

Seminar Sample: Great Expectations

- Overview..... 1
 - Goal 1
 - Discussion..... 1
 - Suggested Reading 2
 - Activity 2
 - Debrief..... 2
 - Mindwinder™ 3
 - Summary..... 3
- Activity: “Keep the Bar High”4
 - Materials & Equipment 4
 - The Challenge..... 4
 - Scoring..... 4
- Facilitator Notes 5

Overview

Goal

To explain why we should set our goals and personal expectations high.

Discussion

There is a great saying: *Shoot for the moon. If you miss you’ll still land among the stars.* This means that we can expect great things from ourselves, try for them, and even if we don’t achieve our goal, we will still be in a better place than when we started.

For example, imagine that you have set your goal to be an Olympic athlete. Everyday, for many years, you wake early to practice your sport before school. You spend many hours learning techniques and honing your skills. You are persistent and focused. Finally, you are ready for the Olympic trials...and you just miss making the team. You are cer-

tainly disappointed, but when you take a step back and look at the situation with some perspective, you realize that though you can't be an Olympic competitor, there are other opportunities for you. You can coach. You can train others in your sport. You can be a knowledgeable sports commentator. So, you shot for the moon. You missed. But you still landed among the stars! By setting your personal expectations high and then working towards your goal, even a relative failure can result in a successful outcome.

Sometimes teachers and parents will tell you what they expect from you in school and at home. This is not the kind of expectation that we are talking about. Rather, we are talking about the expectations that you have for yourself. When you set a goal for yourself, it's important that you set the expectations high.

Another way to say it is "keep the bar high." Think about a circus poodle in a pink skirt. Use your imagination to picture it in your head. Now imagine that the circus trainer is holding a bar high above the head of the poodle. The poodle will jump as high as it can to try to reach that bar. Think of your goals as that high bar and then do everything you can to try to reach them.

Suggested Reading

- Silverstein, Shel. "Moon Catchin' Net." *A Light in the Attic*. New York: HarperCollins Children's Books, 1981. page 9.

Activity

See page 4.

Debrief

How can setting your expectations high for yourself help you get closer to your goal? Can you give an example in your own life when someone set an expectation for you? Can you give an example of when you set your own expectations for yourself?

Mindwinder™

Expect much of yourself as you use your friend's idea to create your own! Your problem is to build on the idea of a team member such that each team member must use a part of the previous answer. For example: Team member 1 says "The sky is blue." Team member 2 may say, "My eyes are blue." Team member 3 might say "Potatoes have eyes." Team member 4 might say "Mashed potatoes go well with gravy."

Summary

Often we get what we expect to get. Set your bar high, expect much of yourself, and see how close to the moon you can get!

SAMPLE

Activity: “Keep the Bar High”

Expect a lot of yourself and your team while you solve this problem.

Materials & Equipment

Materials:

- 1 piece of construction paper
- 5 index cards
- 12” string
- 1” clay
- 1” duck tape
- 1 pipe cleaner

Equipment:

- Test weight (see facilitator notes)

The Challenge

Using your materials, design and build a structure that extends off the end of a desk and supports the test weight.

The structure may not touch anything besides the desk and the weight. The part of the structure that will hold the weight must be at least 3 inches from the edge of the desk or table, and directly over the floor.

When it is your team’s turn to compete, you must place the test weight on your structure. Then, the structure’s length will be measured from the edge of the desk to determine “measurement 1.” A second measurement will be taken from the extended end of the structure to the floor. This is “measurement 2.” You can see that if your structure droops or sags, “measurement 2” will be shorter than if your structure does not droop or sag. This is your incentive to “keep the bar high!”

You will have 20 minutes to design and construct your structure.

Scoring

- Measurement 12 points per inch
- Measurement 25 points per inch
- Creative use of materials and engineering1-25 points
- Teamwork1-30 points

Facilitator Notes

- String washers, nuts, and other hardware onto a length of yarn. Tie the ends together to create a weighted loop for the children to use for the test weight. You may choose to have different weights depending upon the age and ability of the students.
- Notice that “measurement 1” has a lower value than “measurement 2.” Astute problem-solvers will realize that it is more beneficial to build a shorter, stronger structure that will hold the weight without drooping, than to build a longer structure that sags.
- Though “measurement 1” is taken from the edge of the desk, the rules do not prohibit teams from building back onto the desk. Some of the strongest structures we have seen were those that counterbalanced the extended part of the structure with weight behind the structure on the desk. These counterbalanced structures should be rewarded with higher creative engineering points.
- Another well-engineered solution involves bracing the structure from underneath.
- This activity invites a discussion of some basic engineering terms including cantilevers, counterbalancing, and bracing.