

A TEACHER REFLECTS



Giving and Receiving Feedback

After students had designed their own Mystery Spinner Games, I

divided the class into pairs to test each other's games. I assigned pairs somewhat randomly, but tried to think about who would work well together. I didn't want students to pick their own partners because I thought they wouldn't be objective if they worked with their friends. I asked students to swap games with their partners, try to solve the clues, and complete an evaluation sheet like the one shown.

As soon as students started working, I realized that this task was going to be more difficult for them than I had anticipated. Several students had trouble critiquing each other's work. They didn't see themselves as game testers, whose job it was to give feedback to help the designers revise the games. Instead, they thought the challenge was to solve the clues. This was certainly understandable since they had spent the previous two days successfully solving most of the Mystery Spinner Game clues. To them, this was simply another set of clues to solve. Students were upset when they couldn't solve the clues, either because there were essential clues missing, or because they were simply too difficult.

Looking back on what happened, I realized I had emphasized that students solve clues individually more than I had stressed and supported learning

to give and receive feedback. I think that it would have been better to have students focus on analyzing games and providing constructive feedback.

Although students had some problems with this lesson, it raised a lot of interesting social dynamics, and helped me to better understand my class. It alerted me to the fact that they had little experience with giving each other feedback in math class. I realized that if I wanted to make this process work in my classroom, I would have to help them create a more friendly, helpful, and positive environment. In the future, I would let my students pick their own partners and take a more "buddy, buddy" approach to working together.

SPORTS

1. How difficult was the game to solve? Circle your answer.
 Very Easy Easy Medium Difficult Very Difficult Impossible

2. What made the game easy or difficult to solve?
 The game needed a lot of figuring out. It just gave us 2 points and based on the windsurfing clue, we had to figure it out. It involved a lot of thinking & great concentration.

3. Were you asking any questions? If so, what information would you want to get from the clues?
 We were missing the information of sailing, windsurfing, horseback riding & volleyball. We had to get it figured out the puzzle of the clues.

4. What did you like about the game? What suggestions would you like to give to the designers?
 I thought the game was completed and made it fun. I would suggest that in order to make it harder that they would need 2 types of sports & they should...