



# Agents of Change Toolkit

## Serious Games to progress schools towards Sustainable Development Goals



### EvaluationBusters

This game is adapted from a well-known game show. It uses a playful approach to swiftly generate meaningful and rewarding prompts for self-evaluation which are then explored in further depth. This game is specifically aligned with the How Good is Our School evaluation framework<sup>1</sup> but could be adapted to fit others.

This playful activity fits into the ACT change model Step 5 – Evaluation and links back to the indicators of success defined in Step 2 – Agreed outcomes.

**Who?**

Teachers, managers, leadership, and other school staff

**Where?**

Staffroom

**When?**

In service days, or any other time devoted to evaluation activities

**What?**

Computer, post-its, question cards

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<sup>1</sup> [https://education.gov.scot/nih/Documents/Frameworks\\_SelfEvaluation/FRWK2\\_NIHeditHGIOS/FRWK2\\_HGIOS4.pdf](https://education.gov.scot/nih/Documents/Frameworks_SelfEvaluation/FRWK2_NIHeditHGIOS/FRWK2_HGIOS4.pdf)

## You will need

A computer to run powerpoint, post-it notes (or digital equivalent if playing remotely).

**EvaluationBusters powerpoint template. EvaluationBusters list of challenge questions** (these should be printed and cut out into individual question cards before the game.) Optional: gameshow buzzer app (or just shout “buzz!”)

## How to play

### Setup

This game is an modification of the gameshow Blockbusters.

Split your group into teams of 3 or 4, each with their own area and means to run a powerpoint. Ideally the teams would combine class teachers with management positions, or alternatively groups (and question sets) could be split to focus on different quality indicators.

Randomly choose one person in each group to be the gameshow host and arbiter. The host takes **the pile of challenge questions**. (If your evaluation is focussing on just a few of the indicators from the How is Your School Framework you can select only the questions relevant to your needs – they are referenced accordingly. You can also write your own questions based on the agreed outcomes from Step 2 of the ACT Change model, if desired.)

Divide the players into teams: (for a group of 4, 1 host and 1 against 2, for a group of 3, 1 host and 1 against 1) and pick which team will be blue and which will be orange. Give the teams post-it notes.

The aim of the game is to make a solid line of your team’s colour across the powerpoint board (5 answers, team of 2) or down the board (4 answers, team of 1).

### Phase 1

*“Let’s play EvaluationBusters!”*

The host runs the **powerpoint template** – play the intro music to get everyone in the mood.

Randomly choose a team to go first. The team chooses a letter (“Can I have a T please Bob?”) and the host reads out one of the challenge questions, substituting the letter chosen for the placeholder in the question. The first team to think of a credible answer that starts with the chosen letter ‘buzzes in’, stating their answer, and writes it down on a post-it note. The host decides whether the answer is ‘correct’ – if desired the whole group can briefly discuss the answer at this point. Stick the post-it note to the question card to use later.

The team who answered correctly gets to choose the next letter.

Continue until one team has completed their line across the board.

If desired, swap hosts and repeat the game.

### Phase 2

*“Put yourselves on the hotspot please!”*

Now that you have a range of post-it note prompts aligned with your challenge questions, it’s time to work collaboratively to explore your self-evaluation. On a large piece of paper or board, arrange your post-it notes using the Inwards, Outwards, Forwards cycle (Figure 1) to guide you. Explore the concepts together using the answer given in the game as a starting point, rather than a prescriptive definition.



Figure 1 - Inwards, outwards, forwards evaluation cycle from How Good is Our School framework: [https://education.gov.scot/nih/Documents/Frameworks\\_SelfEvaluation/FRWK2\\_NIHeditHGIOS/FRWK2\\_HGIOS4.pdf](https://education.gov.scot/nih/Documents/Frameworks_SelfEvaluation/FRWK2_NIHeditHGIOS/FRWK2_HGIOS4.pdf)

Add further post-it notes to strengthen your discussion, using your different perspectives and experience to help each other. For each evaluation concept try to answer the framework questions: How are we doing?; How do we know?; What are we going to do now?<sup>2</sup> This will ensure that self-improvement is evidence-based and practical. If necessary, make a list of actions that arise from ideas generated.

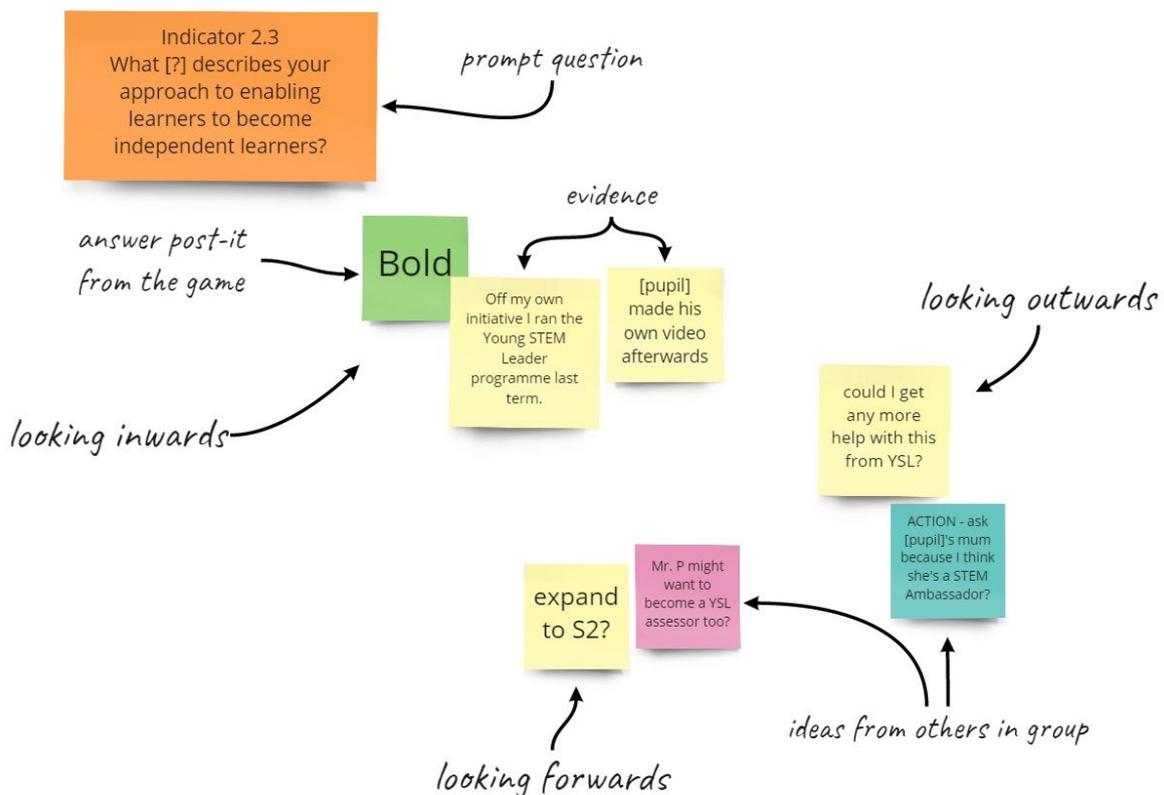


Figure 2 - example exploration of a question and response prompt pair

<sup>2</sup> [https://education.gov.scot/nih/Documents/Frameworks\\_SelfEvaluation/FRWK2\\_NIHeditHGIOS/FRWK2\\_HGIOS4.pdf](https://education.gov.scot/nih/Documents/Frameworks_SelfEvaluation/FRWK2_NIHeditHGIOS/FRWK2_HGIOS4.pdf) p.9.

### Finishing the activity

After the group exploration, the whole group should come together to briefly recap and share their progress with a wider team, as appropriate to your school's process for undertaking self-evaluation. Ideally this would take place immediately after the previous phases but can be adapted to suit your specific process. This phase would likely include the practical steps of what to do next e.g. how the evaluation links up with the School Improvement Plan.

Document the reflections (e.g. by photographing each board) and reassemble the question pack for use next time.

### Game adaptations

This game is designed around school evaluation activities and is explicitly aligned with the How Good is Our School Evaluation Framework. However, it would be equally suitable for any other evaluation framework (for example How Good is Our Early Learning and Childcare) or for directly reflecting on the agreed outcomes from Step 2 of the ACT Change Model (you may need to write new prompt questions). It would also work well for any situation where you would like to swiftly and creatively generate ideas on a topic (game Phase 1) and/or bring people together for a communal exploration of a topic (game Phase 2), especially if the activity is usually seen as not fun, a chore, or a 'necessary evil'.

Examples of adaptation could include:

- A primary school outside Scotland rewrite the Prompt Questions to align with their own evaluation framework. Instead of running the game all at once they decide to play for 10 minutes at the end of each staff meeting and save the post-its for later analysis. The 'winners' get a token prize. This makes the activity a treat and embeds evaluation as a more ongoing process. ACT THEME: *Evaluation*.
- A school's parent council run the game with larger teams at their AGM to establish priorities for activities for the coming year from the wider parent forum. Phase 2 focusses on turning ideas into practical realities and assigning responsibilities. ACT THEME: *Capturing and representing diverse perspectives of what needs to change and how*.
- As above but with the pupil council. If run with mixed groups of teachers/parents/pupils it would also fit ACT THEME: *Communication and building relationships*.

# Understanding “EvaluationBusters” better

## Game purpose

The overall purpose of this game is for evaluation of success to become a positive, joint and reflective experience for teachers and team leaders/managers. It is designed to challenge negative attitudes towards evaluation processes (e.g. it being considered low priority, a form of monitoring/judgement, or boring) and to also create circular processes that capture all aspects of success (not just those thought to be important by managers) and explicitly link self-evaluation with change and improvement. It is, therefore, deliberately ‘silly’, drawing on a well-known gameshow format to increase engagement and enjoyment. It fits into the ACT change model Step 2 – Agreed Outcomes and Step 5 – Evaluation.

## Desired change

The primary desired change is “Evaluation is prioritised as a circular, continuous, and positive process.” which falls under the ACT priority area *Evaluating Success* and also *Capturing and representing diverse perspectives on what needs to change and how*.

## Instructional design

Instructional design focussed primary on identification and labelling of concepts which are then explored through communal discovery. Fun was a core design goal to increase engagement and reward which helps to achieve the ILOs (below). The game was also designed to be somewhat flexible so that it can fit into individual school’s existing procedures for self-evaluation. For example, Phase 1 can be run as a very short, regular, standalone activity to embed evaluation more deeply into the school’s ethos. Ownership over the process was emphasised for all participants.

The form taken combines creative cognitive engagement with a more relaxed reflection with the option for guidance, collaboration, and communal discovery.

## Intended Learning Outcomes

- Evaluation of success becomes a positive, joint and reflective experience for teachers and team leaders/managers
- Management prioritises a continuous evaluation process
- Players have a positive experience of evaluation of school performance in a non-competitive format

## Desired Learning Behaviours

- Unselfconscious generation of a diverse range of success indicators (when used in Step 2)
- Positive, communal reflection and development of ideas for change (when used in Step 5)

Specific learning mechanics are captured in the gameplay loop diagram below.

## Gameplay loop

The below diagram shows the gameplay loop for this activity (including reference to relevant out-of-game activities). Specific learning mechanics are shown in blue and specific game mechanics are shown in yellow.<sup>3</sup>

There are two core loops. The first emphasises creative energy and fun as teams compete to identify concepts from prompt questions. The restriction of the initial letter encourages creative

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<sup>3</sup> For more on the game design framework being used here, see Arnab et al (2015) Mapping learning and game mechanics for serious games analysis. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 46, 391–411.



## Credits

This game was co-designed and developed by Barbara Dzieciatko and Daisy Abbott as part of the Agents of Change Toolkit project funded by the Scottish Universities Insight Institute. The Blockbuster slide template was originally created by the Learning Technology Team at BPP College and has been adapted for use here. Explore the whole toolkit at <https://teacher-act.net/>

