

## **STUDY STRATEGIES – TEAM PREPARATION**

Study strategies will evolve from within the make-up of the students, coaches, resources and facilities available. The following procedures have been utilized by some high schools in recent competitions.

### **Sample High Schools**

#### **High School “A”**

A study center is set up in the library. Resources are available for independent research. Students and coaches meet four afternoons a week. Each weekend, students do research, devise test questions, and make outlines on assigned topics. Each student, in the afternoon session, presents information to other students. The coaches compile the student-operated test items. These practice tests are administered to the students.

High school teachers meet with the students during the afternoon sessions to provide lectures and materials on the specified subject areas. A sophomore Honor student has taken it upon himself to research and provide materials on the Super Quiz topic.

#### **High School “B”**

Students have access to a study center in the library. Resources are available for independent research. Students and coaches meet four mornings a week from 7:30 to 8:30 am. There is concentration on one subject area per week. One section of each subject area outline is assigned to each student. The students do independent research, devise 10 test questions, and prepare a lecture on the material. Each student presents the information to the other students. The coaches compile the 90 questions into a test. The test is answered over the weekend and then graded by the coaches. This feedback gives the students information as to additional study needs.

High school teachers of specific subject areas meet with the students during the morning sessions to provide lectures and materials. The students prepare their speeches independently. Speeches are heard and critiqued. Practice interview sessions are held. Study sessions are planned for Saturday mornings and during breaks.

#### **High School “C”**

The most important ingredient to team preparation is Attitude, Attitude, Attitude. Agree on meeting times and the duration of the meetings. There should be no surprises. You can be a fanatic about this and meet often during the summer, or you can do the worst possible thing by throwing a team together at the last possible minute, or you can find some happy medium between these two extremes. A lot will depend on the students’ individual schedules, the coaches’ schedules and the school’s commitment to the program.

Team members must be committed to Academic Decathlon. This is their primary extracurricular activity. In the summertime, they should read the novel or play identified for study in the Language and Literature discipline for the next year.

## **STUDY STRATEGIES – TEAM PREPARATION** *(continued)*

No coach can be well versed in all the disciplines covered in the USAD curriculum. Include other faculty members in the team's preparation. However, do as much as you can do before asking for assistance.

**Math, Science, Social Studies, Economics:** If any of these are not your field of expertise, invite a math teacher/colleague to work with the team.

**Fine Arts, Language and Literature:** Bring in an expert in each of these fields

**Interview:** Bring in vocational teachers who have experience in interviewing. Counselors often have experience in this domain. A person from your Human Resources department would be a good mentor for developing interview skills. If someone in your school works with Governor's Honors Program candidates on their interview skills, invite them to help your team prepare.

**Speech:** An English teacher and/or debate coach would be a good support for this dimension. These experts may be helpful in the development of the prepared speech. Once the speech is written, then it's Practice! Practice! Practice! Have team members listen to the speeches of other team members and critique them.

**Essay:** An English colleague would be a good mentor for ensuring good essay skills. Then it's Practice! Practice! Practice! Have students critique the essays of each other.

**Super Quiz:** The expertise needed for this will depend on the selected topic.

### **STUDY TIPS**

There is no substitute for reading the assigned materials. This includes the novel/poetry, the various Resource Guides and Subject Area Guides. How students study and learn depends more on the coach's style of teaching than anything else. Don't fall in love with one method. Be versatile.

### **Materials**

Most materials, initially, are research and copied by our coaches. After local competition, student research follows up our research. **Beware** of high prices for Acadec, Acalon, and DemiDec Study Resource materials. You can spend a lot of money on the materials produced by these entrepreneurs (*and that does not include the cost of copying*). It is rare that the value of the materials is worth the cost.

### **Support**

You will need financial support and copying privileges from your school's administrator. You will need support from your teacher colleagues in some academic areas (e.g. – art, music, essay writing, interviewing, speech construction and delivery, etc.). You will need lots of understand from the parents of your decathletes. Finally, you will need financial support from your community. Start early in the year to work on this.