Passing the Torch: RiNA Advice

On July 6, 2018 the student authors of this issue of JASTE met in person for the first time at Cawthra Park Secondary School. The goal of this meeting was twofold, firstly to celebrate the publication of this document and secondary to compile a body of helpful advice to future students who might use the RiNA framework. Students were separated into 3 mixed school groupings and produced the text below. When reading their advice, prospective students are urged to look for common themes which might help you create a more successful RiNA project:

**Group 1:**

Be passionate. Be enthusiastic. Be relatable. In order to choose a successful topic, inspire others by doing what you love.

Explore. Learn about your passion by doing research through credible sources and organizations that will help ignite the flame inside of you and further your understanding of your passion.

Investigate. Take advantage of the resources around you, and find people affected by your issue to discover as many different POV's on your topic as you can.

Take action. Take several steps to create a ripple of change that positively affects the world by interacting with the people and the environment around you. Reflect on your actions and look for areas of improvement by being critical of your own work in order to inspire a lasting effect.

Collaborate. Talk to others about your project to receive feedback and recommendations. Try to work with others who are involved with your issue. Be open to criticism and negotiations, listen to the opinions and ideas of others.

**Group 2:**

Creating the project will require determination and lots of effort. The first step to making sure you do not lose sight is picking the right issue for you. Choose a problematic STSE issue that garners your interest and is something that you think must be addressed to society. Something controversial is good, but be free of bias, and always try to inform your audience about any misconceptions. Research is one of the most important aspects of this project. With your secondary research, always use reliable, unbiased sources. The best place to find these are academic databases such as Google Scholar and academic journals. Organize research in a way that makes it easy to
understand and process. With primary research, ask questions that the general public can answer, do not be too specific to your topic because not as many people are aware of it the way you are. Make questions vague, but good enough for you to be able to collect statistics from which you can draw conclusions from. Target the best possible (and most diverse, if possible) demographic for your issue. Lastly, when taking action, be creative, adapt, and engaging. Ensure you have a clear action plan before implementing anything because you never know what can go wrong. If conducting an experiment or interview, always think about control factors and how they might influence your results. Lastly, make sure to stay away from bias, and spread awareness as much as you can.

**Group 3:**

- **Selection of STSE**
  When selecting an STSE topic, it’s important to choose a topic that people can relate to because this will have the greatest impact on the issue. People will be more engaged and interested in a topic if it affects them and they will be more inclined to contribute to its outcome.

- **Secondary Research**
  When conducting your secondary research, approach it with an open mind and try to see it from both sides to ensure that you are getting a well rounded understanding of your topic. Also, make sure that you are using credible, unbiased sources.

- **Primary Research**
  In terms of conducting your primary research, make sure that the questions in your survey will be useful and relevant toward the final product. Also, it’s useful to choose a survey program that can collect your data and organize it in a graph in an effective and easy way such as Google Forms.

- **STSE Action**
  Choose an action that is realistic, effective and can be done within the timeframe you have. Your take action should be engaging, inspirational and it should give your audience something to think about, or something to take away from. Be creative with your action plan but don’t lose sight of your final objective.

- **Nature of collaboration/negotiations**
  When negotiating with administrative staff for your take action project, you have to be flexible and creative. There’s always the chance that your plan won’t be passed, so it’s good to have a back up plan. When working in a group, divide the work as evenly as possible so that one person doesn’t have to do all of the work.