

# INPUT



ONTARIO INTRAMURAL RECREATION ASSOCIATION

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## THE DECREPIT DECATHALON: THIS IS TRACK AND FIELD?

BY DAVE SCHLEI

Spring brings track and field season to most elementary schools in Ontario and with the sprints, jumps and throws come the opportunity for large numbers of students to compete at a higher level. Many students who may not be athletes and as a result turn to intramurals for activity during soccer, volleyball or basketball seasons find themselves able to throw a softball or be a member of a tug-o-war team or relay team. Now that they may be competing in track and field for a school team they might be interested in other types of track and field intramurals. As an alternative to traditional track and field activities there are a few events which can be staged as a part of a decathlon and which minimize most skill requirements. In the true spirit of intramurals all of these activities have fun as the primary focus. Most are suitable for primary, junior and senior elementary students and can be held indoors or out of doors which is convenient considering the unpredictable spring weather.

### THE DECREPIT DECATHALON

#### JAVELIN THROW

Use ten-inch drinking straws as the javelins and run this event just like a regular javelin competition. You could use an approach run or you could have the competition stand still at the line and throw the straw using only the arm.



#### DISCUS THROW

Use paper plates as the discus. Once again, you may wish to involve a traditional approach for junior and senior students and no approach for primary youngsters. Throwing the plate frisbee style is another alternative.

#### SHOT PUT

There are a number of options for this event. Senior and junior students might be able to use a basketball as the shot. Badminton birds are also excellent for all grades in this event. Having the competitors sitting on the floor when they throw the ball or bird also works very well.

#### HURDLES

This event can be run for students from kindergarten to grade 8. Use two 10" or 12" lengths of 2x4 as the uprights of the hurdle and a ringette stick or broken hockey stick shaft or broom handle as the cross-bar of the hurdle. The 2x4's are stood on end and the stick is placed on top of them to form the hurdle. Place the hurdles three metres apart if held outdoors and use four or five hurdles. This is difficult to do indoors with senior students but with primary students the hurdles should be placed about 2 metres apart using the gym or a corridor.

#### HIGH JUMP

An effective way to alleviate fear of injury because of the crossbar is to use ten or fifteen elastic bands tied together as the crossbar. This is very non-threatening and allows for greater confidence. A two-foot take-off for primary and junior students is one recommended alternative to the traditional high jump. The elastic bar can be placed as low as necessary to accommodate age levels.

(see SOFTBALL, page 2)



The Ontario Intramural Recreation Association acknowledges the financial support of the Sports and Fitness Branch of the Ministry of Tourism and Recreation.

# Elementary School Contributing Editor Dave Schlei, Queensmount Senior Public School

(continued from page 1)

## SOFTBALL THROW

Make this a basketball throw for senior students or a volleyball or 6" rhythm ball throw for primarys.

## LONG JUMP

This event can be changed by having the approach run made running backwards and the jump also made backwards. This may not be appropriate for primary grades but the standing long jump will be a suitable substitute.

## SPRINTS

The distances for spring races can be anywhere from 20m to 100m depending on age and what type of sprint it is. A Siamese Sprint involves running in twos tied together at the waist with a skipping rope. A Four-Legged Sprint involves three people running together with the middle

person having each leg tied to the inside leg of the person on each side of him.

## POLE VAULT

Instead of the pole vault a pole climb or rope climb could be used if no suitable pole exists. Make a number of marks on the pole or climbing rope to indicate heights. This would probably not be a suitable activity for primary grades.

## RELAYS

Regular relay races could be run as a final event using regular batons, or balloons are also excellent alternatives to batons. Using balloons usually negates the speed factor and allows for all to participate.

These events can be run as a decathlon with five events one day and five others the second day. A point

system for each event is easy to develop, or in the tradition of all effective intramural programs, no points need to be awarded and just hold the decathlon for the fun of it. Another possibility is to include these events in a tabloid form as a special day or as a part of a special school-wide tabloid day.

O.I.R.A. is committed to promote intramurals and provide support assistance to the intramural professionals in Ontario.

Annual Membership: \$25.00

### RETURN TO:

RICK TURNBULL  
CANADIAN INTRAMURAL  
RECREATION ASSOCIATION  
333 RIVER ROAD  
VANIER CITY, ONTARIO  
K1L 8H9

## O.I.R.A. '87 CONFERENCE PROGRAM

### SUNDAY

- 3:00 p.m.  
Opening Address  
- Aarne Hannikainen
- 5:30 p.m.  
Dinner & Keynote Address  
- Wayne Somerville &  
Warren Campbell

### MONDAY - PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- 9:15 - 10:15 a.m.
- 1) Pat Kitchen - Student Leader Evaluations - A Positive Experience
  - 2) Marg Terrett - Time management
  - 3) Jim Weese & Kandi McElary - Delegation and the Campus Recreation Director
  - 4) Joe Van Snellenberg - Cheap Thrills
- 10:25 - 10:55 a.m.
- 1) Jean Kennedy - OIRA Scheduling Aid
  - 2) Deirdre Muir - Problem? No Problem! The Process of Change
  - 3) Bob Oldfield - Fundraising
  - 4) John McFarlane - Liability and Safety - What is our role?

11:00 - NOON  
Group Interaction

- A) elementary - Sharon Bradley
- B) secondary - Jean Kennedy
- C) college - Sally Kemp
- D) university - Pat Kitchen

### MONDAY AFTERNOON - INNOVATIVE IDEAS

- 1:45 - 2:45 p.m.
- 1) Mary-Catherine Kelly - Dancing in the Dark (Tap/Jazz Dancing)
  - 2) Marg Terrett - CIRA Student Leadership
  - 3) Beverly Toye - Today Intramurals; Tomorrow the World
  - 4) Brent McFarlane - Hollywood Express
- 2:55 - 3:25 p.m.
- 1) Peter Baxter - Participation and OFSSA
  - 2) Connie Ryan - Ringette
  - 3) Wayne Bozzer - Adapting Ideas to suit your Environment
  - 4) Nancy Thompson - Best Ever Ontario - Women in Sport - EAME Program
- 3:30 - 4:00 p.m.
- 1) Janice Harper - Outdoor Activities
  - 2) Michelle Long -
  - 3) John Bialek -

### TUESDAY - COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- 9:15 - 9:45 a.m.
- 1) Rod Vincent - Community Involvement & Shared Facility
  - 2) Regional Advisors Meeting
  - 3) Dave Schlei - Evening with Pops
- 9:55 - 10:25 a.m.
- 1) Recreation Certification/Fit Five (Meg Innis & Doug Reid)
  - 2) Don Lidstone - School Use of Community Facilities
  - 3) Sharon Bradley - Government Grants and How to Obtain Them
- 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.
- 1) Kevin Smith - Effective Program Planning
  - 2) Jane Beckwith & Patricia Campbell - Community Sports Camps
  - 3) Gord Plumridge - Our Little Town (Community Resources)
  - 4) Brian Bull - Disabled Recreation Programs



# Post Secondary Contributing Editor Meg Innes, York University

## Year End Reports — How Important Are They?

We are quickly approaching the end of the academic year and with it comes the thought of compiling a document that will serve as the Recreation Year End Report. But why bother gathering statistics? Why bother counting the number of participants through the door? Why bother writing about the programs that you offered? After all EVERYONE knows how effective and efficient we are — don't they?

A wise man (actually the grandfather of Intramurals - Peter Hopkins) once said, "we MUST compile statistics and write reports in order to show the powers that be that:

1. We Are Professionals!
2. We provide a variety of innovative programs, and
3. We serve the students, staff, faculty, and community at large.

Writing a year end report is not such an onerous task if you are prepared and have the pertinent information in front of you. If you follow these suggested steps, you too will be able to boast about your program and have a written document in which to back up your claim!

### How To Write A Year End Report

1. When you begin the academic year, have a file marked Year End Report located in a convenient place. Since everything probably comes across your desk, it would make sense to have the file either on or in your desk.
2. At the end of the year, the file will contain the following:
  - Handbook(s)
  - All flyers
  - Notices of special events
  - Special events reports
  - Letters of commendation
  - School newspaper articles
  - Memos regarding any major changes in the program
  - Statistics for instructional, intramurals, clubs, casual recreation, workshops, special events and any other events that have taken place

- Facility usage
- Plans for the future

3. Divide the total program into sections. For example:

#### Section 1

Introduction  
Intramurals  
Student Leadership  
Instructional Services Area  
Sports clubs  
Casual Recreation

#### Section 2

Special Events  
Facility Usage

#### Section 3

Marketing  
Future Developments

4. Begin writing the report with an introduction that clearly defines who you are, what you do and who you serve.
5. Follow the introduction with a Summary Table that shows the activities offered and the client groups served.
6. Divide the intramural report into semesters (eg. Fall and Winter) and write a few paragraphs about what occurred in each semester.
7. Since most Recreation departments have a strong intramural program, it makes sense to follow that write-up with the report about student Leadership. Be sure to mention the various leadership opportunities that Recreation makes available to students.
8. Continue writing mini reports for each sub-heading included in Section 1.
9. Section 2 begins with the Special Events. As in Section 1, report about every event that occurred.
10. When writing about facility usage, make sure the facts are accurate and presented in a graph form. For example:

Facility	Users	% of usage
Main Gym	Varsity	48.0%
Main Gym	P.E. Program	18.8%
Main Gym	Recreation	18.3%
Main Gym	Unused	14.9%

11. Section 3 should be reserved for the future of the program(s). Questions you might consider would include:

- a. What are the implications for the future of the recreation programs?
- b. Have we established our target market?
- c. Are we marketing our programs in a professional manner?

12. The final sub-heading in the year end report should be Future Developments. This section must include all of the major programs mentioned in Section 1 and 2. It is important to note that the inclusion of future developments demonstrates to the reader that you are indeed Planning Ahead and not simply programming on a day to day basis.

13. General Tips

- a. At the end of each few paragraphs or mini reports, write the total number of participants that were active in that particular program.
- b. It is very important that an Appendix be included so that the reader might gain a better understanding of the program.

### What To Do With The Final Report

A wise man once said, "you are never a prophet in your own land!" With this in mind you would be prudent to send a copy of the report to the following people:

- President of the Institution
- Vice-President(s)
- Provost (if you have one)
- Deans
- Chairpersons of Departments
- Board of Governors/Directors

Some readers may agree that a final year end report is an integral part of their final program planning. Others might disagree with this logic because they already have support from their senior administration.

If you are one of the lucky ones that has support — congratulations!! If you are constantly trying to "win" support — present the administration with the year end document. One thing is for sure — It Certainly Can't Hurt!!!!

## **What To Do Before You Use The C.I.R.A. Leadership Materials**

Generally, it is not difficult to get an Athletic Council together. Sport-interested students tend to congregate easily and naturally around the gymnasium and its myriad of activities. One quickly learns to use a "perception" yardstick to identify so-called gym "rats", and potential program helpers. However, merely bringing these students together does not ensure group productivity. When the Council first gathers, it is a collection of individuals held together tenuously by immediate interest. Therefore, what happens in this initial meeting is a critical precursor for generating personal commitment to the long-term process of group development.

It would appear that group life begins from an ego-centered perspective — a collection of individuals with a tentative communal *raison d'être*. Each person comes to the group with implicit expectations and a set of internal criteria for evaluating and deciding whether or not to remain. Evelyn Whitehead suggests that most groups have an identifiable period of orientation: Getting started, which is characterized by the following behaviours:

There are very diverse expectations among us. A combination of both enthusiasm and anxiety over that diversity. We have a hope that we would be able to do something interesting together; to do something well together but with little anxiety ... Often these diverse expectations are implicit, untested and unreal in the sense that I have nothing to check them out against.

It takes careful planning and a high degree of leader awareness and sensitivity to diminish ambiguity and elicit individual movement toward group involvement.

An interesting needs assessment exercise, which I have borrowed from Carol Gall, an instructor at Humber College, might be a useful

tool for addressing this issue. In a newly formed group environment, working with students in a Fitness Leadership program, she asks the question, "Why have you taken this course?" Students are encouraged to call out their individual reasons and these are then recorded on large sheets of newsprint taped to the blackboard. A sample appears below.

### **HELPS ME**

- get a job
- keep a job
- learn to teach
- make fitness "fun" for people
- use music more effectively
- learn anatomy
- become more fit
- design an exercise routine
- learn fitness leadership skills
- develop an exercise inventory

Critics of this type of approach often complain that the activities are gimmicks. Fritz Perls, the founder of Gestalt therapy, has pointed out that a gimmick is what a person calls a technique when he doesn't understand it.

This "task-oriented" climate setting activity is designed to center the group on the theme of the course, set the tone for the time together and develop a "learning community" in the classroom. I also suspect that the recorded needs can be used as a valuable checklist for on-going course refinement.

Students are encouraged, but not required, to disclose their motives for attending. Ownership of a response is a powerful motivator! The format recognizes the right to pass.

... the right of any individual to pass, withhold his thoughts and ideas, to refrain from participating must be respected and reinforced with dignity. The teacher, as group facilitator, is in a key position to foster the attitude that a pass represents a conscious act by an individual which must be respected by all. The motives for

passing are so varied and often so complex that group members should refrain from conjecture as to why an individual might pass at any given moment.

For example, the passer might find the topic too deeply personal to share his thoughts, or the topic might touch off inchoate memories which he cannot express, or he might feel that his thoughts are irrelevant, or might be taken as misleading, or have been expressed so often as to become trite. He might feel that he is protecting someone else, or himself. Or he might be concentrating on the group process as an observer and be unwilling, or unable, to shift his focus. And, of course, he might just be daydreaming! It is essential that the group facilitator establish the sanctity of the pass early in the program.

Verbalizing, and therefore becoming "known", involves a "perceived risk". It is interesting to note that Paolo Friere, the Brazilian educator, reasoned that nothing has ever been learned without a risk being involved. In *Silver Bullets*, Karl Rohnke explains:

Learning implies a change state that involves the observation and re-settling processes needed to alter social, behavioural and ecological norms. Uncertainties, frustrations, and insecurities will result.

People are at risk when they learn. This risk may be physical, social, intellectual, emotional or spiritual in nature. Risk is a necessary part of the educational process.

In the preceding exercise, writing down the motives calls attention to the diversity of individual needs, but the exercise format presents them in a group context. They become part of the infrastructure of the group, to be utilized later as particular discussion or lecture topics, or to provide "background" information for inter-

(see LEADERSHIP, page 5)

# Leadership

(continued from page 4)

personal communication. When people feel recognized and when they can recognize others, they are on their way to feeling "at home" in the group.

The original question — Why have you taken this course? — helps focus the group, and the answers tend to expand and enrich the course purpose so that it has individual meaningfulness. As David Ausubel postulates, this is a necessary condition for reception, as opposed to rote learning to occur. It is for this reason that I feel the exercise is a valuable climate-setting tool. Adapted for use with the secondary school Athletic Council, I would modify the question and use the exercise within the context of a game. Games have an energizing quality which appeals to young, and old, alike. I have found that when a group needs a morale boost, or a means of gaining behavioural (and sometimes cognitive) insights, a well-designed game can be an enjoyable way to accomplish that goal. The game is explained below:

## GETTING ACQUAINTED

Goals:

- To help members of a newly formed group become acquainted in a non-threatening manner.
- To help integrate new members in a group.
- To generate some data about individual interests with respect to the Council.

Group size: 12-20+

Time Required: 30 minutes.

Instructions: Part A:

The idea is to meet as many people in as many different groups as you can. The important word in this *warm-up* is IN. Whenever you hear it, it means a new group for you to get into and learn names.

Get IN to a group of 2...3...6...4

Get IN to a group where everyone is wearing the same colour ... has the same brand of running shoes ... is the same height ... each member is a different height ... has the same colour eyes.

Get IN to a group where everyone has the same last digit in their phone number ... has the same birth month ... was born in the same province ... is left-handed/right-handed.

The options are endless. At the end of the activity, ask the Council

members to form a single group circle. Ask for feedback regarding the exercise. Also, ask for a volunteer to attempt to name everyone in the group. Usually, this person will be successful! Learning names is an essential step in establishing communication among members.

## Part B

The facilitator posts a demonstration sports picture, and informs the Council members that each of them is to receive a piece of a picture. This exercise could be done with blindfolds (teaching the "bumpers" position — hands up and forward) with the facilitator ensuring that no one would stray to far away or run the risk of injury, or without. The task is to find the person with the matching half and re-introduce themselves.

Pictures are distributed randomly, and the search begins. When all the pictures are completed, the facilitator asks each dyad to display their picture for the entire group (pictures depict a humorous side of sport or Council life).

The dyad is then instructed to proceed with the instructions on the back of the completed picture. The instructions read: Your group's task is to discuss "Why have you joined the Council?". Allow five to 10 minutes. Dyads provide a less threatening environment for students to "try-out" their thoughts.

The whole group is then brought together. The question is written on the large sheet of newsprint (a good focusing technique as opposed to

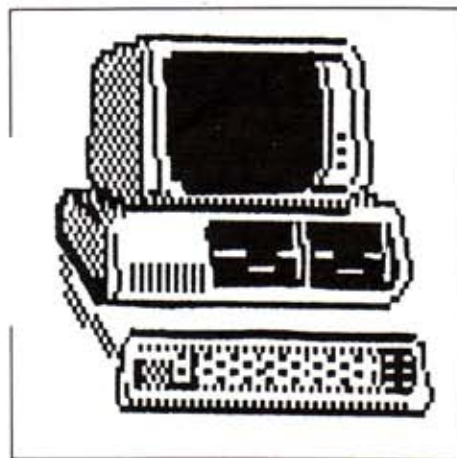
the lack of clarity of chalk on a blackboard). Students are encouraged to share their insights with the class. Having "practiced" in pairs, students often find it less difficult to share personal information with larger groups. Students are instructed to look for patterns amongst the answers and to make relevant generalizations/conclusions and here-and-now comments.

Processing the entire experience could be done in the form of a summary statement, or the "I am feeling ... because" exercise.

The response to the question should be used in a curriculum mode to plan the "educational content" of the Council learning experiences. In this context, I am reminded of the marketing adage — you have to give to get! If effective student leaders are needed — students planning, organizing and operating their own intramural programs with minimal direction from teacher sponsors — then, they must be helped to develop the necessary skills and attitudes to succeed. Non-threatening physical activity should be the medium through which this learning occurs, as these young people respond to challenging, enjoyable and meaningful activity curricula". As the ultimate goal is to have them run activity programs, letting them experience and experiment with communication skills, interpersonal relations, positive feedback, and other group dynamics, in this milieu helps them make "connections".

The OIRA Computer Scheduling Aid is designed to work on an IBM or IBM compatible computer. The program schedules round robin tournaments for any number of teams at a specific time and place. Teams may enter their conflict dates and times.

Statistics are kept for each team. Cost for program and manual is \$200.00. A demo disk and manual is available for \$20.00. For more information write OIRA, c/o PRFO, 1220 Sheppard Ave. East, North York, Ontario M2K 2X1.



# How To Make Effective Presentations

Ian McGregor  
Saint Mary's University

How many times have you gone to what has promised to be an interesting presentation only to be disappointed because the speaker was poor? How many times have you said to a colleague that the conference was good ... except for the presentations?

It makes no difference whether the field is Recreation or Nuclear Physics. The single most critical and criticized aspect of the program at any conference or workshop is the information exchange process — and this, of course, is the responsibility of the speakers. It does not matter how interesting the material is on paper. Unless a speaker is able to communicate that material effectively, the presentation will not be well received.

The ability to make a good presentation is somewhere between an art and a science. The science part entails careful pre-planning and structuring of the presentation, while the art portion consists of a mixture of natural ability and practice. Since few of us can rely on natural ability, the art of making a good presentation depends upon preparation and practice.

The purpose of this paper is to detail the logistics involved in putting together a good verbal presentation. A planning sequence, from the first step of writing a paper to the final step of the presentation, will be particularly useful to first-time speakers and, hopefully, to those with some experience. While this planning sequence will not make anyone a polished speaker overnight, it should help speakers avoid the many pitfalls that can ruin a presentation. The three major considerations when putting together a presentation are:

- Preparation,
- Things to do before speaking, and
- Speaking techniques and style.

## PREPARATION

### (A) Written Paper

The first step for any workshop or conference presentation is the written paper. It is immaterial whether or not one intends to distribute the paper at the end of the talk. The written paper is the starting point upon which the speech is built.

Although the objective of this article is not to demonstrate how to put together a good written presentation, this process should be mentioned, since it is of vital importance if the overall verbal presentation is to "hang together" properly.

In general, papers can be split into four sections:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Objective(s)
- 3) Informal Exchange and Discussion
- 4) Conclusion

This basic format applies to most situations from workshops to research paper presentations. A brief summary of what each section is designed to accomplish is provided below:

- 1) Introduction — a brief preamble intended to attract attention and to outline the topic or problem area to be covered in the presentation. Often, this section is the hardest to write because of its importance in setting the stage.
- 2) Objective(s) — spells out exactly what the presentation intends to accomplish.

- 3) Information Exchange and Discussion — this is where one communicates/discusses what was done, and was found, what is unique, etc., and is the real "meat" of the presentation.

- 4) Conclusion — consists of some closing statement in which the writer refers back to the stated objectives and discusses whether or not these were achieved. The paper should make a full circle with a good concluding statement.

### (B) Verbal Presentation

The verbal presentation basically follows the written paper with one important difference — the speech is *never* an exact reproduction of the written paper.

There are two important points to consider as a talk is prepared. The first is to put oneself continually in the audience's shoes. Imagine listening to the presentation; would you fall asleep, or walk out? The second point to remember is that irrespective of how interesting the material is, the attention span of any audience is quite short. As a general rule, "if you can't say it in half an hour, then don't." If it is impossible for a talk to take less than 45 minutes or one hour, then be aware that it is almost certain the audience will lose interest unless special efforts are made to hold their attention.

- 1) Considerations prior to preparing speech
  - audience type, i.e., to whom is the speech to be given (for example, a Rotary Club or a group of academics)?
  - audience level, i.e., are the academics recreation or non-recreation people?
  - time available, i.e., does your allocated time include question/answer period?
  - interruptions allowed? Decide this before the presentation is made. Remember, interruptions can disturb the flow of a talk and questions are generally better handled at the end.

- 2) Consideration for the actual speech
  - should be different from the written paper
  - run off handouts of the written paper for distribution
  - talk should follow paper content with a change in emphasis as follows:

- (a) Introduction: This is the key to the success of a presentation. It is important to gain the audience's attention at the start. "If you don't do it then, you never will."

- (b) Objectives: Tell the audience what the speech is going to do. Put the objectives on a transparency to help fix them in the listener's mind.

- (c) Information exchanged/discussion: this is the important section and highlights from the written paper must be chosen. *Do not try to cover everything.* Indicate that all the information or results appear in the paper. Avoid reeling off lots of numbers — audiences have problems assimilating numbers unless they are kept to a minimum. Put important pieces of information on a transparency.

- (d) Conclusion: again, this brings things back full circle and allows the speaker to relate the information exchange section with the originally stated objectives.

- 3) Other considerations
  - (a) Put notes on cards

It is absolutely essential to use cue cards which contain key phrases only and which cue the speaker to the use of slides and transparencies, etc.

### (b) Rehearsal

It is important to rehearse at least *twice, out loud* to yourself because the process enables one to:

- 1) get the timing down;
- 2) verify that the material that looks good on paper sounds good verbally;
- 3) reach the point that cards are relied upon as cues only;
- 4) professionalize the talk;
- 5) utilize the KISS principle.

It is very important to simplify the contents of the paper as much as possible. The KISS principle (Keep It Simple Stupid) is, therefore, highly relevant here.

### (C) Audio-Visual Aids

If used properly, audio-visual aids can be of great assistance in making a good presentation. In the preparation of slides and overheads, the following are some common mistakes to avoid:

- 1) The material is hand written, making it difficult to read.
- 2) The material is typed, but the type is too small or too faint to be read.
- 3) There is too much information packed into the slide or transparency.
- 4) There is poor color contrast on the slides. As a general rule, try to seek professional help when making slides. Used effectively, good slides can have tremendous impact on your presentation.

### BEFORE THE PRESENTATION

The following is a list of things that can happen just prior to the speech, if the speaker is not prepared:

- you go to the wrong room, because you did not check the location ahead of time
- you arrive late for your presentation, perhaps because of the above
- there is no slide projector, screen, or overhead projector
- you arrive with a carousel slide tray to find that you have been provided with a projector that takes straight trays
- there is no spare bulb in the projector
- the spacing between screen and projector is such that the image is too small or too large
- you fumble for five minutes trying to organize your notes or slides
- you leave the handouts in your room
- you put the slides in upside down, or bring the wrong slides
- there is no overhead pen, chalk, or pointer.

While some of the above may sound trivial, it only takes one or two of them to have a serious affect on the overall presentation. Most of these little disasters can be avoided by:

- (a) visiting the location of the presentation well before the scheduled talk
- (b) checking out the audio-visual arrangements at some point prior to the presentation
- (c) being organized, i.e., assembling notes, handouts, etc. before heading off to give the talk.

(see PRESENTATIONS, page 7)

# Presentations

(continued from page 6)

## SPEAKING TECHNIQUES/STYLE

### (A) General Pointers

The talk has taken a great deal of preparation, but here you are finally in front of the audience ready to speak. Before going into actual techniques and style, the following general points are offered:

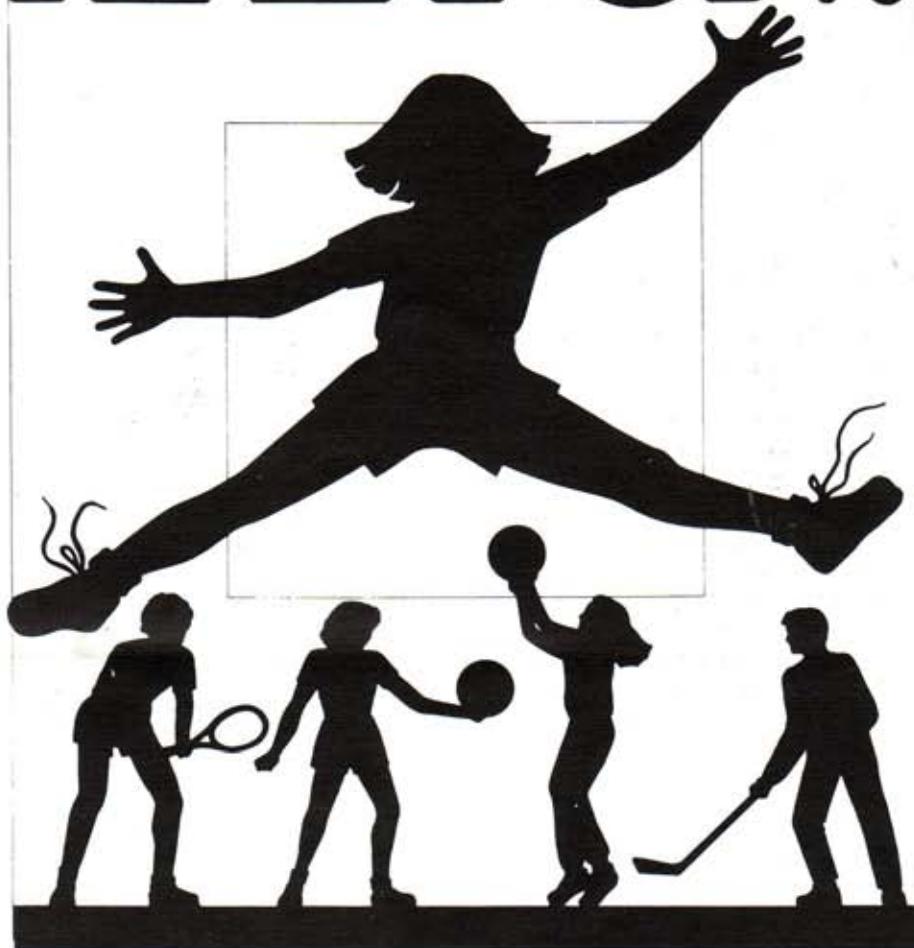
- Short Attention Span — always assume that the audience is on the verge of falling asleep. The material may even be on an unexciting topic. The wise use of slides/transparencies, voice intonations, and audience involvement techniques ("stand up and stretch your legs for a couple of minutes"), however, can help eliminate audience fatigue.
- It is important to continually remind the audience what you are doing (i.e., objectives). This is particularly important about half way through the talk, especially if the material is difficult. An easy way of refocusing the topic for the audience is to say something like:  
"OK — we have talked about objectives such and such in which we found ..., now let's turn to the third main objective."
- Never, never read from the written paper.
- Avoid ad-libbing unless you are good at it.

### (B) Techniques and Style

- 1) Voice — the key point to ask oneself when speaking is "can the people at the back hear me clearly?" This can be ensured through use of a microphone, but generally microphones should be avoided unless there is a good sound system and a remote portable microphone. Otherwise, microphones will cramp your style. It is surprising how well a clear, strong voice carries. The following is a list of common mistakes made while speaking:
  - voice is too soft/speaker mumbles or speaks into notes
  - monotonous voice (use intonations to spice up)
  - stumbling, caused by (a) nerves, or (b) being poorly rehearsed. The best advice here is to *relax* (it's too late to rehearse!)
  - turning back on audience
- 2) Body Movements — good speakers tend to be very expressive in terms of body movements; however, this is something that each individual has to be comfortable with. Forced body expressions can actually detract from a presentation as well as make a speaker feel uncomfortable. There are four points to remember in this regard:
  - too much body movement; for example, continually walking from side to side will cause the audience to concentrate on movements, rather than on what is being said
  - too little movement can lead to the audience losing concentration
  - hand and arm movements can be extremely effective if not overdone
  - effective use of body expressions takes practice

This article has detailed the logistics involved in putting together a verbal presentation. A step-by-step approach has been developed in which the major considerations to be addressed in constructing a presentation are

# INTRAMURALS ARE FUN!



summarized in a sequential fashion. In addition, an attempt has been made to highlight some of the more common mistakes made by speakers.

It is particularly important for novice speakers to develop some form of checklist based on the described planning sequence. The most crucial aspect of such a list is the part dealing with things to do just prior to the presentation. Without a doubt, this is a tense period for speakers and a time when nerves can play tricks on the memory. A checklist can help reduce the tension since the speaker is secure in the knowledge that nothing has been missed.

One final sobering thought in the area of making presentations is aptly captured by one of Murphy's Laws: "If something can go wrong, it will."

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