The team, as a whole, will draft a proposal based on the information they find out about recycling.

During the course of your action, you will need to constantly update your plan as you learn new information, run into barriers, and develop relationships with allies. It is best to remain flexible, while remaining true to your overall goal.

III. Working with Others

Teamwork is a major part of Public Achievement. To be successful, team members need to learn to work with all the different people on their team. Equally important, teams need to work with a diverse number of people outside of their group who have a stake in their issue or problem. When working in a school setting, students find that teachers, principals, parents, and staff are absolutely vital partners in getting anything done.

Other stakeholders may have:

- The ability to help you;
- Worked on this same issue;
- Expertise, knowledge, or information about an issue;
- Power or influence over an issue;
- Resources, funds;
- Knowledge of other stakeholders;
- A need for someone like you to help them;

Another excellent resource and opportunity is for different Public Achievement teams to work together. Teams at the same school can combine their resources on a special project. Or even better, teams from different schools working on the same issue can get together to work together or to discuss their projects. Arranging for two teams to get together can be a mini-project itself. Let team members contact Public Achievement teams in other cities or states through e-mail or the Internet.

IV. Making Public Work Visible

Public work, by definition, should be visible – it is one of the elements that makes the work, public. In the past, some groups have been so focused on their project, they sometimes forget to make it visible. Coaches should also remind their teams to make all facets of their work, not just the finished product, visible.

Why should public work be visible?

- It gets the word out and raise awareness about your issue and Public Achievement.
- It may bring you into contact with other people who have a stake in your issue.
- It enables you to build relationships and partnerships.
- It is a way to leave your mark, to have people see and remember what you have done.
- It ensures accountability.
- You get recognition from others for a job well done.

Suggestions to make projects more visible:

In school/organization:

- Write a story in the school newsletter;
- Make a bulletin board;
- Put up posters;
- Get on the morning announcements;
- Talk to friends, teachers, principal, staff;
- Make a presentation to your school,
  other Public Achievement groups, the PTA, or teachers.

Among parents:

- Tell your parents what your are doing in Public Achievement;
- Ask them or find ways for them to help;
- Write a story in the school newsletter or school district newspaper;
- Make a presentation at a PTA or school board meeting;

In local community:

- Invite local media to cover your event;
- Write a press release;
- Write your own story and submit it to a local paper;
- Put flyers up in town;
- Talk to people in shopping malls, libraries, business places;
- Make presentations to local businesses, organizations, government offices;
- Ask different people who know things about your issue to make a presentation in your group;
- Get on public radio, public TV, local cable.

In wider community:

- Use the Internet to tell the world about your project;
- Post on social media pages/ blogs;
- Send a press release to national media;
- Write letters to Congress/ President/ leaders of foreign countries;

V. Using Technology

Technology is a great way for teams to make their work visible and work with others who are doing similar public work. Public Achievement teams should take advantage of the resources they have in their school or community to bring public work to the information age.

The Internet

- Put your stories and pictures of your achievements on a website or blog. Our Public Achievement website is at www.augsburg.edu/democracy/publicachievement/
- Create your own website that addresses your issue;
- Look at other websites on your issue;
- Connect with other Public Achievement teams through social media;
- Send weekly email updates to other teams, as well as the national Public Achievement office.

Video

- Record your group work or event;
- Take advantage of local cable access for equipment or to get your video on TV;
- Include your video in presentations;
- Send you video to other schools or organizations;
- Post it on social media pages.

Exercise

Creating an Action Plan

In a large group, brainstorm all the things that need to be done in order to accomplish your team's goal.

Break into 3-4 small groups:
Have each small group come up with an order, from first to last, of the things that need to be done to accomplish their goal (some tasks could be done at the same). Write their ordered list on a flip chart. Students will then explain why they chose this particular order.

Return back to the large group:
Compare lists from different groups. Are they the same or how are they different? Have each group explain to the others why they decided to order their list in that particular way.

Make use of all the lists provided, and come up with one list for the whole group. Make sure to include (or add) intermediate goals. Ta-da! You have your Action Plan. Please keep in mind that this may take more than one session to complete.

Reinforce to the group that this Action Plan will most likely change as they find out new information.

Evaluation Questions:
Was it easier to work in small groups or in the large group? Was everyone pleased with the final product? Did everyone contribute? What could be done the next time your team has to make a group decision?

Chapter 13
Taking Public Action, Part II:
Accountability / Responsibility

Now comes the challenge – getting the actual work done. With all of the distractions in our young people's lives today, coupled with the fact that groups only meet once a week, completing assignments can be difficult. In this chapter, we offer some tips on ensuring accountability and responsibility on your teams.

Since it is the actual work that has the greatest ability to transform lives, it is important that work is actually done. Work enables young people to take ownership of a group; it gives them a proud sense of accomplishment from a job well done, and provides the realization that the team's effort can make a difference, which also foster the idea that they are responsible for the world they live in. Make sure to point this out during the course of your team's Public Achievement experience.

Public Skill

I. Accountability

One of the difficult challenges a Public Achievement coach faces is motivating his or her team members to actually do their work. This is an especially acute problem for work that is to be done outside of the weekly Public Achievement session.

Here are a few suggestions that coaches found effective to help ensure team members get work done in between session:

Communicate with Cooperating Teacher

When team members have work to do between sessions, make sure the cooperating teacher know what the tasks are and help ensure that team members are on track.

Establish Clear Expectations

If your team members know exactly what they are supposed to do before they begin a specific task, there is less room for confusion and they are, therefore, held accountable for the work they do (or do not do). Ask your team members regularly what work they need to do and how they will do it during the upcoming week. Another way to remind team members of their responsibilities or tasks is to let them write down their assignments.

The more knowledgeable and prepared team members are to complete these tasks, the greater likelihood for success. Prepare team members to interview; have them write down interview questions, role-play and practice. Make sure that they know what kind of information they're looking for, how to set up appointments, or use library resources.

Check in at the Start of Meetings

Make a routine of checking-in at meetings. If an assignment is not done, take some time to have a discussion about how this affects the group's work, and how we can make up this work. It is also equally important to celebrate completed assignments. The check-ins give team members the opportunity to practice public speaking, take credit for their work, and see how individual work leads toward their larger goals.

When Work is not Done

It is crucial to hold team members accountable early in the project. You can make use of the team rules created by the group during the first few meetings, and remind them that they abided to the consequences for being irresponsible or not completing assigned tasks. Take time to make sure that the group understands how uncompleted assignments could affect the entire team's work.

Ask the group to examine how missing one assignment can affect the work of others, or how it can make the team a week off-schedule. The whole team can then strategize how to deal with this problem and get back on track. By doing this, you are encouraging the team to take ownership of the group and the issue, impress accountability, and avoid a situation where the coach plays the bad cop. Nonetheless, do not be afraid to point out the importance of accountability.

Contact Team Members Between Meetings

A note, letter, e-mail, or phone call to remind a team member or check on their progress may be effective. Also make sure that the site coordinator is aware of the work that should be happening in between meetings, they might be willing to help do special mid-week checks too.

Use the Action Plan/ Timeline or Calendars

If a group of students or the team in general completes a major task from the action plan, have them publicly place a big red check on the action plan indicating the task is finished. Team members are more encouraged to complete tasks on time when it involves public presentation.

A timeline or calendar is an excellent tool to ensure accountability. By setting definite deadlines for when each task needs to be completed, your team is made aware of and responsible for the timely completion of public work. Timelines or calendars are a useful visible tool that shows how much work you have to do and how little time you have to do it. However, like the action plan, keep the timeline updated as your intermediate goals and work changes during the course of your public work.

Use the Mission Statement

Remind your team of the commitment they have made to themselves, their group, their school, and their community. One strategy may be having the mission statement posted at each meeting, or reading it aloud to begin every session.

Evaluation

Have team members publicly evaluate themselves after finishing each task. By publicly evaluating the specific tasks that individuals have done, their work becomes visible and they are held accountable to the entire group. If evaluation is done regularly, your team will expect to have all of their work examined by the entire group, and will hopefully be more accountable as a result. Also, use evaluation at this time to make sure that everyone is in some way involved in the group's work. Are these strategies moving us toward our goal? What more needs to be done? Encourage them to ask for what they need.

When the Same People Always Do the Work

Do not get into the habit of having the same group of people taking responsible for bigger tasks. Often, the rest of the group will become complacent and rely on those individuals. To counter this, mix up the assignments, ask for different volunteers, or have team members work in pairs or groups.

Competition

Divide the team into groups, and have them compete on the same assignment or on different ones. Make sure that you de-brief this competition when it is done, explain that while competition is fun, the point is not to beat your opponents, but work as a whole team engaged in public work.

Celebration

Having a spontaneous celebration when someone is accountable is a great way to positively reward public work. You can make a star chart documenting each time a job has been completed.

II. How Accountability Relates to Responsibility and Citizenship

When young people learn to be accountable in their public work, they learn that their fellow team members are relying on them for that part of the project. They also learn that the work of the team cannot be done without the entire group's contribution. By working on issues that affect their day-to-day lives, individuals get a vivid picture of the ways in which their actions their team's work and their community.

It is at this moment, where coaches have a great opportunity to transform individual lives. You can ask team members to examine how they fit into their surrounding community, what affect it has upon them, and what affect they have upon it; by doing so, team members will realize that they play an important role in carrying out this project. They see themselves and the world in a different light; they realize that they are public creators, and that their actions in Public Achievement have consequence, a positive consequence. They will also realize that they, like all citizens, are responsible for the world in which they live.

Chapter 14: Public Celebration

When you think of celebrating in context of a program like Public Achievement, one usually thinks of a big party at the end of the session. It serves as closure, an opportunity to evaluate the work achieved, review what was learned, and say good-bye. This is definitely encouraged, but we also encourage having many mini-celebrations along the way while working on the project. Celebrations, while breaking up the routine, can also help maintain the needed momentum to achieve your group's overall goal. In all cases, celebrations should be purposeful – to mark your group's achievements.

If you've been struggling over an obstacle or barrier and have successfully overcame it, this is a great cause for a celebration. If one member of your group is usually a quiet participant, and mid-year he/she speaks up to add a suggestion, the group should celebrate. If it has been weeks waiting for a reply from an important stakeholder, and a team member finally sets up an interview time, why not celebrate? Having fun and using little triumphs to mark the milestones toward your overall mission will help unite the team and rejuvenate their work. Likewise, if the group has hit a snag or come up against a roadblock, a little break from the problem might help to lift spirits and give the team a shot in the arm to trudge ahead.

Some ideas for these mini-celebrations may be a snack for the team, or a fun activity or game to give them their due acknowledgment. One recent coach remarked the central component of her celebrations were giving the group praises in front of their peers and sharing their mini-successes in a public way. Public recognition is key to celebrating more broadly. A coach could encourage the group to write notes to the principal, or have an announcement made over the PA system. A team could also compile a story for the school's newsletter that is read by teachers and parents.

The time will come when you want to celebrate the end of your meetings. Have the team brainstorm reasons to celebrate. This is an opportunity for everyone to participate in some way. It would be great if the team could prepare a presentation for the big event, sharing what they've accomplished and learned through their work. Discuss who should attend the party, keeping the public acknowledgment piece in mind (for example the principal, the whole school, community members and leaders, and parents). Have team members take responsibility for: getting the time and place secured, working with other groups to plan, making invitations and creating the program's agenda.

Celebrations should be fun public opportunities to acknowledge and reward the process and products of the work achieved by your group. Public work should be celebrated and made known; it should engage the community and reinforce civic action.

In Their Own Words: What have we learned?

Through Public Achievement, I learned that kids need to be taken more seriously. I also learned how to stand up for what I believe in and do the best I can.

- Nick Kujawa, Team Member

This has been one of the absolutely best experiences I've ever had in applying theory to practice. It seems the balance is really good mixing Political Theory classes with Public Achievement. This is what college should really be like.

- Heather Redmond, Coach

It made me a lot braver. Now I have the courage to be a leader.

- Chelsea Fuerstenberg, Team Member

I've learned to listen more because I'm more open to other people's ideas. Usually, I have my own ways to do things, but I've become more subject to change.

- Team Member

I've learned how to go about solving problems in a reasonable way and that we need organization and organizational skills.

- Team Member

I learned that anyone who puts their mind to it can accomplish what they want to. I am proud of what we did.

- Casey O'Brian, Team Member

I learned that hard work and perseverence pays off.

- Becky Wichlacz, Team Member

They realized that politics cannot be left to other people.

- Sean Fleming, Coach

After Public Achievement, I feel that if I want something changed, I'll have the confidence to go out and change it.

- David Rotter, Team Member

I think that I am better able to model effective citizenship for my family and friends.

- Sarah Renner, Coach

It taught me a lot about facilitating a group. In a bigger picture sense, it opened my view in terms of participating in public life. It has been good to see different avenues of approach.

- Julie Thalhuber, Coach

Public Achievement brought my involvement or non-involvement back into focus; I have since taken opportunities to get involved.

- Sarah Berkowitz, Coach

In Your Own Words: What have you learned?

Appendix 1:

More About the Center for Democracy and Citizenship

A Coach's Guide to Public Achievement is a publication of the Center for Democracy and Citizenship. The Center began in the late 1980s at the Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota, and moved to Augsburg College in 2009. It has always had a focus on developing frameworks, strategies, tools, and examples of how people can become productive citizens and creative agents who engage in the public work of a democratic commonwealth.

For more information, please contact:
The Center of Democracy and Citizenship
www.augsburg.edu/democracy

Appendix 2: Roadmap for Public Achievement

This roadmap is created so that coaches can print it out and bring it to sessions as reference and guidance during meetings.

Roadmap for Public Achievement

A Coach's Guide based on One Academic School Year

Phase 1 about three meetings

- Get to know each other;
- Icebreaker activities;
- Uncover self-interests of team members in the issue;
- Recognize diversity in group and broader world;
- Establish rules and consequences for working as a team;
- Set expectations;
- Introduce core concepts of self-interest, politics, and public work;
- Find out talents of team members;
- Let team members share information about their school; neighborhood, and community,
- Team building exercises and activities;
- Discuss what is Public Achievement;
- Introduce a timed agenda and public evaluation;
- Establish a routine of team members sharing Public Achievement roles, such as note taker, timekeeper, encourager, and eventually facilitator and evaluator.
- Your team should also develop a name for its identity.

Phase 2 within six meetings

This phase is about researching the issue in order to focus on a specific problem within the issue that will be addressed (Defining Problem/Project; pages 96-101).

- Power mapping (Power/Mapping; pages 107-111);
- Contacting people and/or organizations on your power map;
- Visit them, invite people to your meetings;
- Practice what you will ask, want to know;
- Analyze the information,
- Figure out who might collaborate with your team;
- Take a field trip;
- Make a resource list,
- Initiate discussion about possible problems to address and possible projects to address them;
- Develop a team mission statement.

Phase 3 about two meetings

- Reflect on what your group has done so far;
- Brainstorm possible projects;
- Prepare for public presentation and celebration;
- Have your team present in a public setting what work they have done and what they have learned;

Semester Break

Phase 4 takes about three meetings

This phase is all about taking public actions (Taking Public Action; pages 118–126).

- Review previous semester's work;
- Stay focused;
- Wrap up research to decide on a problem that the team will address inside of their issue;
- Visit people and/or invite people to meetings;
- Identify action project ideas to address problem;
- Develop an action plan and timeline to complete the project.

Phase 5 within seven meetings

- Work on project;
- You should have collaborators working with you and your team;
- Make sure that the project is clear and makes public contribution;
- Team members should be learning the core concepts as they work;
- Keep people on-site informed about your team's work;
- Find ways to make your team's work public;
- Have team members perform on public stages;
- Complete project;
- Evaluate the entire year's work; and finally,
- Prepare for the final public presentation.

Phase 6 during last meeting

Takes place during the last meeting.

- Final public presentation and celebration.
- Say goodbye to the team.

Appendix 3: Worksheets for Getting Started

This appendix contains a series of worksheets as an option for host institutions and coaches to use in stimulating thought on issues and topics during the initial stages of Public Achievement.

Getting started with Public Achievement

Guidelines to get team members to think about public issues.

1. In the classroom or Public Achievement space, post newspaper stories and magazine articles about neighborhood, city, national, and world problems or issues that will stimulate interest and generate discussion topics for the team.

2. Have general discussions with team members about these issues, as well as other interesting news stories and political events.

3. Use the language of Public Achievement, citizenship, and public work. Start introducing the skills and concepts prevalent in our work.

4. Have team members name the skills and talents they bring to these problems and issues.

5. When team members have spent enough time thinking and discussing, help them fill out the worksheet *Let's Make History: Welcome to Public Achievement Part I*.

   Keep completed sheets, as they will be used in different ways during Public Achievement.

   Coaches will assist the team to fill out the *Let's Make History: Welcome to Public Achievement Part II* worksheet once the group has been established.

6. Throughout the reflection stage, your teachers can provide assistance to you and your team members.

7. Keep notes during this process. Feedback is appreciated and will be used to improve the program.

8. Sometime during the year, your team members will be asked to write a paper entitled: *What does Public Achievement mean to me?*

Let's Make History:
Welcome to Public Achievement, Part I

1. What news stories, political events, or community issues caught your attention this past year?

2. What news stories, political events, or community issues affected you directly?

3. What is a public issue that you're interested in learning more about?

4. What public projects could address this issue? Which one(s) would you like to work on?

5. What talents do you bring to a Public Achievement group?

6. What excites you about Public Achievement?

Signature: _____ **Age:** _____

School: _____

Let's Make History:
Welcome to Public Achievement, Part II

1. What are some ideas you have for a Public Achievement project or action?

2. Who will be affected by this project (you, your school, neighborhood, city, nation, world)?

3. What skills are needed by you and your team to work on this project?

4. Who or what could help your team with the project or action?

Signature: _____ **Age:** _____

School: _____

Appendix 4: Worksheets for Evaluation

This appendix offers some worksheets to serve as written and/or oral evaluation tools for Public Achievement groups, coaches, teachers, principals, parents, and community members. They are designed to make it easier for you to report your findings back to Public Achievement staff and the Center for Democracy and Citizenship.

I. Weekly questions for the Public Achievement group

Please discuss the following questions as a group:

1. What were we trying to accomplish today? What were our goals?

2. Did we accomplish what we set out to do? Why or why not?

3. What went well? What didn't go well?

4. What lessons were learned today? Were any of them political?

5. What do we need to do for our next session?

II. Quarterly questions for the Public Achievement team members

Please answer the following questions individually, and then discuss as a group:

1. What valuable things are we creating for the community?

    a. Will these things be used or valued by the community for years to come?

    b. Why or why not?

2. Being specific, who else worked with your team on this project?

    a. Do these people represent our community?

    b. Why or why not?

3. What new skills have you or the group learned these past few months?

    a. Explain how these skills help you to be a better citizen?

4. What important lessons have you or the group learned because of this project?

    a. How is the group passing on these lessons to others in the community?

III. Weekly questions for Public Achievement coaches

Please check yes or no for the first three questions and answer the rest:

	Yes	No
1. Youth are central in planning and implementing the project?	___	___
2. Youth accept responsibility for the project's success or failure?	___	___
3. Youth and adults are engaged and working towards the same goal?	___	___
4. Explain the topics and related activities that were covered this session.	___	___
5. What important things did you learn about Public Achievement and the civic capacities of individuals?	___	___

6. What did you learn about the following:

    a. Youth -

    b. Communities -

    c. Institutions -

    d. Service/ Citizenship -

7. What challenges were encountered?

8. What opportunities were encountered?

9. Describe any interesting project related stories?

10. What do you need to do to prepare for the next session?

IV. Post-project checklist for Public Achievement teams

Please check either yes or no to each question and provide examples:

	Yes	No
1. Are the participants able to discuss the public significance of their work? If yes, please provide examples:	___	___
2. Is the work visible? If yes, how? If not, why?	___	___
3. Did the team use a diverse group of stakeholders in order to complete the project? If yes, who? If not, why?	___	___
4. Were new civic skills or public talents learned? If so, please provide some examples: If not, why?	___	___
5. Were new lessons learned and passed on? If so, what was learned and to whom was it passed on? If not, why?	___	___
6. Is there any institutional change? If so, what? If not, why?	___	___

V. Post-project checklist for non-Public Achievement members
(teachers, principals, parents, and community members)

Please answer the following questions as completely as possible:

	Yes	No
1. Was the resulting Public Achievement project visible and public?	___	___

If yes, how:

If not, why?

2. Did the participants learn new public skills or public talents?	___	___

If yes, please provide some examples:

If not, can you think of barriers to such learning?

3. Did the participants work with people outside of their group order to complete the project?	___	___

If yes, who?

If not, why?

4. What changes did you observe in the following:

   a. Youth -

   b. Communities -

   c. Institutions -

5. Being specific, what changes have you personally experienced in how you feel about or deal with the following:

   a. Youth -

   b. Communities -

   c. Institutions -

   d. Service/ Citizenship -

Appendix 5: Worksheets

Interview Form and Phone Contact Sheet

Interview Form

In person _____

By phone _____

By letter/ email _____

_____
Name of person

_____
Title

_____
Phone number

_____
Company/organization name

_____
Email address

_____
Street address

_____
City/State/Zip

_____
Date of interview

Time
From: _____ To: _____

Questions:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Answers:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____
Your name

_____
Your school/grade/Public Achievement group

Adapted from Barbara A. Lewis. Free Spirit Publishing, Inc.

Phone Contact Sheet

"**Hello, may I please speak to** _____ (**or someone that** _____
Contact's name
_____)."
write in what type of person may be able to help

"**My name is** _____ and I'm from _____."
Your name *Your school and Public Achievement group*

1. **Purpose** (write what you are looking for or your need)

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

2. **Information** (write down what your contact tells you)

   _____
   _____
   _____
   _____

3. **"Thank You!"**

   _____
   _____

_____
Your name

_____
Phone number for group

_____
Email address for group

_____
Date of call

_____
School

_____
Street address

_____
City/State/Zip

_____
Contact's name

_____
Contact's phone

_____
Contact's email address

_____
Title

_____

_____
Contact's address

Adapted from Barbara A. Lewis. Free Spirit Publishing, Inc.

Suggested Reading List

Books

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