

Preparing Students for Competition

As a new FCCLA adviser, one of the things that often seems daunting is how to prepare students to compete in STAR Events. Veteran advisers share these tips for getting a handle on competition:

Understand the event. "Read and understand the event before allowing the students to begin. Students are enthusiastic and miss the intent of the event/project," says Anita Uetrecht, adviser at Minster High, Ohio.

Build ownership. "All projects need to be the students' ideas, so they will take ownership," says Dee Kirby, adviser at South Shelby High, Missouri.

Patti Rambo, adviser at Tahoka High, Texas, agrees. "Make sure it's the student's idea and it's their work. That way, when they succeed they have a great sense of accomplishment and pride, and when they're not as successful they understand the reasons why. They understand it was their product."

Make checklists. "The to-do list is the most important part of my life before a competition," says Coleen Globke, adviser at Parkston Jr/Sr High, South Dakota.

Track progress. "It is wonderful to allow the students to do the work on their own, and they should, but keep a watchful eye over the project and group as they proceed through the project and prepare for the event," says Uetrecht.

Conserve time. "Have students do peer reviews of written materials before they give it to you to proofread. This can save a great amount of your time," says Globke.

Volunteer. "Volunteer to help and have students volunteer to help at your local and state level events," says Kirby. "It is a great way to learn the event and get ideas. Don't be afraid to jump in and get started."

Network with experienced advisers. "Get to know a seasoned or experienced adviser who has had STAR Events competitors go to state and nationals and ask questions, ask for help, and ask for guidance," says Sarah Halverson, adviser at Black River Falls High, Wisconsin. "The network of advisers is great, get to know them. They can help you in so many ways!"

"Make as many contacts as possible with those who have been around a while," says Rambo. "Don't be afraid to ask questions."