

Advocacy Activities

Unit: Professional Practices

Problem Area: Advocacy

Lesson: Advocacy Activities

- **Student Learning Objectives.** Instruction in this lesson should result in students achieving the following objectives:

- 1 Analyze types of advocacy.**
- 2 Make contacts.**
- 3 Organize advocacy activities.**

- **Resources.** The following resources may be useful in teaching this lesson:

E-unit(s) corresponding to this lesson plan. CAERT, Inc. <http://www.mycaert.com>.

“AAFCS Obesity Initiative,” AAFCS. Accessed Nov. 19, 2012. <http://www.aafcs.org/Advocacy/obesity.asp>.

Assifi, N. “Advocacy Strategy Planning,” *University of Pittsburgh*. Accessed Nov. 19, 2012. www.pitt.edu/~super7/18011-19001/18351.ppt.

“Guide to Making Contact,” *Be Real*. Accessed Nov. 19, 2012. <http://www.bereal.com.au/making-contact.htm>.

“Quotes About Advocacy,” *goodreads*. Accessed Nov. 19, 2012. <http://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/advocacy>.

“What Is Advocacy?” *Be Real*. Accessed Nov. 19, 2012. <http://www.bereal.com.au/what-is-advocacy.htm>.



“What Is Advocacy? Definitions and Examples,” *Alliance for Justice*. Accessed Nov. 19, 2012. https://docs.google.com/viewer?a=v&q=cache:D8QY5u3fzcJ:www.afj.org/for-nonprofits-foundations/immigrant-advocacy-toolkit/what-is-advocacy.pdf+What+is+Advocacy?+Definitions+and+examples&hl=en&gl=us&pid=bl&srcid=ADGEESgYAhxw9tZ5PBckC184euWTajuzGDvs5E4fa9xvM1KGIV1mj1lq9DiS-l1ltnwVVMeEYdGZKQK7bg_G6Kub940sqwHgM1ryoNZppbV9cX1kcujtTVTcrOE5ph5E4C3XIToxkn&sig=AHIEtbTQ8oVxIHBWDrOJNZratOpD_XxOrQ.

■ **Equipment, Tools, Supplies, and Facilities**

- ✓ Overhead or PowerPoint projector
- ✓ Visual(s) from accompanying master(s)
- ✓ Copies of sample test, lab sheet(s), and/or other items designed for duplication
- ✓ Materials listed on duplicated items
- ✓ Computers with printers and Internet access
- ✓ Classroom resource and reference materials

■ **Key Terms.** The following terms are presented in this lesson (shown in bold italics):

- ▶ action plan
- ▶ advocacy
- ▶ lobbying
- ▶ SMART objectives
- ▶ stakeholders

■ **Interest Approach.** Use an interest approach that will prepare the students for the lesson. Teachers often develop approaches for their unique class and student situations. A possible approach is included here.

What are you passionate about? What are some of the issues that make you want to advocate for a cause? Use VM–A. Morgan Carroll wrote Take Back Your Government: A Citizen’s Guide to Making Your Government Work for You. In it, Carroll reminds the reader about exceptional young people who care. He indicates that many exceptional people were ordinary people who cared and who wanted to help others have a better life. Advocacy takes many forms. Ask students to brainstorm and share some examples.

CONTENT SUMMARY AND TEACHING STRATEGIES

Objective 1: Analyze types of advocacy.

Anticipated Problem: What are the types of advocacy?

I. Advocacy activities

- A. **Advocacy** is support of a cause, a policy, or a proposal communicated verbally or in writing. It can be used to influence public policy, obtain resources for individuals or groups, or educate others. Lobbying is a type of advocacy. **Lobbying** is influencing political policy for a shared interest. Paid and volunteer individuals or groups hoping to get political support for a cause conduct lobbying efforts. The Alliance for Justice clarifies the difference between lobbying and advocacy: Lobbying is a type of advocacy, but not all advocacy efforts are lobbying.
- B. Advocacy is divided into three main types:
1. Independent advocacy is a person who works for the benefit of one or two other people. A family member advocating for health issues of a relative is an example.
 2. Systemic advocacy is working to inform or change the system. A group of educators advocating legislators to support funding for their cause is an example.
 3. Self-advocacy is similar to independent advocacy except that a person undertakes the effort on behalf of himself or herself. (There could be a group of people advocating for themselves.)

Teaching Strategy: Have students brainstorm causes that have advocates. List the examples on the board (e.g., child welfare, education, stem cell research, medical bills, Planned Parenthood, obtaining a West Point appointment from a legislator, and raising minimum wage). Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group a different type of advocacy and a group number: 1 = Independent, 2 = Systemic, and 3 = Self. Have each team review the advocacy list brainstormed earlier and decide which causes belong to their assigned type of advocacy. Once each group has made its decisions, have a representative place the group number next to the issues they identified. If an issue has more than one type of advocacy listed, have the group discuss its rationale.

Objective 2: Make contacts.

Anticipated Problem: How do advocates make contacts?

II. Advocacy contacts

- A. Letter writing is a good first step to make contact with an individual, group, company, government agency, etc.
 1. It is best to keep the letter short and concise, no more than one page in length. Full-block format should be used for typed business letters.
 2. The first paragraph should be an introduction. The second paragraph should be details, and the last paragraph should be a summary. Each paragraph should begin with a topic sentence.
 3. It is important to state facts without emotions, arguments, or accusations.
 4. Congressional letters should be handwritten or typed. Form letters are ineffective. Generally, for a letter to a member of Congress to be effective, a person must be a member of the congressional district.
 5. It is essential for the writer to sign all letters and to include his or her name and mailing address.
- B. Making phone calls, on behalf of a cause, is a common way to show commitment. To make an effective advocacy phone call, tell your students they must do the following:
 1. Identify yourself: “This is _____. To whom am I speaking?”
 2. State the purpose of the phone call in common terms: “I’m calling to register my support for _____.”
 3. Use precise words, and talk at a moderate pace.
 4. Finish the conversation positively, and ask if they have any questions.
 5. If leaving a name, address, or phone number, spell the necessary words, and ask politely to have the information repeated: “Do you mind repeating that number back to me, so I can be sure I gave it to you correctly?”
 6. When leaving a voicemail, state the message clearly and concisely. A message should include the date and time as well as the caller’s name and phone number.
- C. Email and/or social media advocacy
 1. Advocacy emails are formally written but in a shortened format.
 2. The emails should be planned in advance.
 3. Spell-check and grammar proofreading functions should be used.
 4. The use of common email phonetic spellings or emoticons should be avoided.
 5. Subject lines should be succinct: subject, name, title, and date. Some professionals receive hundreds of emails daily. As a result, follow-up is a good policy—asking the person in question to confirm email receipt.

D. Media advocacy

1. Contacting the correct person when requesting media coverage is essential.
 - a. Newspapers: It is best to contact reporters with a byline, editors who assign articles, and/or a photographer. At a small newspaper, the reporter may also take the pictures.
 - b. Radio: It is important to contact salespeople who sell airtime and on-air personalities who determine programming.
 - c. Television: It is essential to contact producers who control local news programs, assignment editors who research background information, and/or reporters who conduct interviews.
2. Coverage for advocacy activities
 - a. Media programs, such as “Unsung Heroes,” “Letters to the Editor,” or “Spotlight on _____” are often looking for sources of information.
 - b. It is best to contact the media well in advance of an event and again the day before coverage is requested.
 - c. It is wise to subscribe to the newspaper when asking for event coverage.

Teaching Strategy: Use VM–B and VM–C to facilitate a discussion. Have student volunteers role-play the following phone calls: making the first advocacy phone call to an organization, requesting media coverage for an advocacy activity, making a follow-up phone call for media coverage, and leaving a message about an advocacy activity.

Objective 3: Organize advocacy activities.

Anticipated Problem: How are advocacy activities developed?

III. Organize advocacy activities

A. Educating others

1. Legislators may be educated using correspondence, copies of news articles, displays at the capitol building, and personal visits at a district office or at the capitol.
2. The public may be educated via workshops, billboards, media programs, bulletin boards, networking, blogs, and other Internet avenues. For instance, the AAFCS Obesity Initiative is a program that advocates for the prevention of childhood obesity. This source is used at community groups and with youth organizations (e.g., FCCLA and 4-H) and in FCS classrooms. Information about the Obesity Initiative is found at <http://www.aafcs.org/Advocacy/obesity.asp>.

B. Research efforts—An advocacy cause may need statistical data collected and often requires that materials be reviewed or field tested before wide distribution. Many groups request funds for ongoing research and need volunteers to solicit funds.

C. Activities—A rally, gathering, or meeting may be planned for advocates with common causes to come together. Advocates often network with others to

exchange ideas, request funds, or share contacts. Advocate groups provide training or professional development for members of the cause.

- D. Strategic planning—Advocacy groups use strategic planning to ensure events are organized and that contingency options are considered. Plans often include:
1. A mission statement agreed upon by the organization or board of directors
 2. A list of issues the group wishes to tackle
 3. A list of **stakeholders**—individuals or groups who have a direct interest in the issue
 4. Objectives and action plans provide an organizational structure for the group’s activities. Strategic plans often use **SMART objectives**: **s**pecific, **m**easurable, **a**ttainable, **r**elevant, and **t**imely. The construction of a clear message is a crucial objective. Advocacy groups typically construct an action plan to carry out the objectives. An **action plan** is a sequence of steps to achieve the desired results. Monitoring and evaluation of the objectives and the action plan keep an advocacy group on target.

Teaching Strategy: Use VM–D and VM–E. Discuss the use of the Obesity Initiative, and determine if this might be a good FCCLA or class project to educate the student body or the community about the nationwide obesity crisis. An example of advocacy strategy planning can be found at www.pitt.edu/~super7/18011-19001/18351.ppt. Assign LS–A. Demonstrate how to tri-fold a business letter and how to address a business envelope.

■ **Review/Summary.** Use the student learning objectives to summarize the lesson. Have students explain the content associated with each objective. Student responses can be used in determining which objectives need to be reviewed or taught from a different angle. If a textbook is being used, questions at the ends of chapters may be included in the Review/Summary.

■ **Application.** Use the included visual master(s) and lab sheet(s) to apply the information presented in the lesson.

■ **Evaluation.** Evaluation should focus on student achievement of the objectives for the lesson. Various techniques can be used, such as student performance on the application activities. A sample written test is provided.

■ **Answers to Sample Test:**

Part One: Completion

1. topic
2. summary
3. one
4. lobbying

5. cause (or policy or proposal)
6. full block
7. action plan
8. stakeholders
9. SMART
10. networking

Part Two: True/False

1. T
2. T
3. F
4. F
5. T
6. F
7. F
8. T
9. T
10. T

Part Three: Short Answer

1. Answers will vary for the examples. Advocacy is divided into three main types:
 - a. Independent advocacy is a person who works for the benefit of one or two other people. A family member advocating for health issues of a relative is an example.
 - b. Systemic advocacy is working to inform or change the system. A group of educators advocating legislators to support funding for a cause is an example.
 - c. Self-advocacy is similar to independent advocacy except that a person (or a group) undertakes the effort on behalf of himself or herself.
2. Answers will vary but should be similar to the following: Advocacy is support of a cause, a policy, or a proposal. Advocacy can be used to influence public policy, obtain resources for individuals or groups, or educate others. Lobbying is a type of advocacy. Lobbying is influencing a political policy for a shared interest. It is a type of advocacy, but not all advocacy efforts are lobbying.

Advocacy Activities

► Part One: Completion

Instructions: Provide the word or words to complete the following statements.

1. Each paragraph of an advocacy letter should begin with a/an _____ sentence.
2. In a business letter, the first paragraph is an introduction, the second paragraph adds details, and the last paragraph provides a/an _____.
3. Advocacy letters are short and concise, typically no longer than _____ page(s).
4. When advocates attempt to influence political policy, it is called _____.
5. Advocacy is support for a/an _____.
6. It is recommended to write advocacy letters in _____ format.
7. A sequence of steps to achieve desired results is a/an _____.
8. Individuals or groups with a direct interest in an issue are called _____.
9. Objectives that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and timely are known by the acronym _____.
10. When advocates meet to exchange ideas, request funds, or share contacts, the activity is called _____.



► Part Two: True/False

Instructions: Write *T* for true or *F* for false.

- ___ 1. Never send unsigned advocacy letters.
- ___ 2. Advocacy can be used to influence public policy, obtain resources for individuals or groups, and educate others.
- ___ 3. State the purpose of an advocacy phone call in complex professional terms.
- ___ 4. When you call on behalf of a cause, begin by asking, “Who am I speaking with?”
- ___ 5. Follow up advocacy emails with USPS mail or a phone call.
- ___ 6. Use common email phonetic spelling or emoticons in advocacy emails.
- ___ 7. Advocacy emails are informally written and are in a shortened format.
- ___ 8. Label your email document succinctly (e.g., subject, your name, title, date).
- ___ 9. People may need to conduct research for an advocacy cause.
- ___ 10. Advocate groups often provide training and/or professional development for members of the cause.

► Part Three: Short Answer

Instructions: Answer the following.

1. Differentiate between the three types of advocacy. Give an example of each type.

2. What is the difference between advocacy and lobbying?

WHAT IS ADVOCACY?

- ◆ What are you passionate about?
- ◆ What issues make you want to advocate for a cause?
- ◆ What would you do to make life better for others?



MAKE ADVOCACY CONTACTS

- ◆ Write a letter
- ◆ Make a phone call
- ◆ Write an email and/or use social media
- ◆ Follow-up emails with a USPS or phone contact



MEDIA COVERAGE: CONTACT THE CORRECT PERSON



- ◆ **Newspapers** (by-line reporters, editors, photographers)
- ◆ **Radio** (airtime sales people, on-air personalities)
- ◆ **Television** (producers of local programming, assignment editors, reporters)
 - Unsung Heroes, Letters to the Editors, or Spotlight on Washington

NOTE: For all types of coverage, contact media outlets well in advance and again a day ahead of the event.

ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES



STRATEGIC PLANNING

- ◆ Mission statement
- ◆ List of issues the advocacy group wishes to tackle
- ◆ Stakeholders
- ◆ SMART objectives
- ◆ Message
- ◆ Action plan (education, networking, activities, training)
- ◆ Monitoring and evaluation



Write an Advocacy Letter

Purpose

The purpose of this activity is to advocate by writing a professional business letter.

Objectives

1. Identify potential individuals who (or positions that) may receive professional business letters from an advocate.
2. Select a cause, policy, or proposal for which you would advocate.
3. Draft, word process, and print a professional business letter.
4. Proofread your letter.
5. Use an original signature on your advocacy letter.
6. Send your advocacy letter.
7. Follow up with the contact.

Materials

- ◆ class notes
- ◆ white board and markers
- ◆ computer with Internet access and printer
- ◆ paper or letterhead
- ◆ business envelope
- ◆ stamps (optional)



Procedure

1. Brainstorm names of people who (or positions that) may be contacted by an advocate. Some examples are listed below. Add local contact names.

Advocacy Cause, Policy, or Proposal	Potential Contacts
Medical information	Hospital, nursing home, insurance company
Legislation change	State or federal legislators
Funds for _____	Newspapers, civic groups, businesses
Educate about _____	Media, civic groups, school board, mayor

2. Individually select an advocacy cause, policy, or proposal. Then select a contact person to whom you will write a professional business letter in block format. Determine if you will educate, request information, or a combination of educating and asking for funding.
3. On paper or a computer, draft your concise, one-page advocacy letter. Proofread for spelling and grammar. Word process the letter. A sample format may be found at <http://www.bereal.com.au/making-contact-business-letter.htm>. Download the business letter format example.
4. Ask two classmates to provide feedback on your letter. Make any necessary edits.
5. Address a business envelope.
6. Submit the word-processed letter and addressed envelope to the instructor for a final proof. Make any necessary edits.
7. Add an original signature to your letter. Tri-fold the letter. Insert it in an envelope, seal, and stamp it. Mail your letter.
8. Follow up via phone or email to confirm receipt of the letter.