

Practicing Goal Setting

A. PICTURES AND A CONTRACT

1. Show photos and give each a title, for example: *talk to a nurse*.
2. Place photos with their titles around the room.
3. Students stand by their most important goal.
4. Students talk to each other in the same group.
5. Students write their goals.

B. USING A CLASS AGENDA

1. Write an agenda on the board for each class.
2. Identify the beginning and end of each activity as you progress through your plan.
3. Review the agenda with the class in order to plan next class.

C. IDENTIFY GOALS UNIT BY UNIT

1. Identify the curricular goals of your class's next unit of learning. If students don't understand the goal, show lessons from the textbook to illustrate the goal.
2. Ask each student to identify his or her most important curricular goal. Ask *What's most important to you in this unit? Why?*
3. Have students tell the class their upmost goal for the new unit.

D. NETWORKING: OBSTACLES AND SOLUTIONS

1. In groups have students talk about reasons they don't get to class.
2. Have the class report back as you write their reasons on the board.
3. Select a few key reasons and designate different areas of the classroom as network centers for each reason, for example:
 - problems with childcare
 - work schedule changes
 - transportation problems
4. Have students network with other who have the same problem. Have them come up with one solution they want to share with the class.

Do this several times so students can update one another on how their solutions are working and how else they might solution the problem. You could also have a running list of solutions on the bulletin board.

E. Pyramid of Goals

1. Students brainstorm their learning goals on stickies.
2. They put them in a pyramid, deciding which ones are the small (short term goals) and which are medium sized (longer term) goals and what is the big goal.

Keeping it Relevant

F. CONTEXTUALIZE THE MATERIAL

Keep the learner's context in mind. As you plan your class, look at each objective. Ask yourself:

Why is this important?

Where and when will my students use this knowledge outside of class?

G. CONNECTIONS INSIDE AND OUT

Make sure students understand how the learning inside the classroom connects to their lives outside the classroom. You can make this connection explicit by brainstorming with students how they will use the learning in their daily lives. Ask:

- *Why are we learning this?*
- *When and where will you use this outside of class?*

H. ASK FOR EXAMPLES FROM STUDENTS

Next time you are explaining a concept, instead of providing an illustrative example yourself, ask students to supply it.

Retrieval Activities: Self-directed Assessment

I. TOTAL RECALL

1. After reviewing a lesson in a book or class-notes, students close the book and put away their notes.
2. Students write down everything they can remember of their learning.
3. Students open the book or notes and check their work. They highlight errors. They write keywords for any areas of omission.
4. They close their books/notes. They correct the highlighted areas and elaborate on the areas of omission.

J. VOCABULARY FLASHCARDS

Have students make a flashcard of each new vocabulary item in class. Between class activities have pairs of students quiz their partners on their flashcards. Prompt them with one of these questions or tasks.

- How do you spell _____?
- Look at the word. How many syllables does it have? Which syllable is stressed?
- Sorting: Sort words into groups of:
 - verbs/ nouns/ adjectives/ etc
 - used in the classroom /in a restaurant /at home
 - stress patterns (Ooo – oOo-ooO)
 - used in geometry
 - describe a historical figure

K. QUESTION CARDS

- At the end of every class, have students write down one or two questions they learned to answer or write the questions yourself. For example:
 - How's the weather today?
 - What were three events before the Civil War?
 - What is an angle? How do you measure it?
- At the beginning of the following class, have students take turns picking up a card from the other student's pile and asking their partner the question.
- The cards should be randomly recycled over the course of your semester.

Organization tip: Have students use a different colored card for each content unit, so they can see the questions belong to different units.

L. RETELL WITH KEY WORDS

After learning a new point, have students practice retelling what they learned using key words.

M. EXIT TICKET

Before leaving class, ask students a question about what they learned in class. Students write their answers on a slip of paper and hand you the “ticket” as they exit the classroom. You can be specific or open ended.

- What is one thing you learned in class today?
- What are three new words your learned?
- What are two reasons for the Civil War?
- Why is Susan B Anthony an important person in US history?

Self-Reflection Activities

N. MARK THE MARGINS

This is a strategy to get students to consciously think about their comprehension as they are reviewing readings, homework assignments, and class notes.

Students can use the following symbols and mark the margins of readings, notes, or homework.

- ✓ - I understand
- ? - I don't understand
- ! - That's surprising!

O. CLASS RECAP AND REFLECTION

1. Erase the class agenda.
2. Ask: *What did we do in class today?*
3. Have students reconstruct what they did in class as you write their ideas on the board.
4. Ask: *What was the most important part of today's class for you? Why? What do you want to practice more?*
5. Have students identify an activity that was most valuable to them.

Study Skills

P. THE TALK

Have this talk often. Students habits will evolve as they become more aware of themselves as learners.

1. Ask your students:
 - *Where do you study?*
 - *When do you study?*
 - *How long do you study?*
 - *How often do you study?*
 - *Who do you study with?*
 - *What materials do you use to study?*
2. You can have students discuss the questions in small groups, as a class, or as a Gallery Walk (see above activity).
3. Return to this discussion several times over the semester so students can evolve in their habits and learn from one another. The best study tips come from peers.

Q. A STUDY PLAN

Research has shown that by visualizing the specifics, an intention is more likely to happen. When one goes further to problem-solve before the problems arise, the goal is even more likely to be met.

Have your students answer these questions individually, and then share their plans with a partner:

- *What days will I study?*
- *What will I study each time?*
- *Where will I study?*
- *How long will I study?*
- *I might have this problem: _____ .*
- *If this happens, I will _____ .*

R. CLASS DISCUSSION & INVENTORY: WHAT IS A GOOD STUDENT?

1. Have students discuss the following questions:
 - *What does a good student do when she doesn't understand the homework assignment?*
 - *What does a good student do when she misses a class?*
 - *What does a good student do when he doesn't understand a word?*
2. Write students' ideas on the board.
3. Reflect: Students go up to the board and write a checkmark next to all the things they already do. They put an X next to the actions they don't do and put a star next to those things they want to try.

4. Discuss: What are we doing well as a class? How can we try to do these new things? Why don't we do some of these things?

S. STUDENT TO STUDENT WELCOME LETTER

1. Have students write a welcome letter to new students with advice.
2. In groups have them brainstorm a list of tips for a successful semester.
3. Write their ideas on the board.
4. Vote on the top ten ideas and write a welcome letter to the next students of the class. Your students can sign it.