

Student Leadership Challenge
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STUDENT APPRECIATION: NURTURING AND DEVELOPING (S.A.N.D.)

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The Student Leadership Practices Inventory (SLPI) is a great way for young leaders to receive feedback about the frequency of their leadership behaviors. And as we know from research about millennials, they need frequent feedback. Unfortunately, the reality is that most programs can only afford to use this 360 feedback instrument once or twice a year. So, what is a leadership educator to do?

I've adapted an activity by Mathew Gregory and Natalie Munoz called S.A.N.D. (Student Appreciation: Nurturing and Developing) to reflect The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership® and provides students an opportunity to receive frequent feedback from their peers. This activity, which has become a regular part of staff meetings with my Resident Assistants, help them develop a deeper understanding of The Five Practices—especially Encourage the Heart—by looking at all the ways they have seen the practices in action.

Objectives

Through this activity students will:

- Become increasingly familiar with The Five Practices of Exemplary Leadership®
- Develop an awareness of leadership behaviors in themselves and others
- Practice Encouraging the Heart

Audience

- current or emerging leaders
- any size

Time Required

10-20 minutes

Materials and Equipment

- Craft sand in 5 colors
- A glass (or clear plastic) bottle, jar or vase for each participant
- Masking tape and a marker (or a label maker)
- S.A.N.D. handout (see below)
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Process

1. Before the activity begins, label a glass, jar, or bottle with each participant's name. (Alternatively, you could ask participants to label their own.)
2. Distribute a vessel to each participant, along with a copy of the SAND handout
3. Explain the process: students will be recognizing each other for practicing leadership behaviors. They should think about past behaviors and remember a specific instance when they saw one of their colleagues act as a leader. With an example in mind, they should address that person, for example, saying: "Judy, I saw you Model the Way when you explained to Gary how health and safety inspections relate to our department's core values."
4. The student would then pour the corresponding colored sand into the vessel of the person being recognized. (In this example, the speaker would pour green sand into Judy's vase – green symbolizing Model the Way leadership behaviors.)

Spend about 10-20 minutes with the S.A.N.D. activity 2 or 3 times each month. Students can use the feedback to set goals for themselves. For example, if Judy notices that she has plenty of green sand (Model the Way) but no purple sand (Challenge the Process) in her jar, she might set a goal to take the initiative in experimenting over the next week or two. By the end of the year, students will have a colorful reminder of how they have grown as a leader.

Student Appreciation Nurturing and Developing

This is an opportunity for you to recognize the leadership behavior of your peers. Please consider who you have seen exhibiting these behaviors and nominate them for the appropriate color of sand.



- Sets a personal example
- Aligns others with principles and standards
- Follows through on promises
- Gets feedback about actions
- Builds consensus on values
- Talks about values and principles



- Looks ahead and communicates future
- Describes ideal capabilities
- Talks about vision of the future
- Shows others how interests can be realized
- Paints “big picture” of group aspirations
- Communicates purpose and meaning



- Fosters collaborative relationships
- Actively Listens
- Treats others with respect
- Supports decisions other people make
- Gives people choice about how to do their work
- Provides leadership opportunities



- Develops skills and abilities
- Helps others take risks
- Searches outside the organization for innovative ways to improve
- Asks “What can we learn?”
- Makes certain that goals, plans and milestones are set
- Takes initiative in experimenting



- Praises people
- Encourages others
- Provides support and appreciation
- Publicly recognizes alignment with values
- Celebrates accomplishments
- Creatively recognizes people