Unite, Inspire, Lead
Our Students, Our Union, Our Future

ADV 202: Building Member’s Campaign-Activism for Strong Public Schools!

Tom Dunn and Kerrie Dallman
NEA Strategic Goal and NEA Organizational Priorities for this session:

• **NEA Strategic Goals**
  – Strategic Goal 1: Strong Affiliates for Educator Voice and Empowerment
  – Strategic Goal 2: Empowered Educators for Successful Students

• **NEA Organizational Priority**
  – Early Career Educators
NEA Leadership Competency: ADVOCACY

- **NEA Leadership Competency Progression level(s):**
  - **Level All:** Foundation, Mobilizing & Power-Building, Agenda-Driving

- **NEA Leadership Competency Themes:**
  - Leverages advocacy practice (CT1)
  - Leads public education policy reform (CT4)
  - Acts as a political advocate (CT5)
What do you have to say for yourself?
Members Voice Training: Colorado 2016

- Communicate externally and internally to mobilize members in the 2016 election
- Continue to utilize this cadre of key communicators to forward local and state priorities
Our Goals Together

• To develop confident, skilled educator spokespeople who can advocate for candidates, causes, and issues vital to public schools and students in 2017 and beyond.
  – Claiming our Credibility
  – Supercharging Our Messaging
  – Communicating with Confidence
  – Putting it All Together

• To work through theory and practice

• To leave with a unique pitch that builds a common case for change.
Skill Set #1: Claiming our Credibility
Before we do anything else, we need to claim our credibility.

What is Credibility?

- Our authority to speak knowledgeably on a topic based upon our experience, our identity, or our expertise.
- It is key to persuasion.
- Research demonstrates that audience’s perception of a speaker’s credibility dramatically influences whether they follow the speaker’s proposed action.

59% think they’ll say something foolish.

59% think they don’t make sense when they speak.²

Women tend to believe their opinions and experiences matter less than men’s opinions.³

However, communicators are often the biggest skeptics of their own credibility.

In fact, educators are among the most trusted people in their communities…

How would you rate the honesty and ethical standards of people in these different fields?\(^5\)

Therefore, you could simply begin every speech or conversation with a phrase like:

“As an educator…”
Activism in Action #1

Crafting an Exceptional Credibility Statement

Objective: to develop an effective single sentence to begin any pitch.

Time: 10 minutes

Prompt:
• **Consider** what makes me a particularly credible person to talk about issues in public education?
• **Write** a single sentence starting with the words “I am…” that encapsulates your experience/passion/expertise in this area.
• **Edit** your sentence to make it clear, precise, and rich in detail.
• **Deliver** your credibility statement to the person sitting next to you. Then, switch roles and listen to their statement.
Skill Set #2: Supercharging our Messaging
Now that we have people’s attention, we need to pick a message and make it impactful.

**What is a message?**

“information conveyed by a speaker to an audience”

a.k.a. what we want the audience to do and why.

NEA helps its members identify key messages through talking points; However, individual educators can make talking points more meaningful by making them real, relatable, or relevant.
How do we make talking points **real**, **relatable**, or **relevant**?

- Identify a talking point that speaks to you and your experiences...
- **SUPERCHARGE** it with details and examples from your life…
  - Be personal
  - Be specific
  - Be local
  - Use concrete terms
  - Rely on vivid description
- Put the two together into a single, seamless thought.

When done successfully, every spokesperson both echoes the community’s message, while making the talking point more than just a political, boilerplate list.
Example: “I oppose Betsy DeVos for Secretary of Education because…”

NEA Messaging

“…she has no experience with public schools. She's never worked as an educator or in a public school in any capacity. She didn't attend public schools, and did not send her children to public schools.”

Your Connection

“As an educator in Colorado, I’ve seen how cooperation between parents, teachers, and community members invested in our public schools can make a difference. But when outsiders with a political agenda take over, our students suffer. We can’t allow that to happen.
Activism in Action #2

**Supercharging Your Talking Point**

Objective: to take a key NEA talking point and make it more real, relatable, or relevant for your imagined audience.

Time: 15 minutes

Prompt:
- **Review** NEA talking points on key issues in education with others near you (2 minutes)
- **Select** one talking point that speaks to you and that you can commit to memory (1 minute)
- **Supercharge** your point by making it real, relatable, or relevant through a vivid example from your own life and career (3 minutes)
- **Spend** a minute sharing your revised talking point with the person next to you. Then switch (4 minutes)
Skill Set #3: Communicate with Confidence
What does a speaker with no confidence look like?
There are two aspects of communicating confidently:

** Appearing Confident.  
• While there is no single model of confidence, most audiences read confidence through:  
  – Eye contact  
  – Open Posture  
  – Enthusiasm  
  – Tone  
  – Volume

** Being Confident.  
• Speakers who feel confident almost always:  
  – Know their message  
  – Know it is true  
  – Know the situation in advance  
  – Expect anxiety  
  – Have succeeded previously
Delivering a Confident Message

**Eye Contact** → Direct, friendly, and generous

**Open Posture** → Standing, head up, hands out, feet planted

**Tone** → Relaxed, casual, approachable

**Volume** → Easily heard in the situation, easily understood

**Enthusiasm** → Excited, engaged, authentic
Activism in Action #3

Objective: to practice delivering a confident message.

Time: 20 minutes

Prompt:
• Break up into your assigned teams
• Come up on stage with your team
• Read the prompt I provide to you to yourself
• Think about what you want to say and how to say it confidently
• Say it with a confident delivery at the right time
Skill Set #4: Putting It All Together
Now that we have built out all the component parts of our pitch, we need to **synthesize** them into a compelling whole.

1. Start with your compelling **credibility statement**.
2. Add in your **supercharged talking point**.
3. Deliver the pitch **with confidence**.
Activism in Action #4

Putting It All Together

Objective: to synthesize our unique, compelling message and record/share it on social media.

Time: 20 minutes

Prompt:
• **Pair up** with the person next to you
• **Review** your points in your mind
• **Deliver** your pitches to each other with confidence
• **Provide** feedback and encouragement
• **Record** your pitch and consider posting it on social media
Session Outcomes

• The content from this session can be used in the following ways in your current position/role:
  – **Example 1:** As a basic framework for most activism interactions you will have in person or on social media
  – **Example 2:** As a model for thinking through making your arguments at your local level
  – **Example 3:** As a tool for empowering others in your local associations, schools, and communities
We want your feedback!

• Please complete the evaluation for this breakout session!
• Please visit the Leadership Development Resources website at www.nea.org/leadershipdevelopment