



Aggie Next Step Day at Newcomb High School

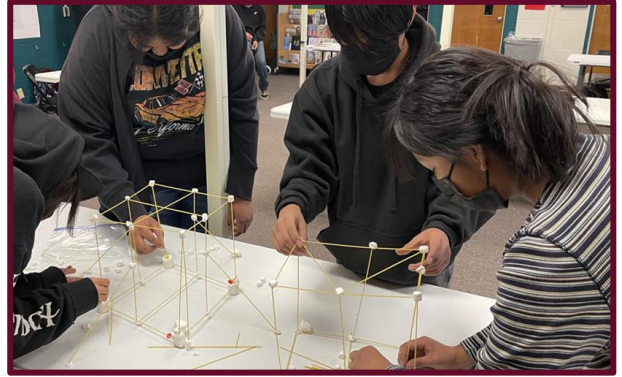
2023

Newt McCarty, Augusta Ahlm and Laura Bittner

4-H and Youth Development

SITUATION

Employers indicate soft skills such as leadership, communication, and problem solving are just as important, if not more important, than technical skills in today's workplace. Improving transferrable skills enhances a youth's social life, postsecondary studies, and success in finding and maintaining employment.



NMSU EXTENSION RESPONSE

Soft skills represent one of three Aggie Next Step (ANS) priorities. In response, ANS Day was provided to Newcomb High School's 9th grade class, located on the Navajo Nation in San Juan County. During ANS Day, 56 ninth grade students participated in six hours of hands-on activities, engaging discussions, and teamwork exercises. Skills introduced and practiced included personal responsibility, time management, discovering personality strengths, managing stress and test anxiety, teamwork and collaboration, and communication.

IMPACT

- 75% of participants indicated they gained greater understanding and awareness of the skills practiced
- 94% are interested in more opportunities to participate in additional Aggie Next Step programs
- 89% of participants rated their experience participating in ANS Day as "good" to "great"

Youth Responses:

"Communicating in a teamwork activity makes it easier than just working by yourself."

"I learned that in time management, you sometimes need to give up social media and other time-wasting entertainment."

"I know more about how to take extra time seriously and I learned how to be more responsible and mature."

Adult Response:

"Native youth, particularly Native students, are underserved and overlooked by universities. Providing programming at Newcomb High School on the Navajo Nation, shows a respect for the community and an interest in their culture. The presenters for the ANS workshops were extremely respectful in presenting their workshops with cultural sensitivity in mind. From this experience additional high schools in the Central Consolidated School District have requested scheduling ANS Days."

DEMOGRAPHICS

Female: 25 • Male: 31 • Native American: 54 • White: 1 • Asian: 1

