Goals Setting

Overview: This goals setting lesson helps the learners to clearly identify their goals, ensure their goals are SMART, and develop a plan to achieve their goals. The learners will use the EFF Plan Standard as the organizing framework for setting their goals. The learners will also learn several specific goals-setting tools to use with the planning standard. Learners will also use regression analysis to identify the steps and time period to achieve their goals.

Educational Goal: The objective of this lesson is for each learner to comprehend how to develop, plan, refine, and adjust a goal by using a systematic process to reach his or her goals.

Objectives: The learner will:

Cognitive: —Explain the goal-setting techniques and EFF Plan Standard
—Summarize how the goal-setting tools work

Affective: —Perform the goal setting and planning process activities
—Discuss the positive value of using these processes and tools

Skill Standard Connections: This lesson has connections with a Tennessee KSA – Planning; GED – To Achieve; and EFF Standard – Plan. (Appendix II)

Teaching Strategy: The lesson starts by focusing the learner on identifying his or her goals by using a goals worksheet. Assist the learners in filling out the form and narrowing down the goals they wish to achieve in the four areas. Teach the learners how to ensure their goal is a SMART goal. Help the learners by selecting their top 10 goals and using a prioritization list. Show them the value in answering the “why” question. Finally, use the EFF Standard of Plan to demonstrate how to systematically reach their goals. When learners have set and prioritized their goals, have them do a regression analysis. Regression analysis is a statistical process. While it is not used here as a statistical process, the principle is applicable to this lesson. Simply, it is a way of having learners look at the achievement of the goal and work backwards to the beginning, identifying all the steps they will need to complete to reach the goal.

Time: 1 hour

Learner Materials:
— Goals Worksheet
— Top 10 Checklist
— EFF Plan Standard
— Bill Cosby Success Story
(Use story from Internet. Suggested site: mrshowbiz.go.com.celebrities/people/billcosby.bio.html)

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Introduction

**Attention:** We all have goals we want to achieve, but we often do not reach them because of lack of planning and follow through. 

**Question:** How many have made a New Year’s resolution but failed to keep it?

**Question:** Why?

There are numerous reasons why we do not stay on track to our goals. One of the primary reasons is that we do not set a plan and follow through with it. It would almost be like trying to hit the bull’s eye on a target with a dart. So often we say the equivalent of “ready—fire —aim,” not “ready—aim—fire.” Aiming is the planning part: exactly when to release the dart, the path and angle it should take, and focusing on each element of the throw. Without aiming (or planning) we have little hope of hitting our target (or goal). It is the same way with planning; without it we have little chance of reaching our goal. Even when we have a plan, we have to make sure we stay focused on it and follow through with it.

**Motivation:** This lesson will provide you with some easy-to-use tools and a planning process from Equipped for the Future to help you reach your goals. You can also use these tools with other family members and friends. By paying attention to this lesson you will learn some valuable ways to help yourself and others.

**Overview:** We will first set goals using a goals worksheet in four areas of our lives. Next, we will use a prioritization list in case we have difficulty reaching a decision about the order of our goals. Then we will use the EFF Standard for planning to help us carry out the plan and reach our goal. Finally, we will use regression analysis or looking backward to identify the process of reaching our goals.

Body of Lesson

Main Point 1: Goals-Setting Worksheet

Use your “Goal-Setting Note Taker” during the discussion. We need to identify exactly what are the goals you wish to accomplish. Project Read from the San Francisco Library system developed the goals worksheet (at right) to help learners to identify their top goals.
Prioritizing: One problem everyone has is prioritizing the things they want to accomplish. We fail to clearly decide which comes first, second, third, and so on. We also often spend time focusing and working on the goals that are the easiest, because they are not as difficult to reach. There is a simple technique to prioritizing our goals.

Procedure: Start by making a list of your top 10 goals. Also ask a value question: “Why is it important and what is the payoff?” This question helps to focus the person into bottom-line payoffs. This task seems easy, but it will take time and a thoughtful evaluation process.

Main Point 2: SMART Goals
Once you have decided on your goals, you need to make sure that they are SMART. The SMART process is a step-by-step process to help think through and refine a goal into clear, concrete terms.

First, a goal should be S = Specific.
We often make goals too general, e.g., lose weight or finish school. Goals need to be as specific as possible so the target is concrete, not vague. Examples: Lose 10 pounds over the next month and keep it off or take a math course needed to finish the GED.

Second, a goal should be M = Measurable.
A goal should be able to be tracked in order to evaluate how it is going. Some goals are more difficult than others to measure, so the learner must set up appropriate or common sense checkpoints to measure progress. Examples: Weigh in to see the loss of weight on the way to losing 10 pounds; periodic assessment to show how close to mastering math and readiness for taking the final exam.

Third, a goal needs to be A = Achievable and R = Reasonable.
Each person needs to step back from his or her goal and ask the question “Is the goal reasonable for me and is it achievable at this time?” We often set goals that are not reasonable or achievable for various reasons. Examples: Obtain a management position earning a good salary, complete GED in a month, etc. In order to reach a management position, a person must
start at an entry-level position. The management position is achievable with a reasonable view of where one must start and that it will take time to work up the ladder of responsibility. The GED goal is achievable, but given the amount of studying or work needed, it may be more reasonable with more time. There are some goals that are just not achievable given our talents, personality, and other characteristics.

Finally, a goal needs to have a clear T = Timelines. A realistic timeline needs to be set to focus one’s energy and not to waste time. If a person never sets a timeline, then there isn’t a rush to achieve it. Timelines should be flexible, but they need to be set so a person can measure how they are doing and how close they are to achieving his or her goal. A timeline provides a finish line to race toward.

Main Point 3: Developing a Plan
Now that we’ve developed a SMART goal, we need to develop a plan to reach the goal. The EFF Standard for Plan will help with this.

Plan:
- Set and prioritize goals
- Develop an organized approach of activities and objectives
- Actively carry out the plan
- Monitor the plan’s progress while considering any need to adjust the plan
- Evaluate its effectiveness in achieving the goals

Let’s look at each step.
— Set and prioritize goals. Our first step of the lesson using the worksheet and priority list helped us to achieve this step.

— Develop an organized approach of activities and objectives. With this step we need to develop those activities and objectives that will help us reach our goal. *Examples: Some of the activities and objectives with our weight loss example could be getting a healthy diet, eating less, and starting an exercise program. With the GED example, it could be mastering math by first studying fractions, decimals, percentages, pre-algebra, and algebra.*

— Actively carry out the plan. Once we have our plan and the specific steps, we need to do it. This sounds easy, but it is the hard part. It will take motivation, determination, and discipline to follow through with our carefully laid-out plan. We have the advantage of a carefully laid-out plan.
versus a vague, unrealistic plan. Just take it step-by-step and you will reach the goal. Do not focus on the ultimate end, but rather focus on reaching each objective. By achieving each objective, you will reach your ultimate goal, no matter how far off it seems.

— Monitor the plan’s progress while considering any need to adjust the plan. Keep track of how you are doing. If you set up a timeline chart or checklist, you can check off or color in when you have achieved certain objectives. This is a motivational way of keeping track of your progress and measuring how you are doing. It also allows for adjustments to your plan if it is not working well. Just do not quickly abandon the goal.

— Evaluate its effectiveness in achieving the goals. After you reach your goal, you should evaluate your plan and yourself. How did it go? How could you improve your process of goal setting? What were the difficult parts of carrying out the plan? How should you plan for difficult areas with your next goal? The more you analyze what you did, the better you will get at developing a goal-setting plan and carrying it out. Planning is a skill that goes beyond goal setting and will be very important in your everyday life with your family, work, and other areas.

Main Point 4: Regression Analysis
Now that you have identified and prioritized your goals let’s take a look at an example of a person’s vision and how he or she achieve it. Regression analysis is a way of having you look at the achievement of your goal and work backward to the beginning, identifying all the steps you will need to complete to reach the goal.

Example:
A young girl in elementary school wants to play basketball for the Lady Vols. Her vision or goal is to be a Lady Vol. (Start with the vision at the top. Ask: What does she have to do to get there? Learners will usually say—She has to make good grades and practice basketball to get to college. Tell learners that is true and then ask: What does she have to do in high school to get to college? Keep working backward down the staircase until you are at the beginning of the steps when she is in elementary
school. Write learners’ answers on the board and guide the discussion so that the learners keep identifying more and more specific actions that the girl will need to do to reach her goal. Learners should begin to see that reaching goals takes planning, practice, time, discipline, and focus.)

**Conclusion**

**Summary:** (Have the learners summarize this lesson and the tools. This will help their understanding of the tools and how to use them. Fill in any gaps. Get a feel for how this lesson went with the learners and encourage them to use these tools not only in their life but also with their children, family, work, and in their neighborhood.)

**Re-Motivation:** Goal setting is a critical skill for success. The more you use these tools and techniques to set, prioritize, and pursue your dreams, the more you will accomplish and obtain the things you want from life. By modeling these skills for your children and family, the more they will follow your example of how to take charge, follow a plan, and reach their goals.

**Homework Assignment:** Bill Cosby Success Story (in Appendix I).

**Close:** A goal is a dream ready to be made real through careful planning and hard work. If we use the tools at our disposal, there is no telling what we can accomplish.