

A Puzzling Proposition

Key Concepts:

- Visualizing the end before you start enhances success
- Well written goals facilitate evaluation
- Evaluation is essential for group success
- Evaluation and assessment should be taking place throughout the activity/event
- There are many types of evaluation techniques
- Time spent developing the evaluation tool makes analysis easier and more meaningful
- Think about the end of a project and evaluation before you start

ACTIVITY:

***Prior to starting this activity, the manila envelopes containing the puzzles should be set up in four separate areas of the room and the photocopies of the box cover should be taken out of the box and set up as follows:

- Puzzle A: photocopy of cover set on top of the envelope
- Puzzle B: photocopy of cover taken out of the envelope
- Puzzle C: photocopy of cover taken out of envelope and put on top of puzzle B envelope
- Puzzle D: photocopy of cover left in the envelope, pieces of the puzzle are taken out and placed face down on the desk/table/floor (monitor this group, pieces must stay face down)

This will produce the following set-up:

- Puzzle A: pieces will be used face-up with the correct picture
- Puzzle B: Pieces will be used face-up but with wrong picture
- Puzzle C: Pieces will be used face-up without any picture
- Puzzle D: Pieces will be used face down without using the picture (can refer to this picture a set number of times (eg. 3) during the activity)

Procedure:

1. Divide the students in 4 groups. Each group should gather around a puzzle set-up and 'shelter' it from the remainder of the students.
2. Announce that the goal of this activity is to complete all four puzzles in the next 15 minutes and that all members of the group must be involved in the assembling of the puzzle.
3. After about 3 minutes, rotate the groups (A to B, B to C, C to D, D to A and so on)
4. Call time when each group returns to its original position.
5. Move the students to their regular seats and raise the following questions:
 - Which group worked the hardest?
 - Why was Puzzle A completed with the least difficulty?
 - Which puzzle was more difficult to complete, Puzzle B or Puzzle C?
 - What made Puzzle D so difficult?
 - How important is it to have a clear picture of what the finished product will look like when working on a project?
 - How important is it that you check your progress along the way?
 - How does this exercise relate to goal setting and evaluation?
 - What represented the "goal"?
 - How did a clear picture of the goal help the success of the 'project'?

6. Write the following on the board – “The dance was attended by 300 students and generated a profit of \$50.00.”
7. Raise the question, “If the goal was to have the best dance ever, was the dance a success?” and discuss briefly.
8. Write the following on the board, one on each side of the previous statement (#6)

Goal – to increase participation in students’ council activities by 25% by the end of the school year (previous dances averaged 125 students).

Goal – to raise \$2000.00 for the “Make a Wish Foundation” by April 30.

9. Restate the question “Was the dance a success?” and emphasize the correlation between the goal statement and the evaluation.
10. Process the activity by asking what situations in school does the different puzzle set-ups represent? Emphasize again that people were working in set-ups, yet the success of the groups varied greatly. Make the following points:
 - Evaluation should be referenced/orientated to the goal statement(s)
 - Evaluation part way through a project can help assess the progress toward the goal and allow for any needed adjustments.
 - Evaluation should be looked at as a part of the project.

Bringing It All Together:

Puzzle A: A well written goal statement is one that matches what you are trying to achieve with your goal!

Puzzle B: Does your evaluation match your goal statement?

Puzzle C: Previous experience can probably get the job done!

Puzzle D: If you are not certain of what you are doing; keep checking!