

MEETING SKILLS

PEOPLE TEND TO SUPPORT THAT WHICH THEY HELP CREATE

Management is doing things right; leadership is doing the right things.

Peter Drucker

WHY:

Purposes of Meetings

- ❖ Improve communication
- ❖ Share information and educate the group
- ❖ Make plans and set goals
- ❖ Improve group productivity and effectiveness
- ❖ Develop leadership
- ❖ Bring problems to the surface
- ❖ Resolve conflicts
- ❖ Solve problems and make decisions

HOW:

- ❖ Set up the meeting with the needs of the group in mind
- ❖ Determine purpose, participants, time and location of meeting
- ❖ Develop agenda with timelines
- ❖ Determine format, roles and meeting style

Discussion is an exchange of knowledge.

Argument is an exchange of ignorance.

Robert Quillen



Why Have Meetings?

Meetings provide an opportunity to:

- Bring problems to the surface
- Solve problems and make decisions
- Improve communications
- Develop leadership
- Increase ownership of and commitment to decision
- Resolve conflicts
- Make plans and set goals
- Share information and educate the group
- Improve group productivity and effectiveness

STYLES OF MEETINGS

Student councils use two types of meetings

Select the type of meeting appropriate to the business you need to conduct

| <u>Interaction Method</u> | <u>Parliamentary Procedure</u> |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Less Formal | Formal |
| Planning Meeting | Business Meeting |
| Few Rules | Many Rules |
| Achieve Consensus | Majority Rules |
| All Participate | Participation Not Universal |
| Small Group | Legal Record of Formal Meeting |

In the following pages you will be introduced to a simplified outline of these two major meeting types.

The Interaction Method for Conducting Meetings

Much of a student leader's time is spent in meetings. Individuals and groups may become frustrated by the way time is used or by the way students treat each other during meetings.

In order to be more effective in meetings be sensitive to the following:

Be prepared and on time.

Before the meeting:

1. Set focus of meeting-agenda
2. Check room arrangements
3. Communicate necessary information ahead of time

Needs of group members:

1. Inclusion - Ensure that all members feel they belong
2. Control - Clarify who is running the meeting.
3. Acceptance - Be sure all members are treated equally.

(For more information and clarification refer to *How to Make Meetings Work* by Doyle and Straus.)

The **Interaction Method** of meeting skills is designed to increase participation in meetings and to use available time effectively. It is based on four well-defined roles which correct and balance each other.

A. The Facilitator: Keeps the group focused and drives it to its goals.

1. Neutral "cop" - directs traffic
2. Does not evaluate or contribute ideas
3. Protects members from attack
4. Encourages everyone to participate
5. Compliments group, not individual
6. Suggest alternative methods and procedures

B. The Recorder: Writes-down group member ideas on butcher paper, posted so people can visualize their recorded words.

1. Records group memory - no editing (listen for key words)
2. Abbreviate words
3. Vary colors
4. Supports facilitator - work as a team

C. The Group Member: Supports other members while staying open and positive.

1. Active participant
2. Supports facilitator-work as a team

D. The Chairperson/President: Serves with other group members. Opinions are expressed. Assignments are made. The Parliamentary restriction of neutrality is not expected.

1. Active participant
2. Sets agenda

Procedures Used in the Interaction Method

The Interactive Process: Working Toward Consensus

Brainstorm:

1. Write down all ideas
2. No criticism or praise
3. Go until “popcorn” done

Consolidate and eliminate:

1. What items are the same?
2. What are the criteria? Which ones don't meet it?
3. What have others done?
4. What can we live without?

Rank for preference - voting

1. Three votes
2. Rank order
3. Rule of a third plus one
4. Spend a buck

Discussion:

List advantages and disadvantages
“What I like about ...”, “My concern is ...”

Decision Making: Build up and eliminate

Majority Vote: When consensus cannot be reached

Consider also:

Planning by looking ahead
Working backward

Brainstorming becomes easy. The goal is to collect as many ideas as possible and the rules are few:

- Ideas are positively stated
- Ideas are briefly stated
- No criticism or evaluation is allowed until brainstorming is finished.
- Everyone participates

The interaction method serves as an automatic pilot. If a person strays, the people in other jobs bring them back on course. Group Members can tell the Recorder if an idea is missed.

The Interaction Method focuses everyone on a common task:

“People tend to support that which they help create.”

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Let's Get the Meeting Moving

1. Call to Order

The meeting is called to order by the President, who rises and says, "The meeting will please come to order."

2. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting are read.

Example: The President says, "The Secretary will read the minutes of the last meeting". After the reading, the President asks, "Are there any corrections or additions to these minutes?" "If not, they stand approved as read."

If there are corrections, the Chair informally directs corrections be made. "The minutes are approved as corrected."

The Secretary signs the minutes, "Respectfully submitted." They may be initialed by the President.

3. Report of Officers:

The President makes announcements by reading the President's report.

The Secretary informs the group of any letters which have been received by the group. Each communication should be handled by a main motion before another is read.

The Treasurer reports on receipts and expenses paid. These are "received and placed on file." No vote is taken on reports "placed-on-file".

4. Reports of Committees:

The reports of Committees are called for by the President.

- A. Standing Committees
- B. Special Committees (Temporary)

Procedure: In each case the President calls upon the Chairperson of the Committee to make the report. The report is read.

After this has been done, the President says: "This report will be placed on file. Any action required in this report will be taken care-of under the proper order of business."

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Now Let's Keep It Moving

5. Unfinished Business

This is any business postponed from a previous meeting. It includes any action required in a report given earlier, (a recommendation to pay for something) would now be presented by the President, requesting a motion on the matter. Discussion follows the motion and then a vote is taken.

6. New Business:

This includes any ideas not presented previously. It is moved and discussed by the members. Example: President states, "We are now ready for the new business of the meeting, which includes the decision about the admission fee for the party. Will someone make a motion so that we may discuss the question?"

Member says: "I move that the admission fee for the party be fifty cents." Second member: "I second the motion."

President: "It has been moved and seconded that the admission fee for the party be fifty-cents. Is there any discussion?" Discussion follows. One member calls "Question", which means that the President must ask, "Are you ready for the question?" (Ready to vote.) Or the President asks on personal initiative and if there are no objections brings the matter to a vote.

7. The Program of the Meeting:

Example: guest speaker, movie, slide presentation, etc.

8. Adjournment:

This happens after a motion to adjourn is made and carried (or if business is finished). The presiding officer declares the meeting adjourned.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Minutes of Meetings

Purpose of Minutes:

Minutes are legal records of meetings and of actions taken in them. Minutes are not a verbatim transcript of every word spoken. They are a concise documentation of the essential matter discussed at each meeting. Minutes are a means of record keeping or history taking. Remember that an abbreviation that means something to one group may mean nothing in one year to someone reading your minutes. Try not to use abbreviations for special projects or groups as this reduces the value of your minutes for the future.

Information Included in Minutes:

Form of minutes varies from organization to organization. Certain general information should be included in almost all minutes.

1. Name of organization holding meeting.
2. Type of meeting.
3. Place, date, and hour.
4. Presiding officer.
5. Names or number of those present.
6. Approval of minutes from previous meeting.
7. Reports.
8. Unfinished business.
9. Elections, results - including names of those in opposition at their option.
10. New business such as motions made and resolutions adopted. Names of persons making and seconding motion included.
11. Date and time of next meeting.
12. Adjournment.

Any information introduced to those attending should be attached to the original copy and kept on file. (e.g. Bylaws in full, project outlines, letters, etc.)

Tone of Minutes:

As the minutes are a brief and totally factual record of a meeting they should contain no editorial comment by the secretary. Be objective. Make no reference to heated debate, moving address, or lengthy discussion. In other words there should be no adjectives reflecting emotion.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE

Minutes of Meetings (continued)

Typing the Minutes:

Format varies from group to group. The following is a list of guidelines relating to format.

1. Capitalize and center the heading, date, time, place and organization.
2. Indent the present and absent section to 12 - 15 spaces.
3. Double space the text.
4. Indent all paragraphs.
5. Double space between the paragraphs.
6. Triple space between each item in order of business.
7. Single space resolutions and indent 12 - 15 spaces.
8. Proper names are capitalized. e.g. Board, Directors, Committees, President, etc.
9. Sums of money should be written first in words and then in figures in parentheses.
10. Number each page at the bottom in center.

After Minutes are Written:

Any binder may be used to hold minutes. Minutes of important meetings are usually kept in a locking minute book. The minutes book should contain a copy of charter bylaws, policies and procedures.

Distribution of Minutes:

Minutes may be duplicated and distributed before the next meeting. Before duplication they are checked by the presiding officer for accuracy. They are then distributed to all members thus members who were absent are informed of actions taken. When minutes are distributed there is no need to spend time reading the minutes at the next meeting. Once minutes have been approved they should be signed by the presiding officer and the recording secretary. They should never be changed or rewritten.

Responsibilities for Meetings

*If we are going to get our jobs done, we need to know both:
What the job is...and the best way to do our work!*

GROUP LEADERS SHOULD

Know the council goals.
Serve those Students we represent.
Work hard.
Provide leadership.
Seek fairness for everyone.

BEFORE MEETINGS:

Choose meeting goals.
Choose the kind of meeting to hold.
Plan the agenda and deliver copies to members.
Arrive on time.
Be ready to help.

DURING THE MEETING:

Help to get started on time.
Follow the agenda.
Help the discussion-participate!
Know how to get things done. (Help others know.).
Make positive suggestions.
Listen to each person.
Help summarize progress.
Use the last few minutes to review.

AFTER THE MEETING:

Put the room back in order.
Evaluate the meeting.
Send the minutes to teachers.

BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING:

List jobs to do by the next meeting.
Check the minutes and reports.
Check committee work and reports.
Investigate and get ready to report back on items of interest.

GROUP MEMBERS SHOULD

Know the council goals.
Serve those we represent.
Work hard.
Collect and bring ideas to council meetings.
Share ideas between council and class.

BEFORE MEETINGS:

Review the agenda
Be sure all needed materials are ready.
Arrive on time.
Be ready to help.

DURING THE MEETING:

Listen attentively.
Help keep the group on-the-subject.
Try to use written motions so everyone has a copy
Be sure everyone has a chance to talk.
Keep asking.
Are we reaching our goals for this meeting?
Are we using our people and materials well?
Share your ideas.

AFTER THE MEETING:

Review your notes.
Evaluate the meeting.
Arrange to report to your class.
Make-up missed class work.

BEFORE THE NEXT MEETING:

Read the copies of the minutes.
Make a report to those you represent as soon as possible.
Write down important ideas and reactions.

Key Ideas for Successful Meetings

DEVELOP AN AGENDA

Conducting an ASB meeting without an agenda is about as plausible as achieving consensus without agreement. Without an agenda a meeting can go anywhere and usually does. If you don't know where the meeting is going how do you know you want to go there?

A carefully planned agenda forces the leader to examine all aspects of a meeting and to build it into some logical structure. Everyone knows now what the beginning, the middle, and end are likely to be.

Key Question: Does the agenda reflect the meeting direction, the set of tasks, and the relative time constraints?

CONSIDER THE SETTING

Allow ample time to set up before a meeting. Seating can have an important effect on the interaction that takes place. A circle will invite discussion. Rows facing the leader will give the leader power. A room too large will discourage interaction.

Key Question: Have I made certain that the task appropriately fits the available space, seating, and lighting.

START ON TIME

To not do so gives the message "This meeting isn't very important and, apparently neither are those of us who arrived on time!"

Key Question: Do I consistently start meetings on time and follow a predetermined schedule?

STAY ON TASK

Once members understand their task, the leader has the responsibility for keeping everyone on track.

Key Question: Do I check periodically during the meeting to be certain that the group is "on track"?

GET ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

One sign of participants' interest in a meeting is discussion. Members talk, not only to one another, but also to the group as a whole. Everyone should be encouraged to share information, opinions, and suggestions and then give feedback

Key Question: Am I aware of who is participating and who isn't?

CONTROL MEETINGS

Only the naive or foolish person will try to conduct a meeting without a method or plan. These methods are used to keep the group on track, to facilitate discussions, and to encourage decision making. Never back away from asserting control when it is needed, but don't impose so much control that views are stifled. Some methods used traditionally are group interactive methods and parliamentary procedure.

Key Question: What methods will best facilitate the work of the group and accomplish the task?

VARY THE APPROACH

Consider varying the format during a meeting (e.g. question/answer, brainstorming, visual presentations?)

Key Question: Do I vary some of the approaches I use in my meetings?

RESPECT DIFFERENCES

Everyone has their own ideas, thoughts, and values. It is important to be able to put aside notions of "right" and "wrong" or "good" and "bad" and look at divergent ideas as possibilities and potential solutions.

Key Question: Do I regard interpersonal conflict as a normal, needed, and challenging ingredient in all group endeavors?

RECORD ACTIONS TAKEN

Because the average person forgets half of what was heard in a meeting almost immediately after hearing it, and over time forgets even more, it's necessary to keep a written record of important events. A useful record includes details about what actions were taken, by whom, when, and the relevant circumstances. It is not useful to include informal comments, personal positions, or general debating points. Written records are far more believable than are personal recollections.

Key Question: Are records of all meetings both current and accurate?

INVITE PARTICIPANT FEEDBACK

Many psychologists claim that people don't grow without constructive feedback. How do I know how well things are going unless I am open to the thoughts and feelings of others and, more importantly willing to modify my behavior accordingly?

At the very least, feedback provides data for making choices. In groups we can encourage questions, be alert to body language signaling a desire to participate, lessen or remove personal and physical barriers that can block group interaction and ask key people for their assessment of our meetings.

Practice *doesn't* make perfect if we're practicing ineffective group skills. And, only our members can tell us if we *are*.

Key Question: Am I sensitive to the need for group members to become meaningfully involved and am I willing to actively seek their feedback?

_____ School
Associated Student Body
 Meeting Minutes for Date: _____

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|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| 1 | <p>Call to Order [By President; Time] President: <i>Miss Or Mr.</i> _____ Time:</p> | | | | | | |
| 2 | <p>Pledge of Allegiance [President Initiates; Use title, Mr. or Miss with last name]</p> | | | | | | |
| 3 | <p>Roll Call of Members Present [Use person's title, Mr. or Miss with last name]</p> | | | | | | |
| 4 | <p>Reading and Approval of Last Meeting's Minutes [Audience reads and makes corrections] Corrections: Motion to Approve: Second:</p> | | | | | | |
| 5 | <p>P.O. Approval [Treasurer Reads all P.O.s, i.e., to whom, for what, how much; Motion to approve and second (write who); attach P.O. list] <u>Vendor</u> <u>Amount</u> <u>Purpose</u></p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse; margin-top: 5px;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%; height: 20px;"></td> <td style="width: 15%;"></td> <td style="width: 52%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="height: 20px;"></td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table> <p>Treasurer reads PO's Motion to approve: Second:</p> | | | | | | |
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| | | | | | | | |
| 6 | <p>Guest Speaker [Write Speaker's name and summarize his/her discussion]</p> | | | | | | |
| 7 | <p>Officer's Reports [MANDATORY - What have the officers been doing; Write officer's title, Mr. or Miss with last name and his/her report] Secretary's Report, <i>Miss or Mr.</i> ____ - _____ Treasurer's Report, <i>Miss or Mr.</i> ____ - _____ Vice President's Report, <i>Miss or Mr.</i> ____ - _____ President's Report, <i>Miss or Mr.</i> ____ - _____</p> | | | | | | |

| | |
|------------------|---|
| <p>8</p> | <p>Committee Reports [MANDATORY - What have the committees been doing; Using Mr. or Miss, write the committee speaker's last name and his/her report]</p> <p><i>Music:</i> _____</p> <p><i>Dance:</i> _____</p> <p><i>Spirit:</i> _____</p> <p><i>Fun Friday:</i> _____</p> <p><i>Birthday:</i> _____</p> <p><i>Sports:</i> _____</p> <p><i>Publicity:</i> _____</p> <p><i>Rallies:</i> _____</p> <p><i>Fundraising:</i> _____</p> |
| <p>9</p> | <p>Special Orders [Important business previously designated for consideration at this meeting]</p> |
| <p>10</p> | <p>Unfinished Business [Business (fundraisers, activities, important decisions, etc.) not completed from last ASB meeting; Decisions need a motion and a second]</p> |
| <p>11</p> | <p>New Business [Business being introduced at this ASB meeting; Decisions need a motion and a second]</p> |
| <p>12</p> | <p>Announcements [Typically addressed in officer and committee reports, but serves as a time for ASB members and the Advisor to verbalize reminders]</p> |
| <p>13</p> | <p>Adjournment [Motion and seconded by whom; Time]</p> <p>Motion to Adjourn:</p> <p>Second:</p> <p>Time:</p> |

Notes: