Simple Evaluation Tool Development

Developed by Kendall Martin as a result of a group exercise in a break-out session led by Jonathan Ferris at Spring Conference 2009. (This was a similar session to the one presented by Janet Bechman/Janet Allen at a previous Area 3 staff meeting.)

In this evaluation tool planning session I discovered that I have been working much too hard to develop a “perfect research tool” for measuring general learning. When in fact, what I need to do is create an “effective survey tool to measure if learning has occurred” and then later “to measure if transformational learning was a result of the program”.

Jonathan convinced me that using short, simple questions on a 3 x 5 card and reporting the percentages of how many participants marked “Yes” is a valid style for many kinds of programs. As you read the questions below I think you will see you could easily insert any questions related to the topic matter that was taught and use this carefully crafted question format for many programs.

Thus, whenever possible, I intend to simplify my questions and shorten the evaluation process significantly to this “just ask what you want to know” method. I know this may not be the best way for creating all evaluations, but, this is going to be my “default” evaluation tool creation procedure.

Some 4-H evaluation tool questions are:
1. As a result of your participation in 4-H did you learn life skills? Yes / No
2. Will you recommend to your friends that they should get involved in 4-H? Yes / No
3. Did your participation in the 4-H program prepare you for the future? Yes / No

An example for a topical program on making nutritious meals by adding more fruits and vegetables to your family’s eating habits:
1. As a result of participating in this program will you change your meals to include more fruits and vegetables? Yes / No
2. Will you share this information with your family? Yes / No
3. Did this program give you ideas that will help you prepare more nutritious meals? Yes / No

Further down to the road to measure transformational learning:
It has been _____ months since you attended the _______ program at ____________.
1. As a result of participating in the program did you change your family’s meals to include more fruits and vegetables? Yes / No
2. Did you share this information with your family? Yes / No
3. Do you continue to use any of the ideas to help you prepare more nutritious meals? Yes / No