



CONNECTING ACTIONS TO OUTCOMES: HELPING STUDENTS REACH THEIR GOALS



Helping Students Reach Their Goals

A theme within the competency of responsibility is the ability to “select the best option among choices for a suitable outcome” (Fly Five, 2021). While ensuring that students are able to assess their choices and make sound decisions is important, they must also be able to clarify and articulate the outcome they desire in order to achieve it. What is their goal in a given situation? What would their ideal outcome be?

Clearly defined goals can help students self-regulate and allow them to evaluate how their actions and behaviors are helping or hindering their pursuit of their goals. Teachers can show students how to clarify goals and outcomes by:

- Providing clear-cut goals for lessons, which fosters students’ motivation, deepens their learning, and helps them understand the reasoning behind each lesson (Krijgsman et al., 2019; Dean et al., 2012).
- Modeling what it means to clarify a goal within the context of a lesson, then giving students time to outline their personal goals for a lesson alongside the teacher’s goals for the class.
- Allowing students to practice clarifying the outcomes they hope for in a variety of situations, first with a teacher’s guidance and eventually on their own. What outcomes are they hoping for in their extracurriculars, their friendships, or at home?







As students practice making reasoned, informed choices, they deepen their understanding of how their current actions will put them closer to their desired outcomes. Students can learn to clarify their goals by:

- Exploring their goals and desired outcomes in different situations, which can guide them in making decisions. Students can practice asking themselves questions such as “What do I hope to learn from this?” or “How do I want to feel after this experience?”
- Refining their goals using the SMART framework: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. Have students consider, in detail, what they want, when they want it, and the small action steps they can take to make it happen. As students clarify the specifics of their desired outcomes, they will be better able to make smart choices that align with their SMART goals.
- Reflecting on their “why?” (UCOP, 2017). Why do they want to achieve this goal? How will arriving at this desired outcome benefit them? How important is it that they reach this outcome?

- Incorporating self-assessment into their learning. Feedback is necessary for successfully reaching learning goals (Dean et al., 2012), and students must know how to give themselves feedback when clarifying and working toward a goal. What's working and what isn't? Has their goal/desired outcome shifted in any way since they began working toward it?

As students practice clarifying their goals, they will be positioned to make positive choices that will put them closer to the outcomes that they want. We can help students whittle their big goals down to smaller, more manageable ones, which will in turn help them show responsibility for their outcomes and develop strong decision-making skills.



References

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