

CASE STUDY: PROCESS IMPROVEMENT

The Florida Aquarium – Program Evaluation

About The Florida Aquarium

Located in Tampa, Florida, the aquarium is home to more than 20,000 aquatic plants and animals from around the world; a 2-acre water adventure park offers cool fun. One can dive with the sharks or take an eco tour on a 49-foot catamaran. Extensive educational programs are offered to people of all ages.

Aquarium educators presented three day-long workshops on Underwater Archaeology to 48 teachers between October 2008 and March 2009. Workshops included a comprehensive manual containing learning modules and interactive classroom activities, some of which were demonstrated during the workshops.

Problem

Aquarium educators never know whether or not teachers use any of the information or materials provided during workshops. Did the workshop meet teacher needs? How were workshop materials used (or not)? What other materials would have been helpful?

Solution

Between February and June 2009, TNI Consultants LLC conducted in-person interviews, phone interviews and email interviews with 26 teachers (54%) who attended the workshops to find out whether or not they used workshop materials and, if so, how.

Results

Seven teachers had used workshop information and/or materials in their classrooms. TNI Consultants LLC gathered samples of student projects and teacher work to show aquarium educators how workshop information was applied. Aquarium educators were intrigued by the portfolio of work samples, which provided insight into how teachers processed the workshop information and integrated it into their classroom lessons.

Comments from teachers who had not yet used the materials were also significant, providing aquarium educators with insight into the demands on a classroom teacher. Aquarium educators came away with a clearer understanding of how to maximize the likelihood that teachers would use workshop materials in their classrooms.

Testimonial

“I am already pondering numerous items that were included in your report, which was thorough. There were some fabulous quotes, and it's helpful to have them in the format you gave us. You're the greatest! Easy to work with, professional all the way, and clearly skilled in numerous areas!” *Debbi Stone, Vice President, Education, The Florida Aquarium, Tampa, Florida*