

TIME: Teaching scouts how to make better use of it

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1. Motivation

At the recent National meeting, 45 scoutmasters were asked to tackle six problems, ours was “Time”

- Scouts have poor time management skills
- Competing activities are pulling scouts away
- Scouting is a low priority for older scouts

We quickly came up with these issues. Competing activities-sports, competitive band, Lego Robotics, theater, karate, ... there are many more activities going on than there used to be. Scouting is a 48-week season. It's becoming second and third on the list of extracurricular activities for too many scouts. Older scouts have even more problems. They're trying to figure out what they want to do in life. It's not enough to just have fun and it's hard to have fun after years of camporees

2. This is bigger than scouting

- 44% of undergraduate students fail to graduate
- They lack motivation and time management skills
- Lower socio-economic families ⇒ Lower rates
- This can be very expensive
- We can help our sons do better
- The Boy Scouts is uniquely set up to teach these skills

Ref: William Bowen, Princeton Univ Press

Something to consider. It's just an ominous statistic that says we're working on the right problem. This second part is good: Boy Scouts is unique, we can solve this problem: Our focus is values, not the score. We can work with boys much longer than a teacher. The boys lead, not the coach or teacher. We have a bigger playing field (the outdoors). We have a much broader scope, more flexibility. We can do longer term projects. We have fun!

3. Goal

- Teach scouts the skills they need to make their time more rewarding
- Set and meet their own goals
- Plan and do an Eagle project without guidance
- Organize a week-long campout
- Be the Troop's boating expert
- Find a skill that gives them great pride
- Create their own opportunity

That's the problem. Now for our goal. The goal is to give scouts the skills to take control of their own time. They shouldn't wait for the teacher, or coach to tell them what to do. Younger scouts - achieve their own goals. Older scouts – organize and plan bigger projects that help the troop. Rather than wait for opportunity, they should create it. This is where you want to be. How to get there is a different problem.

4. Outline

- Wing and a prayer
- In the usual Scouting Tradition, we're making it up as we go
- This is an iterative process
- Some troops already do parts of this
- This is where we found these ideas
 - First: Skills to Learn
 - Next: Method of Teaching

Outline of the rest of the talk we're not sure what the best method of reaching goal we will try, make mistakes, try again. We've talked to a lot of SMs and most of what we have is from them. First talk about skills to learn then talk about how to teach them.

5. Skills to learn

- Time Management
 - Setting goals as a patrol
- Keep track of commitments, do them
- Planning
 - More complex goals – events, PORs
 - For older scouts
- Goal Setting
 - Setting simple goals

There are three types of skills: Tenderfoot level: time management, keeping track of commitments. This is hard for 11 year olds. First Class level: setting and achieving simple goals. Star level: goals for a patrol. Eagle level: organize complex events, needs leadership. This is for older scouts. These skills build on each other. You can't set goals if you don't know what you're responsible for. You can't organize a high adventure trip if you can't set personal goals. Now talk about the three types of goals.

Time Management

- Scouts keep track of all commitments
- They need to look ahead and plan accordingly
- This runs three months out
- Will take months to make it habit
- Mom is not the calendar (but mom can help)
- The reward: less panic and missed opportunity
- Updated constantly

First skill is time management. Scouts keep track of their commitments. Includes everything – inside and outside of scouts, needs to run months into the future. More updates → requires discipline, resolve conflicts → can require mentoring, they need to plan their spare time. Campout this weekend, so get the homework done early. Reward: less stress over time issues.

6. Goal Setting

- Individual and by patrol
- Ask questions: Where, When, What resources, Who will help.
- Set quarterly, coincide with COH, PL tenure
- Discipline: The goal is set, now do it
- Goals are SMART
- Approved by PL, SPL, Mentor
- Simple planning:

Once a scout can manage the activities given to him, he can add his own. This is goal setting: First are individual goals, set quarterly, COH. Next, set goals by patrol, requires teamwork. Goals are SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely. Goals require some planning: who, what, where, when. Challenge is discipline in following through. Will take months/ years to learn to set reasonable goals. Approval is part of learning process

7. Planning Skills

- Breaking down complex tasks
- Managing others to stay on task
- Creating schedules
- Fixing problems
- Presenting plans for approval
- Some of this falls under leadership skills

Once a scout can set simple goals, ready for more complex goals, requires more planning. This is for older scouts, requires maturity (15, 16?). Planning skills... The tasks the scouts work on should mostly fit into a 3-month time frame. Simpler than an Eagle project, but close enough.

8. These Skills Complement the Methods of Scouting

- Patrols – Teamwork, patrol goals
- Personal Growth –
- Leadership Development – More skills to lead
- Outdoor Program – More adventure
- Association with adults – Mentor/Coach

We know the problem, the goal, and the skills we want to teach the scouts. Now talk about how to do this. All the skills are based on 1 or 3 month schedules. Need to use EDGE, but it will take many iterations. You don't learn how to cook or camp the first time you do it, this is the same. It has to become part of the culture of the troop. Will be push back, change is hard, but introduce in 3 places, younger scouts, patrols, older scouts

9. Method of Teaching

- Mentoring/Coaching
- EDGE - or maybe EDGGGGEEEEEEEEEE
- Part of the culture
- You keep doing it, this is not a one-time deal
- Stages of change: anger, denial, forgetfulness, grudge, acceptance
- Introducing this to a troop
 - Younger Scouts
 - Patrols
 - Older Scouts

10. For Younger Scouts

- Their objective is to set and achieve goals quarterly
- Time Management
- The calendar is the focal point
- Requires a lot of one-on-one mentoring
- Parents? How to train them?
- Quarterly goals
- By patrol? SM Conference? Broad of Reviews? Use older scouts?
- All adults must buy in and help

By younger, we mean anyone not in a position of responsibility. All scouts need to learn this. Time management is first skill. It includes everything in and out of scouts. Need someone familiar with all of it. Probably need parents help. How do we train them? Setting goals quarterly is second. Scout related goals so can do this in the troop. By patrol could be easiest, older scouts eventually. Will take a lot of adult help. This is not one ASMs job. All of the adults in the troop need to buy in.

11. For Patrols - Goals

- Set quarterly, or tenure of PL
- Nontrivial - Patrol outings, service projects, skills
- Accommodate patrol members – Advancement, fun
- Simple planning:
- Who, what, where, when, ...
- Assign responsibilities
- Create a calendar
- Execution: Keep focused, communicate

Patrols are used to teach team goals. This is nothing new for Boy Scouts. Goals have a limited time to be completed. Tenure of PL. Goals should be non-trivial. SPL sets boundaries. Accommodate goals of scouts. Patrol Leader does planning, assign responsibilities, create schedule. Next: Ensure execution. Keep scouts on task and communicate. The PL should have experience at setting and achieving his own goals. Might not always happen

12. For Older Scouts

- All older scouts are expected to help out
- Evens the load

- Builds camaraderie
- Keeps older scouts engaged
- Younger scouts look up to them
- Scouts do tasks that serve scouting
- Scouts might not like this, at first

All older scouts help out – this is a change from the norm. Helps everyone: “Many hands make light work”. Builds camaraderie among older scouts. Many SMs: best way to keep older scouts engaged. Younger scouts look up to older scouts more than adults. Scouts do tasks to help troop or council, instructing, organizing events, ... Some older scouts don’t like change. Some adults in the troop like it less. Will need early success.

13. Planning

- Tasks should start out simple
- Examples include teaching skills, organizing campouts, setting up demos for Webelos, projects at camporees or OA
- Eventually as open as an Eagle project
- Scouts are encouraged to find their own
- Help them out
- Be flexible on what is acceptable
- Match tasks to personalities
- Account for busy schedules

In order for the scouts to be successful they need training. Their tasks should start off simple and work up in complexity. Simple tasks include... Eventually, the tasks could be as open as an Eagle project. This gives the scout the skills to do an Eagle project. Scouts should be given freedom to pick their own project. As long as they are engaged and giving service to the troop then it’s a win. Encourage them to do their thing. Adapt to their schedules. Adapt to their personalities

14. Where we're at

- A few troops are starting to try this out
- We need a few more
- We will have either a website at National or a Google site to share ideas
- We are using “Best Practice” ideas, so we welcome yours

Things we can do to promote Time Management in the units:

- Open the meeting site on time.
- Start meetings on time. It’s up to those that are late to catch up with what they missed.
- Close the meeting on time. Manage time throughout meeting. Keep it moving!
- Campout Meals can be on time if you start the planning while making the meal plan – You need to know how long things take to cook and plan accordingly and in what order so it all hits the table warm and ready-to-eat.
- Hold leaders are just as responsible for being on time as the scouts!
- Fail to plan, plan to fail!
- Remind those that are habitually late, that their habits affect the rest of the patrol, or troop and it’s not scout-like.

