

INTRODUCTORY ACTIVITY: Encouraging Student Success in School

SUPPLIES NEEDED: One fairly large, but simple, children's puzzle.

*Prior to class, hand out pieces from a fairly large, but simple, children's puzzle to random participants. Withhold one large **center piece** of the puzzle and keep it hidden. Write the word **STUDENT** on the back of it. As the class begins, ask the group to bring their puzzle pieces to a central table and collaborate on putting the puzzle together. They will soon discover that a central piece of the puzzle is missing. Inform them that if this were a puzzle of their children's education, the pieces already in place would represent teachers, other school personnel, parents, the community at large; even books, computers, encyclopedias and other learning materials. Note, however that a critical piece of the puzzle is missing. Ask what they think this piece might be. As you bring out the missing piece and fit it into the center of the puzzle, inform them that this piece represents the **STUDENT** and is the most important piece of the whole educational process.*

***STATEMENT:** No matter how good the school, the teacher, the building itself, the number of computers and learning materials; or, even the parent's involvement, the most important component is the student. Therefore, the trend of the future is to more actively involve that student, not only in the learning process; but, to hold them responsible and accountable for their progress along the way, Thus, we have seen a phenomenal growth of the trend toward student-led conferences.*