

Goal Setting Overview

Goals often refer to your overall aims. Objectives are the steps that help you get there. The goals and objectives themselves are far less important than the process of self reflection that you engage in while defining and revising them.

Why set goals?

- Defining goals help you identify your intentions. Honest reflection results in greater clarity.
- Goals boost motivation if they are really important to you.
- Goal-directedness, motivation and self assessment (reflection) sustain learning.
- Goals shift and change depending on context, experience and opportunities. The practice of defining, refining and revisiting your goals is important to staying flexible.

How do I start?

1. **Futurecast:** Consider some point in your future, imagine it and brainstorm as many qualities about your vision as you can. Create a broad goal that matches with this vision.
2. **Focus on now:** identify as much as you can about your current situation.
3. **Identify the gap:** what do you need to develop in order to close the gap between where you are now and where you want to be. Identify as many steps as you can in the process, working backward from your goal. These are your objectives.
4. **Identify the step closest** to where you are now. This is your first objective.



Tip: Meaningful learning goals represent a shift in knowledge, skills and attitudes. Meaningful objectives make steps toward the shift.

1. Articulate (as best you can) your overall, in the future, broad goal
2. Identify an objective or two that will help you towards your overall goal.
3. Use the SMARTER method to ensure your objective is well defined.

Overall goal: _____

Example: To be a competent critical thinker.

Your Objective(s)	Components of a SMARTER objective						
	Specific Your objective is specific.	Measurable You'll know when you have accomplished it – you'll need to do something.	Attainable It's realistic, attainable and you have a plan to ensure success.	Relevant to long term vision It supports your long term goal.	Time specific You've identified a timeline.	Energizing You'll be energized by accomplishing it.	Reward You've identified a payoff when you reach your goal.
Example: By the end of February, I will have found and bookmarked at least 3 great resources about critical thinking and I'll be able to describe critical thinking to a friend.							