

Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Course: Setting Goals & Discovering Inspiration

Level: Elementary



On the places you'll go,
Today is your day!
Your mountain is waiting,
So ...get on your way!

--Dr. Seuss

Objective: Students will be able to define goals, identify their advantages, and learn how to set Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Timely ("SMART") goals.

Course Intent: Students will be provided with information and exercises to understand the goal setting process and consistently practice setting and working towards their goals.

Applications & Benefits:

By setting goals, students can discover, plan, and celebrate their achievements. Some benefits to goal setting are that students will learn about their own capabilities, develop their confidence, and adopt important life skills.

Course Snapshot

This course incorporates the following lessons.

LESSONS	ACTIVITY	TIME REQUIRED	RESOURCES & MATERIALS NEEDED
#1 Introductory Lesson: What is a Goal?	Whole group discussion	15 – 20 minutes	Lesson definitions
#2 Short-Term Goals and Long-Term Goals	- Partner talk - Small groups	15 – 20 minutes	Lesson information
#3 Types of Goals	Whole group discussion	15 – 20 minutes	- Lesson information - Lesson definitions
#4 Classroom Exercises	- Small groups - Presentations and Sharing	10 – 15 minutes each	Lesson information

Lesson Rationale



When a child does not put forth all of their potential effort, this limits their growth and can be frustrating for teachers. Teaching students how to set and achieve goals one step at a time can give them the confidence and inspiration they need to strive to achieve more in school and in Life.

Why set goals at such an early age? When students understand (with the help of the Growth mindset lesson) that their intelligence is not limited, goal setting will provide the roadmap to their development and success.

My goal is to learn this song before Friday.

Praising Students

Remind students that, rather than feel discouraged, they can instead analyze what went wrong or why something is difficult for them. They can then set a more realistic and attainable goal.



I want to finish this book so I can get a toy!



Helpful Tips

- Post the SMART goals and Personal Best (“PB”) goals for students somewhere in the classroom so that they, and their fellow students, can keep track and hold each other accountable.
- Reward students for completing goals to keep them motivated. It does not need to be a big or expensive reward. For example, if they complete a step towards their goal, or achieve a PB goal, they might get extra recess time or perhaps get a sticker. If at all possible, reward larger goals with something a bit bigger, like recognition in front of the class or a personalized certificate.



Introductory Lesson #1: What is a Goal?

Definitions

What is a goal?

A goal is an achievement we desire to reach. A goal can also include reaching a smaller milestone of the desired improvement. It is something we aspire to accomplish, an outcome we strive for, or something that will make a difference in our life as a result of achieving it.

A goal can be any sort of improvement or achievement and can range from person to person, depending on the person's needs or areas that they wish to improve upon. Some goals may seem silly or trivial to some but might be meaningful to others. It is important not to judge someone's goals. They might hold a value for that person that you do not understand, especially if you are not familiar enough with the person.

Goals can be an amazing way to celebrate achievement and can also inspire productiveness in students. It allows them to strive for completion of the goal due to the excitement of achieving it. Setting new goals also allows students to stop and think about their own needs and desires.

What do they want to accomplish? What is the area in which they would like to improve? Creating goals allows students to ask these questions and start the process of working towards their desired achievement.

Goals can be big or small, and it is a good idea to encourage students to have both types. Smaller goals can be an effective way to feel the positive and motivating effect of completing a goal, along with instant gratification. Bigger or more comprehensive long-term goals can take much more time and require more focus, but the goal may hold more significance to the student.



Lesson #2: Short-Term Goals and Long-Term Goals

Short-term Goals:

Short-term goals are great introduction goals for students not familiar with consistent goal setting, as well as younger students. Short-term goals allow the student to feel instantly gratified once the goal is achieved, and motivate them to pursue longer and more comprehensive goals.

Examples of short-term goals for students:

- Reading one chapter of a book each day, for two weeks straight. This is a great goal to motivate a student to spend more time reading on their own without being prompted by a teacher or parent. Doing this for two weeks will help the student form a habit of reading every day, but it is a goal that also seems attainable and unthreatening.
- Practicing multiplication for an hour every day for the week leading up to a test. This is an excellent example of a goal aimed at improving a student's studying skills, which, in turn, will help the student perform better on test day.

Long-Term Goals:

Long-term goals are more complex and require more time to achieve. A long-term goal does not offer instant gratification, and it requires dedication and perseverance on the part of the student. The benefits of a long-term goal are that the student will be able to achieve bigger goals or milestones that they may have been struggling to achieve before.

Examples of long-term goals for students:

- Improve a subject grade over the course of the school year. Improving the overall grade of a subject is not always as straight-forward as it seems, especially if it is a subject that the student has struggled with in the past. It is important for the student to know that the goal can be achieved over time with hard work and dedication.
- Become an honor-roll student. This is another example of a goal that a student can set that will motivate them to perform better in class. The goal would require the student to pay more attention in class, study, and work harder than they previously had.



Lesson #3: Types of Goals

How Are Goals Applied?

There are many different types of goals: Personal Best (PB) Goals, SMART Goals, Performance Goals, and Learning Goals.

Personal Best (PB) Goal: Specific challenging, competitively self-referenced targets towards which students strive.

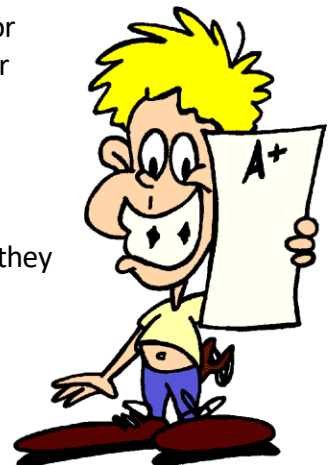
S.M.A.R.T Goal: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely goals. Commonly used in some school and office settings today.

Performance Goal: A goal that focuses on completing tasks, knowing specific information, attaining a skill or ability, and ranking one's performance compared to others.

Learning Goal: a goal that focuses on overall learning. Specifically, how mastery of a skill or concept will develop understanding and ability that can be applied to additional learning or challenges.

What is the difference?

Students who set learning goals focus on true mastery- a deep understanding from which they can draw conclusions, connect ideas, and build relationships to new skills and concepts. Learning-oriented goals help students develop grit and dedication to learning over time, as opposed to performance goals, which are more about improving intelligence or ability for isolated tasks.



A purple megaphone with a black outline, pointing towards the left. It has several short black lines radiating from the top, suggesting sound or vibration. The megaphone is positioned to the right of the "Points to Cover" box.

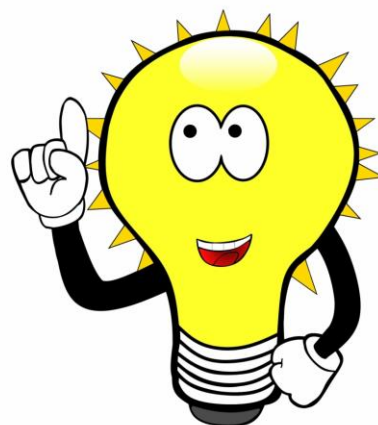
Points to Cover

- Define S.M.A.R.T goals, explain what it is and what a proper S.M.A.R.T goal isn't.
- What a PB goal is and why it is different from other goals.
- Why it is helpful to set Learning Goals and Performance Goals, and how these fit into SMART goals.



Fascinating Facts:

Dopamine, a neurotransmitter, is naturally produced by our brain and helps us feel good. Dopamine plays an important role when it comes to feeling rewarded and motivated after achieving a desired goal, meaning our brains are designed for goal setting!





Lesson #4: Classroom Exercises



Instructions to students:

Today we are going to learn how to choose which topics to set goals for, how high to set goals and how to reflect on the goals we set in the past.

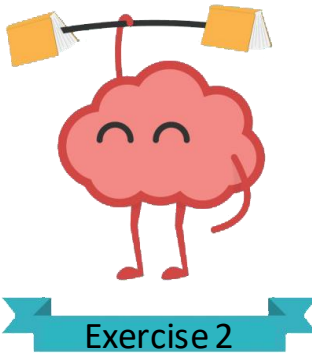
Reflecting on goals is an important part of thinking about things we do well and things we need to improve on.

It is hard to just “do better” at something, but if we take little steps every day, we can really make a change.

Write down something you want to do in school, something you want to be better at, or something you want to learn about. Then, write down a few ways in which you can start to make it happen. For example, if you want to do better in math, you can do your homework with a tutor or with your friends, talk to your teacher about something you think is difficult, or ask for a worksheet to practice with.

After you write your goal, try to find a way to measure your goal, similar to a high score in a video game. For example: “I want to get a B on my next test.” If you are not sure your goal can be measured, ask me or a friend for help. If you still cannot think of a way to measure your goal, we can work on making a slightly different goal that will still help you progress towards your intended outcome. Make sure your goal is something you can reasonably achieve. Your goal should not be to grow wings or lift a million pounds.

Finally, make sure your goal can be reached before the end of the year. Try to set a time limit that you can stick to. For example, “I can read five additional books in four weeks” might not be an achievable goal at your current level. Try to break your goal down into something smaller, like one or two additional books in four weeks.



Start with a conversation about what the students are good at. Have each student write a list of things they do well at. There should be at least three items listed in the “Do Well” list. A few examples would be raising their hand to ask a question, helping others, adding numbers, learning to swim underwater, tying their shoelaces, or riding a bicycle.

Quiz students on what the acronym SMART means before and after giving them a definition so it sticks with them.

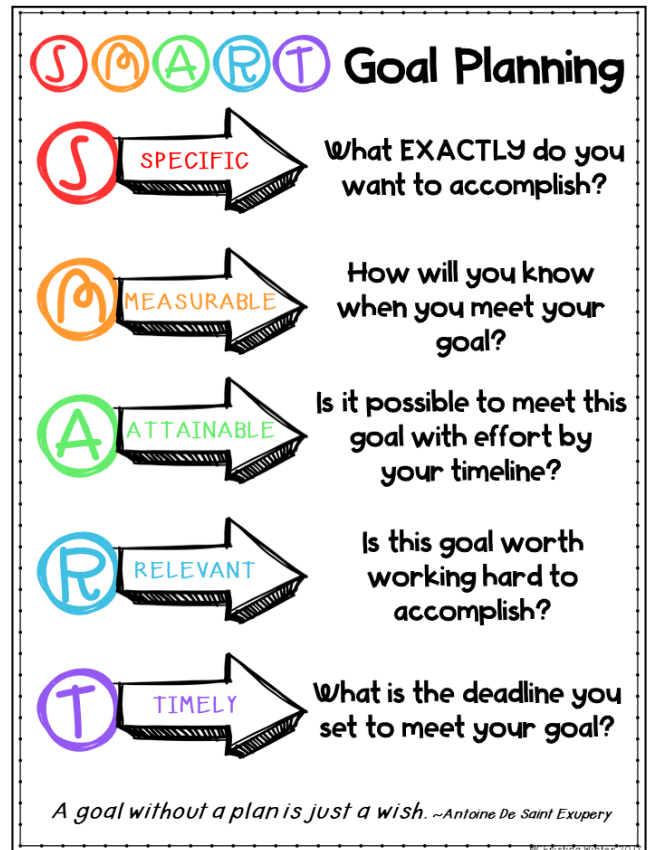
Have them pick apart a goal and see whether or not it qualifies as SMART either through a worksheet or perhaps a smart board (have students come up and write in answers or sort words, phrases or whole goals into categories).

Have the students make SMART goals, especially if they have recently had a test that they did poorly on. Naturally they will put broad goals such as “do better in math” so they may occasionally need to re-assess the goals.

Once SMART has been implemented, have the students learn about PB goals by defining it for them and showing them how it could apply to their lives.

Have the students write about a time they accomplished a PB goal.

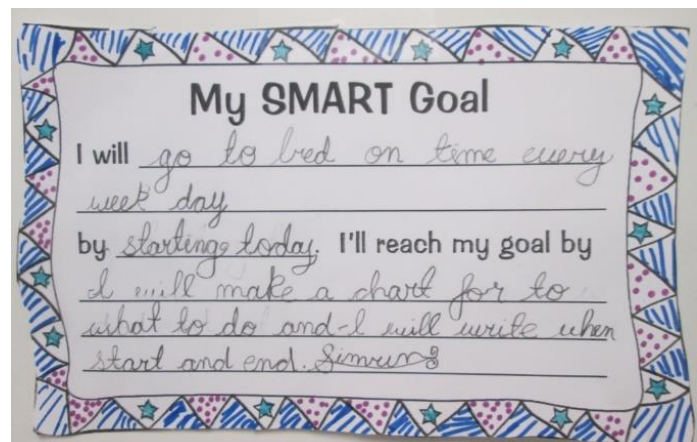
Make a list of possible PB goals, such as going from being able to do 10 pushups to 20, and a list of goals that would not fit into this category, such as deciding to try reading higher level books, and have the students sort them into categories.



SMART Goal Planning

- S** SPECIFIC: What EXACTLY do you want to accomplish?
- M** MEASURABLE: How will you know when you meet your goal?
- A** ATTAINABLE: Is it possible to meet this goal with effort by your timeline?
- R** RELEVANT: Is this goal worth working hard to accomplish?
- T** TIMELY: What is the deadline you set to meet your goal?

A goal without a plan is just a wish. ~Antoine De Saint Exupery





Quick Quiz

1. Goals can help you _____.
A.) feel good about yourself
B.) complete something meaningful
C.) get better grades
D.) All of the above
2. A long-term goal _____.
A.) is impossible to achieve
B.) is not worth the effort
C.) takes dedication and hard work
D.) is quick and easy
3. The "S" in S.M.A.R.T stands for _____.
A.) Specific
B.) Sad
C.) Special
D.) Study

Teacher Feedback

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