

**THE ASPIRA PUBLIC POLICY LEADERSHIP PROGRAM**

**PART II**

**CURRICULUM CONTENT**

## **Section A**

### **THE LEARNING APPROACH**

The ASPIRA Public Policy Leadership Program uses public policy as the framework within which leadership is taught and learned. In implementing the program curriculum, as described in this manual, the facilitator will find that its content is defined by a specific philosophical approach and set of beliefs and values. We believe it is important to address these values and philosophy at the very beginning so that the learner, as well as the facilitator, will be conscious of their influence on the content and will also test their consistency with the learning/teaching process. As the reader will see, the philosophy of learning becomes the method of learning as well as the model of learning.

The curriculum and teaching methodology in this program are based on the following principles:

- \* Students learn best when they are self-directed and engage in situations that promote problem formulation and problem solving
- \* Teachers are more effective when they serve as resources and as facilitators for learning, rather than serving as the source of learning
- \* A small group of committed learners facilitates the learning process
- \* Knowledge can be generated through many activities; research is one of these many activities
- \* Education that is meaningful and purposeful to the learner must incorporate the learner's educational needs, interests, and objectives
- \* Formal education should be a part of an ongoing and continuous process in the life of a learner, and it should not separate the learner from her or his life situation, circumstances and community
- \* Alternative education provides a significant opportunity for education to become purposeful and meaningful in community development and community renovation

Throughout the program, we encourage learners to develop and use skills of inquiry,

analysis and investigation to find the answers necessary to make their future community work more purposeful and targeted.

Therefore, the teaching methodology must provide opportunities for program participants to develop and reinforce skills in analysis, synthesis, conceptualization, data gathering, evaluation, and dissemination (both oral and written), and to regard these skills as essential to transforming their reality. They should also understand that these skills, unknown to them or previously rejected by them, are crucial to community development activities through public policy. In this method of teaching, the students' learning is what counts. Teaching is the strategy to this end. These two ideas do not always come together in public school education. This program places its emphasis on the learner, not on the teacher. However, the teacher is crucial in the learning process. The learners must be actively involved in learning and observing themselves as learners.

So many teachers say, "the students did not hear a word I said," or "they have no idea what it is I am talking about," or "they just do not know how to listen." In these examples, the students are blamed for not learning while the teacher is not a suspect. No one asks how the teaching could be more effective. Unfortunately, in the majority of cases, the students who are being accused are students who are culturally and/or linguistically different. Thus, the students are blamed for not learning, and educators discover complex, culturally biased, ethnocentric theories to substantiate withholding learning from a particular few.

In our program, the educational emphasis is on both learning and teaching, and the method of directing that learning is what is known as learner-centered education. The lesson plans in this manual describe activities involving both the facilitator and the learner, and promoting the development and reinforcement of skills, insights, techniques and basic competencies. The purpose of the material is to promote learning that is expandable; learning that produce critical thinkers and problem solvers; learning that convinces the learners that they are learners indeed!

This philosophy/methodology of learning is implemented when both learners and facilitators can question and discuss ideas and skills, and can transfer these discussions into purposeful action. The learner must be actively involved in the learning process while at the same time being at its center. Learning must progress from the known to the unknown. Learners must

build upon information and skills they already possess, thereby becoming open to new ideas.

Learning must always be tied to the learner's daily life. This simple and obvious statement is essential since everybody has a way of looking at the world based upon the experiences they have had in it. We were all brought up in certain homes, communities and cultural settings. These experiences, coupled with societal influences, provided us with a frame of reference, shaping our vision of the world. Thus, our learning must consider, use, and enhance this frame of reference.

The educational philosophy in this program is associated with names such as Freire Brunner and many more. It is called Dialogical Process, Inductive Method of Learning, Inquiry Learning, and so on. The bibliography at the end of this section contains a list of authors for further reading about this educational philosophy.

### **Role of the Teacher/Facilitator**

Technique and philosophy come together in Creative Education. Dialogue is both a philosophy and a technique. The teacher is essential to this process, although the learner is the central player in teaching her/himself. The facilitator asks key questions to assist the learner in problem posing and gaining greater clarity of her/his values, ideas, goals, experiences, and the surrounding world in general. This is why we call the teacher a facilitator. The problem posing process takes a great deal of skill on the facilitator's part. To ask a question implies that the facilitator carries a solid knowledge base and recognizes the learner's lack of understanding of an unsolved issue, problem, concern, or consideration, and of the conditions that are preventing effective problem solving. The dialogue or dialogical process allows the learner to think out loud, hear her/himself in defining the obstacles to problem solving, test through dialogue the options, verbalize strategies, and make plans for action.

Problem Posing	Dialogue	Engagement	Problem Solving	Action
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If the facilitator is skillful, she/he will be able to assist the learner in asking and answering

her/his own questions. In short, the teacher facilitates learning while the learner becomes skilled in being her/his own teacher. The success of the learning is measured by the learner's ability to foresee future situations, by the acquisition of skills and a way of structuring her/his environment that allows her/him to evaluate, plan and act effectively.

We believe that all youth programs must concern themselves with the problem of exclusion and alienation of youth, quite significant in our society. Youth are disfranchised by a society that relates to them as a dependent and consuming population. The social roles and responsibilities that youth have carried historically in families, small businesses, neighborhoods, and communities have been eroded or eliminated by many social processes beyond youth's control.

### **WAYS OF VIEWING EDUCATIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

	TRADITIONAL EDUCATION EDUCATION (Learner's Usual School Experience)	CREATIVE  (Philosophy of this program)
Role of Teacher	Teacher is all-knowing and determines the "program content"	Teacher is a facilitator, catalyst and resource person in the learning situation
Role of Student	Student is subservient and brings little knowledge to learning situation; student adapts to learning situation	Student is at the center of learning and is encouraged and challenged to become the central "actor" in the learning process
Student/Teacher Relationship	A relationship of inequality exists; teacher teaches and students are taught	Both teacher and students are partners in an exploration of knowledge and discovery with both contributing to and benefiting from the shared experience
Student's Relationship to Social	Environment	Environment

The student is removed from social environment and is expected to integrate her/himself into the larger society

Student's social environment is valued as significant and integrated into the learning experience

In reality, youth are excluded from the economic life and the decision-making structures and processes of the community. The result has been an ill-defined or undefined status for youth in communities. The extreme consequences of these conditions are youth vandalism, crime, drug addiction, suicide, and dropping out of school.

We strive to have all the youth with whom we work understand the place (or "non-place") of youth in our society and their ability and responsibility to define themselves by actively participating in the life of their communities. Where our youth find incidents of racism, community deterioration, loss of leadership and apathy, we challenge them to prepare themselves to become socially conscious and committed people.

### **Teaching Philosophy and Methodology**

Who teaches, what is taught, and how teaching occurs is not happenstance. Excellence in teaching requires systematic preparation and a thorough understanding of what teaching and learning mean.

We understand and accept education to be a learning process in which teacher and learners constitute a learning community where both learn and grow. We accept that learning is ongoing and continuous. Your involvement with the youth should be seen as part of their total life experience.

The facilitators implementing this curriculum are expected to utilize these principles as a foundation for their interactions with youth. The knowledge base is holistic. The curriculum is

expected to challenge the youth to explore their own ideas, as well as the ideas of others. Theories and concepts in each of these areas are to be used by the facilitator to validate, challenge and substantiate youth discussions. While we do not wish to mystify knowledge, this ASPIRA program accepts that there is knowledge generated by others that our youth should be aware of.

In each content area, we identified a series of problem-posing questions. These questions are used to provoke discussion and challenge the youth. The questions require that the facilitators have their own answers and be able to address their questions and answers from a knowledge base as well as from the standpoint of "self-involvement." We identify problem-posing questions as issues or situations to be worked through. They are not necessarily negative. They are situations requiring that the youth analyze, gather data, and engage in decision-making activities.

The curriculum and teaching methodology of this program are based on a theoretical understanding and knowledge of community theories, systems theory and theory of learning.

Youth interaction should occur primarily in three ways: direct interaction between the facilitator and youth on a one-to-one basis; group-to-facilitator interaction; and interaction among the youth themselves.

Since our program is in pursuit of developing leadership skills and values in community involvement, we require that group interactions be the major method for facilitators to become involved with the youth. Through involvement with peers, youth will discover their potentials; dialogue and critique their perceptions and values with others of similar age, background and circumstances; discover, test and exercise their skills and ability to influence, direct and motivate others. Because we believe that these insights and awareness of self are discovered in relation to others, our program emphasizes youth sessions as the method for working with the youth. This position does not negate our willingness to offer individual counseling to youth at such times when the particular nature of a problem or other circumstances require that a youth receive individual attention. However, our focus is always on the integration of youth in their peer groups and communities.

### **Philosophy of Youth Participation**

We have heard the words "youth participation" used in a variety of ways. By "youth participation" we mean the involvement of youth in legitimate responsibilities and decision-making processes that affect their lives and the functioning of their respective communities.

**It is essential for program staff to spell out in detail their own definition of "youth participation" and the logical parameters and implications of the definition.** Throughout the program year, it is necessary to evaluate and monitor your commitment to and expectations for youth participation. It is necessary that an explicated philosophy of youth participation be thoroughly worked into the staff's program activities. Without such intent, it will be impossible for you to hold the youth to performing the adult activities involved in leadership roles. If you treat the youth like children, they will act like children, and they will be unable to function with the maturity and responsibility required. You should identify and use safeguards to assure that you are following through on the program's commitment to honest youth participation. This commitment must

become yours.

You may use the following kinds of activities to insure continued commitment to youth participation:

1. During each component of the program, meet with mentors, speakers and advisors to discuss how you and they can insure and increase the responsibilities of the youth in fulfilling the objectives of the program.
2. Allow the youth to involve themselves in practical program operations, such as reaching decisions on the expected behavior of participants; evaluating the quality of the mentors, speakers, and other advisors; handling discipline problems; organizing program events; electing youth leaders; handling daily assignments.
3. Encourage students to accept speaking engagements and involve themselves in community activities.
4. Organize a program curriculum committee that allows youth to become involved in decisions regarding teaching content, field experiences, internships and mentor selection.

## **Section B**

### **IMPLEMENTING THE CURRICULUM**

This manual is presented in distinct units of learning consistent with the philosophy described above.

The units of learning are:

- Skills Development
- Personal and Social Development
- Community
- Public Policy
- Leadership

Each unit of learning is introduced by an overview of the subject followed by specific learning activities that facilitators can use in their work with participants. The activities should be viewed as opportunities for you to explore and create additional possibilities that reflect the particular educational interests and needs of your participants.

The learning activities should reflect real life situations and challenge the participants to become knowledgeable and actively involved in the affairs of their communities.

#### **Organizing Your Curriculum**

In an earlier section of this manual, we discussed the teaching philosophy of the program. An understanding of this philosophy is essential to conducting a successful program. Let me restate two basic principles of our teaching philosophy:

1. Education needs to be meaningful and purposeful when it incorporates the learner's educational needs, interests and objectives.
2. Education should be an ongoing and continuous process in the life of the learner and should not separate the student from his/her life situation.

#### **Core Content**

Core content provides a knowledge base upon which to expand, reflect, analyze, and synthesize experiences.

### Field Observations and Internships

The field observations and internships offer youth-organized activities to observe directly and first-hand the functioning of their communities.

### Community Assessment Experiences

The community assessment experiences are designed as action research activities to learn about and analyze the community.

### Individual and Group Motivation

Individual sessions are available as needed by youth to handle personal or social problems that interfere in achieving goals. Group motivation is scheduled weekly in a structured time. The purpose of these sessions is to integrate and synthesize learning.

You will be able to plan your own approach to the curriculum using the teaching modules. The facilitators are encouraged to write their own lesson plans using their own information base; their skills in working with people; their cultural and community affiliations; past and current situations in their communities; their personal style and personality. Individual creativity is shaped by mutually agreed upon objectives, standards, and goals for the program. This flexible approach will be monitored and evaluated so that there is an acceptable standard of preparation and performance at all program sites. The use of the program manual assures that there is a quality curriculum that is rational, task-oriented and youth centered.

In the next few pages, we will touch upon some essential considerations as you plan your approach to the curriculum. Each approach will exhibit some differences since each community-based institution functions in its own community, facilitators have different backgrounds, and participant needs will vary according to location. We expect that each program and each facilitator will develop the teaching contents based on the needs of the youth participants, and our teaching

modules will provide examples for you to follow.

Let us restate a variety of guidelines that have been articulated throughout this manual:

1. A curriculum is how you teach (method), what you teach (contents) and your specific goals in teaching (objectives and product). All of these factors must be considered in teaching.
2. Your basic commitment and goals ought to be the development of Puerto Rican and other Latino youth.
3. The facilitators must relate to, teach and work with the whole group of youth and with individual members of the group.
4. Each unit of the curriculum must be considered as a distinct unit, but all units must be interrelated and in support of the overall goals and objectives of the program.
5. You must have clearly identified product goals that become the evidence of how successful the teaching/learning has been.
6. The work of advisors (community citizens and community leaders) must be integrated into the total curriculum. Their input must be consistent with the goals and objectives of the program.
7. The philosophy of youth participation must be practiced at all stages of the curriculum. The youth should be actively engaged in defining teaching objectives, identifying resource materials and persons, teaching, and evaluating the appropriateness and effectiveness of the curriculum.
8. Lesson plans must utilize the facilitators' creativity, knowledge, skills, style and personality. The facilitator is in charge of the teaching function.
9. Facilitators must allocate time to meet with the executive director and other facilitators to plan, discuss, monitor and evaluate the curriculum.
10. In planning your approach, it is important to allow time to respond to the changing needs and requirements of the program.

## **GUIDE FOR PLANNING AND ORGANIZING YOUR APPROACH TO CURRICULUM**

### **PROGRAM COMPONENT**

### **LEADERSHIP SEMINARS**

Teaching objective:

To lay a foundation for responsible community work in policy-making bodies.

Knowledge to be gained:

Functions and origins of community; needs that must be satisfied for quality life; social situations of the community; problems and issues; organizations and groups; leaders; nature and functioning of public policy; policy issues as they affect Latino communities.

Skills to be learned:

Data collection; analysis; assessment and evaluation of leadership and organizational performance; public speaking; technical writing; arguing a position.

Products:

Intelligent and informed members of a community prepared to carry responsible positions on community policy-making boards.

### **PROGRAM COMPONENT**

### **COMMUNITY SERVICE INTERNSHIPS**

Teaching objective:

To provide practical experiences for observing the performance of leaders in policy-making arenas.

Knowledge to be gained:

Same as in the Leadership Seminars, but including knowledge of a particular policy-making setting and the performance of a leader.

Skills to be learned:

Ability to analyze and assess leadership performance; ability to analyze policy-making as to key issues, major interest groups, background and processes in policy formulation and implementation.

## **GUIDE FOR PLANNING AND ORGANIZING YOUR APPROACH TO CURRICULUM**

### **PROGRAM COMPONENT**

### **COMMUNITY SERVICE INTERNSHIPS**

Products:

Group community service project: papers analyzing and criticizing the performance of a leader or a policy issue; youth conference addressing policy and youth issues; presentation of testimony at hearings; youth rally; direct service project. Project should demonstrate skills acquired, knowledge of leadership performance, knowledge of the community and of policy making.

### **PROGRAM COMPONENT**

### **NATIONAL INTERNSHIPS**

Teaching objective:

To work on a national issue and become fully knowledgeable of its parameters by writing a paper that analyzes said policy (criteria to be provided).

Knowledge to be gained:

Same as previous components, to include: in-depth knowledge of a particular problem or issue that affects Latinos at a national level.

Skills to be learned:

To be able to select and follow a problem through the policy-making process.

Products:

A policy analysis paper completed by all participants.

### **Developing and Using a Lesson Plan**

The lesson plan is a tool that the facilitator uses to prepare himself/herself for teaching. The lesson plan is a standard tool used by all teachers, and we have adapted it to this program.

Let us briefly identify and discuss each section of the plan. A sample format follows for

your review. The outline of the plan should be developed as indicated. This progression will assist in clarifying, focusing and generally preparing the facilitator to teach. As for a public school teacher, the facilitator cannot short change the process. If faked, the facilitator will be unable to hold his/her own with the group and the group process, and the group will not be able to reach its highest achievement level.

We strongly suggest that lesson plans be completed weeks in advance to provide the facilitator with a sense of security. Although the facilitator may complete plans well in advance, he/she must remember that the plan is an anchor and a guide. The plan should never become more important than the relationship between teacher and youth. Well into the program it may be possible for you to show students how to develop their own lesson plans.

### Time Schedule

It is important for the facilitator to introduce the structure of time in the day's activity. It is not necessary to use classroom bells and a visible watch, but it is necessary to be aware that (1) time can be wasted and (2) a non-structured day will generally produce no concrete goals and tasks. The facilitator must keep a consciousness of time in order not to lose it. The realistic construction of time is to work with half-hour units.

#### Example 1:

9:00 a.m.	Planning for the day's activities -- setting priorities and tasks to be accomplished
9:30 a.m.	What is a leader? (content)
10:30 a.m.	Discussion and assessment of leadership by group members: Using examples of persons known, group compiles a list of qualities
11:30 a.m.	Lunch

#### Example 2:

11:00 a.m.	Saludos
11:10 a.m.	Writing piece. Topic: What I do from the time I wake up until I get to school
11:30 a.m.	Discuss important newspaper articles (Ana and Maria were assigned to collect articles)
12:30 p.m.	LUNCH

1:45 p.m.  
2:10 p.m.

Work on community assessment as a group  
Presentations (60 a round on internship sites)

Youth have a way of wasting time on their own, but they will be critical of the staff person who wastes their time.

### Topic/Content to be Covered

Your objectives for the day determine the content to be covered. The content is the major informational material that the teacher will bring to the day's activity. The content further defines one of the major areas of the curriculum. The facilitator (or other resource people) breaks down "what is to be taught" into manageable units of teaching and learning.

Example:

- Day's Objectives:
- 1) to assist the youth in identifying what they know of leadership
  - 2) to develop a collective definition of leadership and criteria for evaluating leadership

Topic/Content:

Leadership:

What is leadership? How do leaders function?

### Teaching Objectives

The teaching objectives are the pursuits, products or tasks to be accomplished for the day. In this program, it is not necessary to establish measurable objectives although facilitators may desire to do so. However, the objectives should be considered and stated clearly to allow both the facilitator and the youth to (1) have a frame of reference for the day's work, and (2) evaluate the day's work. The teaching objectives can cover one or more topics (or content areas). Methods, resources and outcomes must be developed for each stated objective.

### Methods to be Used

This section is intended to assist the facilitator in identifying the teaching method(s) that will be used. We use "teaching method" in a broad sense. Methods may include: a lecture; teaching/working with small groups; speakers; field trips; meetings; reading; etc. The above content may be covered by any of these methods. The purpose for this section in the lesson plan is to have the facilitator identify "how" things will happen during the day.

### Resources/Materials to be Used

In this section of the lesson plan, the facilitator is asked to think about and identify any materials or resources that should be collected and prepared before the teaching day. The reasons are obvious. The resources can include: books, films, forms, speakers, newspapers, magazines, statistical tables, comic books, remedial books, dictionaries, blackboard, large paper, etc. **(Refer to resource lists at the end of the book)**

The questions that the facilitator must ask are: "What material can I use to best illustrate the points I am trying to make? What teaching aids can I use to achieve my teaching objectives?"

The resources for learning are as exhaustive as the teacher is creative. There should be no appropriate or inappropriate materials as in a public school. The materials should be identified and collected prior to the teaching session.

Example:

Topic/Content Area: Leadership

Resources/Materials:

- |            |    |  |
|------------|----|--|
| leadership | 1) | Definitions of leadership developed at HLOP training |
|            | 2) | Any studies completed on leadership                  |
|            | 3) | Large paper to write down students' definitions of   |
|            | 4) | Video of Latino grass roots leader                   |

### Expected Outcomes

This section encourages the facilitator to explicate the task and product goals for the day. This section answers the questions: "What is the outcome of today's work? What concrete results will be reached?"

While the outcomes are not always products, the facilitator should push his/herself to identify concrete outcomes for the day so that each day is a step in developing the fullest potential of the youth. The outcomes should be stated in such a way that you can test for attainment.

Example:

Expected Outcomes (correct)

- \* to have each student complete a detailed self-assessment
- \* to have each youth identify a policy area of his/her interest
- \* to have each youth discuss and evaluate his/her reasons for entering the program
- \* to have youth become acquainted with the interests and backgrounds of other group members
- \* to complete a community research project
- \* to visit five community organizations

Products - a completed community assessment; a leadership profile

Expected Outcomes (incorrect)

- \* to have the youth feel better about themselves
- \* to study community problems
- \* to work on a community issue
- \* to meet a leader

Although these "incorrect outcomes" may be useful in some situations, when outcomes are left vague or too abstract, most learners will have difficulty connecting them to the activity.

Evaluation

The evaluation will allow you to test on a daily basis how well you are teaching and how well the youth are learning. For each day, you should have a way of testing the effectiveness of the curriculum. There are a number of possible evaluation methods: written quiz, review of written documents, feedback sessions, oral examination, written paper and group presentations.

A final word of advice: Since many of our youth have been previously "turned off" to learning, it is crucial that this new learning be exciting, motivating, well planned and well implemented. The program must be learner centered. The teaching/learning should use a practical approach, that is, the learner must pose and solve problems by working around relevant issues and gathering skills to become more successful. The student must learn by doing!

In the beginning of the program, you may believe that many of the exercises are childish or

irrelevant. This is probably not true! Many of our youth possess a facade of maturity or maturity is limited to specific areas of functioning. You must try to test your activities. A simple exercise can often become appropriate because it requires extensive involvement and maturity. We wish to impress upon you the fact that the youth will have limited attention spans and little tolerance for teaching that they define as irrelevant. The facilitator needs to be thoroughly organized, prepared to teach, flexible, creative, and extremely energetic. Pay attention to the current level of knowledge in students, many may have already been exposed repeatedly to some of these concepts in other programs.

### Planning Your Time and the Youth's Time in the Program

There is a large amount of content and other activities to cover in a short time. You will need to organize your time around your requirement of five weekly hours with youth during the Leadership Seminars and the Community Service Internships.

Following is a copy of an empty lesson plan and a table which provides a weekly time distribution for youth in the program. It also gives you a suggested distribution for your own time use.

# **LESSON PLAN**

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

Identify your major objective and goals for the day

TIME SCHEDULE	CONTENT TO BE COVERED	TEACHING OBJECTIVES	METHODS TO BE USED	RESOURCES/ MATERIALS NEEDED & TO BE USED	EXPECTED OUTCOMES

**SAMPLE DISTRIBUTION OF WEEKLY HOURS FOR PARTICIPANTS IN PROGRAM**

	Leadership Seminars	Community Service Internships	National Internship
Structured Teaching and Skill Teaching	2 Hours	1-1/2 Hours	5 Hours
Presentation by Speakers (in location & at sites)	1/2 Hour		5 Hours
Field Trips to legislative bodies, commit- tees, agencies, community sites, meetings	1 Hour		1 Hour
Completion of Work Assignments, Tasks, Research Projects, Papers, Library Work, Field Work, (supervised work)	1 Hour	1-1/2 Hours	5 Hours
Internships		5 Hours	30 Hours
General Plan- ning, Advising, Assistance to Learners	1/2 Hour		
Total Hours Weekly	5 Hours 15 Weeks	8 Hours 8 Weeks	40 Hours 4-6 Weeks

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