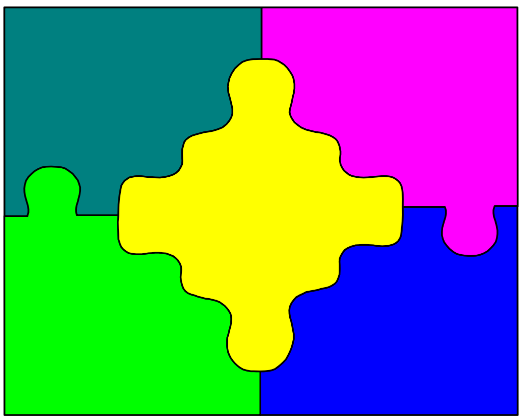
After School Programs:

Tips for Using Evaluation to Help Solve Puzzles in the Development and Implementation of the Programs



Welcome to Evaluation Tip Sheets for After School Programs

So, you are starting a new after school program for youth and your funder wants you to evaluate whether your program works. Or, perhaps you are an old pro! You have run hundreds of programs over the years, but you keep wondering how to improve the programs, especially since the needs of youth may be different today than in the past.

We all want to have successful programs. We put so much energy into them! But how do we know if our programs are working? What needs to be included in programs so that will be successful and will meet the needs of youth?

The Graduate Students in University of Massachusetts' Lowell Program Evaluation class (a very talented group!) have done lots of the legwork for you. They have spent the semester of Fall, 2001 identifying effective ways to use evaluation to develop successful, well-run programs. In the tip sheets included in this guide you will receive lots of ideas that you can put to work right away.

What are these ideas?

We begin with ***Program Implementation***. Many times people focus on whether the program achieves its aims. We all want youth to develop better academic skills, for example, through our outstanding programs, but suppose the students don't. How do we know what needs a bit of fixing or tinkering? This is where looking at program implementation (in the lingo of evaluators) comes in. Maryjane Costello has provided lots of ideas on how you can focus on program startup and process to see if you have put together in place that should lead to the effects the you want.

And, how exactly do you know what you should focus on in your program? How do you decide what should be included in process? What kinds of outcomes should you expect? How do you make sure that you are doing to right kind of program for the youth you are serving? Lots of other people have worried about the same things. Deciding what are the key components that make up a successful program is crucial and it turns out that there are researchers who have done a lot of this homework for us. Marianne Blanchet shows us how to ***Compare After School Programs to "Best Practices" in Program Evaluation***. She guides you through the steps of deciding what kind of program you are trying to do and what kinds of youth you are trying to reach. These steps will then help you look through information that can improve your program.

But, you say, all your funder cares about is outcome, outcome, outcome! Where do you start in thinking about ways to measure outcome that are true to the spirit of your program. Tamar Griffin has provided a step-by-step analysis that assists you in beginning to think about outcomes that really matter to the goals of your program. So, take a look at ***Measuring Outcomes: A Primer for A.S.O.S. T. Community-Based Programs***.

Sometimes things that people don't see as central to programs turn out to be crucial. Partnerships are one of those often neglected but crucial elements. Successful after school programs usually involve partnerships bringing together the schools, community groups, and the like. Don't neglect evaluating whether this crucial characteristic of your program is really working! Take some time to evaluate what kind of partnership you have and whether it is moving in the direction you want. Need help thinking through these issues? Look at Melissa Wall's ***How to Evaluate Your Community Partnerships.***

Are you struggling with how to bring your data alive? You have collected all of this important information about your program and about the neighborhoods in which the youth in your program live, play, and go to school. Now you want to make sure that people use the information to think about whether the program is meeting the needs of youth given other programs and resources in the community. Computerized mapping of your information may be the answer! Sara Diorio provides ideas for using geographic information systems (it is not as bad as term makes it sound!) to think about your evaluation data in fresh ways. Please see ***How GIS & Community Mapping Can Enhance Program Evaluation.***

Please let me know if you find the information in the tip sheets helpful. I can be reached at 978-934-4247 or at Linda_Silka@uml.edu

Sincerely,

Linda Silka
UML Faculty, Program Evaluation Course

Strategies for Evaluating Program *Implementation*

Maryjane Costello

When you start to evaluate your program, one of the first areas that you will want to look at is called Program Implementation – or *how* you did what you did. An evaluation centered on program implementation gives you the chance to really see the roadmap of your process. When you are on a trip, each landmark that you can identify on the roadmap leads you to your ultimate destination more smoothly. When you are working on the implementation of a program, each step that you can identify and anticipate leads you to a successful outcome more smoothly.

One of the ways to assess program implementation is to use a time-line approach. By setting up each of the steps in the planning process on a time-line, you can see the flow of tasks from the beginning of the planning stage through the start of program activities to the program end assessments. At each point in the timeline, you can ask yourself a series of questions to help maximize the benefits of your program.

The pre-program planning stage is when you have the opportunity to gather the information you need to lay a strong foundation for your program (*For more information, please see the tip sheet on "Comparing After School Programs to 'Best Practices' in Program Evaluation*).

- It is important to know the community in which you will be working. Are you in an urban, suburban, or rural environment? Are there cultural and ethnic characteristics of your community that might help in your definition of the program? Will the economic characteristics of the community impact what you will want to accomplish?
- Understand your program participants. Will you be working with a particular age group? If so, what are the characteristics of that group? What kinds of activities and programming will best serve their needs?
- Learn about the umbrella program within which your activities will be held. Why has the program been established? How and by who is it being funded? If it is being funded outside of the community, how will the local interface be constructed? Are there written and cohesive goals and objectives that have been shared?

All of this information can be used as you design the dimensions of your own program

- Have you developed a specific goal statement that supports both the goals of the funding agency and your own program? Write it up so it can be shared with staff and program participants. That way everyone is engaged in working towards accomplishing the known and common goals.
- Have you developed a written curriculum that lays out the specific programming and activities that you plan to use to meeting your stated goals?
- Have you developed a staffing plan that will be sufficient to meet your proposed activities and projected numbers of program participants? Have you planned how staff will be recruited and how they will be trained for their role in bringing the activities to the program participants? Have you written job descriptions that will make it easier for you and your staff to understand their responsibilities?
- Have the space requirements for your activities been reviewed? Can you meet those requirements in the space that you have available? Will any special equipment need to be found?
- Have you developed a written budget that will adequately cover projected materials and staffing costs for the duration of the program?
- How will program participants for your program be recruited? Will it be by brochure, word of mouth, or agency referral? Are there specific requirements for participation in any part of the program? Are there number limits for how many program participants can become involved in the program?
- How are you going to take advantage of the relationship benefits of working with any involved community partners to strengthen your program and to lay the groundwork for future collaborations?
- Have you developed a basis for evaluating the workings of the program, defining baseline standards of program participants, and assessing their accomplishment outcomes?

It is useful to take the opportunity to evaluate your achievements at different times during the course of an ongoing program.

- If you review progress towards the beginning of a program, you can judge whether your planning process anticipated your start-up needs.
- A mid-course review gives you the advantage of looking at a program that has built up a record of ongoing activities.
  - Are your activities matched to your goals? Does one or the other need to be reviewed or adjusted?
  - Is the designed programming engaging your program participants? Have you had the opportunity to get feedback from this group?
  - How is your staff implementing the planned programming? Do they have the skill and training that they need? Have they had the opportunity to give you feedback on their view of programming impact?

- What methods are you using to get program feedback from involved parties? Is feedback formal or informal? How are you using the information to adjust or improve the program?
- Are your program participants assessment tools giving you the information that you need for you own purposes and those of any funding agencies?
- Have you been able to establish working relationship with other involved community individuals and organizations?

At the end of the program, you have the opportunity to evaluate how all of your preliminary planning and implementation and ongoing review and assessment contributed to the program's outcome.

- Did your planning process give you the tools that you need to collect data to judge the program's effectiveness?
- Did the activities achieve the goals that you anticipated?
- Did you collect data that can effectively communicated to all the program's concerned audiences, including program participants, staff, and funding agencies.
- Can new and established working relationships with community and administrative partners be supported through effective sharing of planning, implementation, and out outcome information?

The keyword in program implementation is "planning, planning, planning". By keeping this in mind before, during, and at the end of your program, you can maximize the positive impact of your efforts on your program, your program participants, and your community.

Measuring *Outcomes*: A Primer for A.S.O.S.T. Community-Based Programs

Tamar Griffin

Whether you are already in the process of carrying out your program or in the process of starting up the program again for the next cycle, you will need to think about how you will measure whether the program works! Is your intervention effective in reaching its goals (particularly if your grant funders require proof of this!). So, how do you begin this process? The "keys" (or main points) to beginning this procedure are listed in order below.

🗝 **Define and Clarify Your Goals**

The term "goals" refer to the expected end result or impact of your program (e.g., *What is my program trying to accomplish?*)

🗝 **Outline How Program Activities Will Connect to Goals**

Begin with a simple diagram (go ahead, don't be shy ☺)

Example:

Tutor students from 2:45pm-3:45pm ***(Program Activity)*** *----→ Students will show increased confidence that they can complete homework* ***(Goal)***

🗝 **Decide How You Will Gather Information on Measuring the Impact of Program Activities on Reaching its Goals**

You can figure this out by reflecting on the following questions:

- *Do I want to find out how people feel about whether or not the program is beneficial to the participants?*
  - Informal surveys, interviews, or observations would be useful in determining this (**qualitative tools**)
- *Would accurate numbers be a better indicator of how well the program is working?*
  - Looking at student records or grades (**quantitative tools**)

The best method for measuring program goals would most likely be one that includes **both qualitative and quantitative tools**

🗝 **Final Points to Remember:**

Collect data about the program's effectiveness from *start to finish*!
Maintain confidentiality, especially when recording information from student records

Use the information gathered to make continual improvements to the program

One other point: you may find that you don't want to wait until the end to fine tune your program. Please read the tip sheet *How to Evaluation Your Program Implementation* for great ideas on how to evaluate how well your program is being implemented.

☺ Happy Data Collecting!! ☺

How to Evaluate Your Community *Partnerships*

Melissa P. Wall

As an evaluator, you may be hired to evaluate a project in which there are several partners. Each agency may serve a different role and there are different situations and projects that call for different levels of collaboration. It is important to understand the role the partners play and the level of participation that is appropriate for the project you are working on. There are some characteristics of successful community partnerships as well as some challenges commonly faced. Here are some tips for having a great partnership!

Level of Community Linkage

There are different levels of community linkages that vary according to their purpose, structure, and process. These levels are

- Networking
  - Cooperation/alliance
    - Coordination/partnership
      - Coalition
        - Collaboration

These levels are sometimes given different names, but the meaning is the same. They range from a low level of involvement in networking to a higher level in collaboration. Networking, for example, is to exchange dialogue and create a base of support, has a non-hierarchical structure with loosely defined roles, and is characterized by informal communication and little conflict. On the other end of the spectrum, collaboration purports to build a system that is interdependent and addresses goals and issues; has formally defined roles; uses consensus building as a decision-making process; and is characterized by communication pathways that are highly developed where decisions and ideas are shared equally among members. Needs, skills, and relationships all play a role in determining the level of community linkage that is most appropriate for each project.

Please Note: Before you evaluate a partnership in terms of how successful it is, you will want to have an idea of what kind of partnership the members are trying to achieve. Do they intend simple networking or are they trying to achieve high levels of collaboration. Or, are these groups trying to moving from a lower level of partnership to a higher one? You can use evaluation to help a partnership learn where it is at, what impediments are standing in the way, and even how to improve partnership capabilities. Read on!

Successful Collaborations often include:

- A clear vision, created by all partners, concerning goals to accomplish and plans for how these goals will be achieved through collaboration.
- Established goals, benchmarks and timelines that identify a clear purpose and process of the collaboration.
- A commitment to the vision by all partners.
- Roles and responsibilities of each partner that are identified. The environment fosters the feeling that each member of the collaboration is important to the success of the project.
- Mutual respect and admiration among partnership members. It helps if participants like each other and/or have an established relationship.
- Partners who present their intentions and agendas openly and honestly.
- Established pathways for clear communication, trust building, and sharing resources.
- Identified resources including needs as well as those already in place?
- Collaborative leadership that respects partners' strengths and values and that creates an environment of flexibility and adaptability to change.
- A clear action plan created by all partners to identify each member's roles and responsibilities including how and when tasks should be done.

Please note: In evaluation you can teach each of the above characteristics and evaluation the partnership you are working with to see where people stand on each of these dimensions. This information can help strengthen the partnership by showing areas of success and areas for possible improvement.

What kinds of problems can partnerships encounter? Read on!

Challenges

Successful collaborations can also pose challenges that strong partnerships can overcome. Listed below are some examples.

- Lack of resources, including funding, human, and time, among others.
- Lack of commitment and resistance to involvement.
- Protecting one's individual turf, often a result of mistrust.
- Conflicts among members of the collaboration.
- Issues with building respect, understanding and trust.
- Building a collaboration with a diverse representation of members.
- Issues maintaining communication that is clear, open, and frequent.
- Employing a leader or a facilitator that is skilled at fostering the kind of environment noted in the above section of successful collaborations.

Please note: In evaluating a partnership you can develop a checklist that includes each of these challenges and you can check to see if these challenges are posing a problem. If you do this checklist procedure near the beginning of the partnership, at midpoint, and near the end, there will be lots of opportunities for pinpointing problems and identifying solutions.

All of these points might make partnerships sound too hard to do. Why do them? If you want to have a successful program, read on!

Why Collaborate?

There have to be reasons that groups collaborate; otherwise, why would agencies share the responsibility and the ownership of a project? There are many noted advantages for agencies and organizations to collaborate. Programs can be delivered in a more effective and efficient manner. There is often improved public image, professional development and communication. Duplication of services can be eliminated and there may be an increased use of the programs. Another advantage is an increased availability and sharing of resources. This can lead to members sharing information and new ideas that may lead to new innovative ways of doing things.

Comparing After School Programs to "Best Practices" in Program Evaluation

Marianne Blanchet

In today's world there are many new services provided to youth through the school systems. These include community-based social support and enrichment programs. These programs provide social, recreation and entertainment services in addition to the more traditional academic and goal-oriented tutoring, homework help, and career-based programs. Coordinating these programs can be almost overwhelming!

What does 'best practice' mean?

The good news is that you don't have to reinvent the wheel when you are trying to decide how to design a great program! You can simply compare your planned programs to 'best practices.'

The term 'best practices' may sound a little confusing, or even daunting at first (especially when we add the rest of the phrase…. 'best practices' approach to program evaluation design and implementation). The idea is **simple** even if the term is not. When people talk about "best practices" they only mean that somebody else has already done the hard work of doing studies to find out what features are **crucial** to successful programs. Want to know what are all the pieces that need to be there to have after school programs that work better for teens than for younger kids? Somebody has done the study! Want to know what components are crucial to having a successful program that increases math skills? Somebody has done the study!

In fact, somebodies have done lots of studies on lots of programs. The big question is finding the right comparison that will help you figure out what you need to include in your program to be successful. In order to find out if the programs that are proposed will be implemented in the best possible way, look at literature that's already been published about what works and what does not.

What will 'best practices' prove?

Using this 'best practices' approach will not only help you figure out whether your programs are of high quality, but will also help you learn about many other after-school programs. You can compare your program against outstanding models. The 'best practices' approach tells us to ask four important questions:

1. Are your programs addressing the most pressing needs of your community?
2. Are your programs using the most modern techniques available?
3. Are your programs using key components that are relevant to the subject?

4. Are your programs offering any new or unique elements that will address a specific need or make them even more successful than others?

Answering these questions by checking the best practices will provide you with proof that you are doing what is best.

How do I compare our out of school time programs to 'best practices?'

'Best practices' can include much more than just a traditional literature search. To be clear about where to look and what to look at you need to follow the following steps:

First, decide what the specific goals of your community are and what you need to look at. This can be done by talking to people. Talk to the students who will use the programs, to find out what their real needs are. Talk to those who have been involved with programs like this one before to find out if the proposed programs can fulfill these needs. You can also use more formal methods of data gathering by observing, conducting focus groups, or creating surveys. By doing this you can find out what local programs have accomplished before and what was lacking. Where did they succeed or fail? Can your program fulfill the needs of the students and the community?

Second, form collaborations. There are three primary elements that we should consider while trying to build working relationships. They are:

1) Common Goals
2) Shared Resources
3) A Common Monitoring System for Planning and Decision Making

Make sure that the organization that you collaborate with has the same values and goals that you want for your students. Make sure they have the resources to fulfill implementation. Then, make sure all parties will be accountable.

Third, assess. This is where you gather data on individuals and programs so you can learn which programs to implement and how. Before we do this we must first remember:

- Who the stakeholders are
- Equity is important (gender/race/income/disability/etc.)
- Be realistic
- Need assessments may lead to improved programs for a particular population

How do you assess? There are some typical types of assessment tools. Some are surveys, interviews, focus groups, or observation.

Fourth**,** you can finally look at the literature. Now that you are sure what you need and who you are going to serve, you can look at traditional library resources. Surf the web. Contact the experts. Search for information on programs that meet the needs of a community like yours. Search for common goals of other after-school or out of school time programs. See what other programs have been successful, and how they can be adapted to fit your needs.

Finally**,** evaluate. Once you collect data, you have to make a decision about the best way to look at it. Look at research techniques. Make sure that the data is evaluated properly or your needs may be missed.

Remember:

Information about 'best practices' will give you information about the level of risk of your population, how to determine whether or not they will be best served by a particular program, and what measures will work best for future reference.

Best practices will also show you what works in which situations. You can use this information as a guide to help you identify what best fits your needs.

Lastly:
Write up your experiences and your results. Leave a record for others. Become a part of best practices.

How GIS & Community Mapping Can Enhance Program Evaluation

Sara Diorio

Geographic Information System (GIS) is a computerized mapping program that allows users to map data and they ask questions about the map. Pretty great, isn't it! The information is presented concisely and clearly in the form of a map, allowing funders to focus on the actual problems instead of trying to comprehend the data.

Imagine that you are the program director for a new community literacy project starting in Lowell. In order for your project to really accomplish what you want it to, you'll need a Bookmobile to deliver reading materials and provide outreach to community members. So, you ask your funders for additional monies to purchase a van. In order to receive supplementary funding, the funders ask you to conduct an evaluation of the best locations for the Bookmobile. How would you go about this? How would you present your findings to funders?

GIS mapping is great here, particularly for evaluations. Most of us are visual learners. GIS and community maps make data visible and comprehensible. Therefore, by incorporating maps in the presentation of your evaluation findings, funders and community members alike will easily be able to visualize your suggested locations and understand why you chose them, regardless of their culture and/or literacy skills.

When evaluating the reasons why a program is not running smoothly, GIS mapping can again be helpful. By producing a map with the location of the program in relation to the locations of the program's participants and transportation systems, you could assess whether or not program location is a reason for some of the program's problems. Conversely, when planning or relocating a program, GIS mapping can assist you in finding the best location(s) for it.

Other uses for GIS mapping during program evaluation:

- Evaluating where to better market your program
- Evaluating the program's use of available public resources/facilities
- Evaluating the demographics of the area where your program is located
- Evaluating better means of transporting program participants

For more information about GIS mapping, please refer to the following Web sites:

http://www.esri.com

http://www.usgs.gov/research/gis/title.html

http://dizzy.library.arizona.edu/library/teams/set/gis-azul.html

http://www.geo.ed.ac.uk/home/giswww.html

http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/GIS/NEWINDEX.HTM

Strategic Plan for Barrier Analysis / Prevention

Marilyn J. Masker

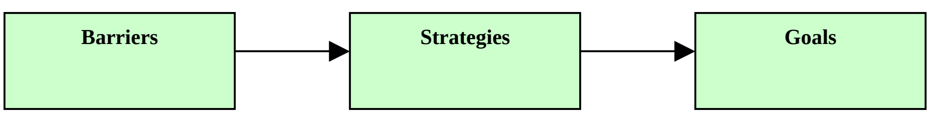
Identification of Barriers

When evaluating after-school youth programs, many of us become aware of barriers to the success of our programs (for example, the program is unexpected hard to get to for the students we want to reach, there are competing activities that keep students from coming to the program). We all know that barriers to a goal can be damaging, but did you know that these barriers are often preventable?

The prevention plan outlined in this tip sheet may be of help. Its objective is to address existing or anticipated barriers by using a tool known as a Logic Model. The Logic Model is simply a method of summarizing key information and then reviewing and comparing that information to determine strategies for a solution.

Setting up a Logic Model

How do you set up a Logic Model so that it will help you think about those frustrating barriers? A Logic Model may be set-up using three columns (or more). Using three columns, on one side you would list your goals (overall goal or broken down into specific stages) and on the other side you would list known barriers or obstacles or anticipated barriers, using the center column to develop strategies. The use of a Logic Model can be effective at any stage of implementation.



Logic Model Example

What might be barriers to the success of your program? You might, for example, discover that you have a great program but you are struggling with issues of student attendance, lack of participation, lack of comprehension, student fear of rejection, or student lack of interest. The Logic Model is one way to not only identify some of those pesky barriers but also to start to identify some strategies that could help you overcome the barriers. We have found that tracking your implementation of the various segments of your program can then help you see if the barriers are being eliminated.

Ongoing Analysis Using a Logic Model

Step 1: Clarifying your goals as a way to anticipate and prevent barriers:

When you started your program you established many goals. Some may have already proven successful; others may have drifted a bit. We have been in the same position. When we are at the point of clarifying and reprioritizing our goals for a program, we have often found that it is helpful to list these goals by category in order of importance and then break them down into smaller steps:

For example, you might list the academic goals for your program:
Academic

- Writing skills
- Reading comprehension
- Study skills
- Homework help, etc.

How then do you develop prevention steps that keep barriers from emerging that make it difficult for youth to improve in academic areas? In the case of the academic goal, we have found that it is sometimes helpful to begin by doing a separate Logic Model to determine, for example, what the barriers are to an effective writing skills segment of the program. Spending a little time taking this step might indicate that a simple change is needed (perhaps, for example, a change in communication or follow up).

Step 2: Test Out Identified Strategies for Addressing Barriers

Once you have clarified and reviewed your goals and identified barriers or potential barriers, the Logic Model can still be useful to tracking what you try to overcome these barriers and checking to see whether what you try works!

Step 3: Establish Tracking Method that helps you quickly track progress toward goals and check for emergence of barriers

We have found that it is helpful to establish methods that help track how programs are going. Other tip sheets also provide some detail about these tracking methods. Here we want to mention that you might use interviews, surveys, and the like to keep track of how the program is going. Then you can use the logic model (listing objectives, information collected about whether the objectives have been reached, and dates of accomplishment) to put all of the cumbersome information in order so that you can use it for decision making.

Timeline Checklist

A timeline checklist or procedure may sound complicated but it really isn't. The timeline checklist is just as it sounds. You list an objective or goal on a page that has sections to accommodate dates and a larger column on the right for comments. As the program proceeds you simply check off the date completed. The comment column can then be filled out at the end of the activity or as scheduled periodically.

We hope that these tips and tricks will be helpful in allowing you to carry out a very successful program that achieves all of your aims!

Overcoming Barriers in After-School Based Programs: Communication Strategies as a Example

Marilyn J. Masker

Have you ever found that sometimes what we do can be a major barrier to reaching our intended goals? The following tipsheet is intended to assist you in constructing a list of four main procedural methods that might prove helpful for your programs. Below we present a few examples of some of the barriers that can come up in running a youth based program. We hope this information is helpful.

A Common Barrier: Conveying content in a way that is too formal or rigid

I think that we are all often surprised at how difficult it is to "get the tone right" in working with youth after they have spent the day in school and are coming to an after school program. I find that it is helpful to ask myself a few questions to start to work on this common barrier:

- *Will my audience understand the terminology being used?*
- *Am I addressing the youth from a position of authority or am I seated among the youth?*
- *Do I explain the general issue under discussion in a way that encourages interest and involvement?*
- *Will I encourage responses from their point of understanding?*

Sounds easy, right! I've often found it isn't and that it is worth remembering that a flexible approach proves especially effective in working with youth. As you know children/adolescents that have earlier in the day adjusted to the formal environment of public school are restless and eager to break lose from conformity and are less likely to benefit from rigid methods of instruction.

By being creative and by expressing excitement about the information you intend to share you might encourage a renewed awakening of interest. For example: If the topic under discussion is to be *Teen Pregnancy Prevention*, one approach that the best practice literature indicates is successful is to emphasize the importance of the topic, in particular, the potential impact in the lives of the teens involved; while explaining the benefit of using the proper terms which will allow them the ability to talk about the issue responsibly. Allowing for laughter (a normal response) and praising attempts to participate in the discussion (however incorrect) might allow for some comfort in an awkward situation. You might try planning a short discussion initially returning to it during follow up meetings.

Another Common Barrier: Not Monitoring the Comprehension Level Using the "What I Hear You Saying is…" Concept, etc.

This seems to be a hard one for all of us. How do we monitor comprehensive level with testing the youth or sounding like a teacher???? Well, again, the best practice literature suggests some ideas. You might consider the following:

- *Do you plan to ask what their level of understanding is?*
- *You might even ask what do you know about…at the onset of discussion.*
- *You might build into your presentation informal comprehension checks?*
- *You might ask: Does anyone know what-----means? Can you explain such and such? Or, when you hear the word college write down all the words you can think have related to college and then share them. This type of interaction has proven successful in other programs in Lowell and elsewhere. Using the quote "What I hear you saying is…" is another way to obtain the level of comprehension that exists. The key here is comfortable---non-confrontational conversation.*

Another Common Barrier: Forgetting to develop academic lessons around active "fun" activities

Sounds easy, right? Well, we can all use some help on this. Again, there is a best practice literature out there that can be of great help. The literature shows:

- *Some successful programs have found that lessons often have a more lasting effect if they are learned without pressure while having fun.*
- *One way to address the serious topic of writing skills can be found in the text <u>Developing Writing and Thinking Skills across the Curriculum: A Practical Program for Schools</u> by John J. Collins, Ed. D.*

  Tips from the text:
- *List the relevant information they "know" about a new concept or topic just before it is presented to them.*
- *Put a concept from the text or another source into their own words; Then translate it or summarize it.*
- *Make a connection from class and something else they know about or have experienced in their own lives.*
- *Explain how ideas are similar (despite their differences) or different (despite their similarities).*
- *In addition to students writing about content of course encourage reflection. Take responsibility for their learning understanding.*
- *Have them write about the personal significance of a subject- what they like about it, how they'll use it someday.*

In addition, the best practice literature reminds us to:

- *Actively engage*
- *Refine listening and speaking skills*
- *Read their writing out loud*
- *Teach them to listen critically to others' writing*

There are many great text books and activity books available with ideas that are easily adapted for your program. The suggestions listed above could easily be used to help develop leadership skills, or to create teamwork in a given situation.