

Chapter One includes a lesson plan on goal-setting, and a small part of that lesson includes students reading a short piece called “The Harvard Goal Study,” which basically says that it’s beneficial to write down your goals. It’s cited in countless books and on thousands of websites.

Unfortunately, as [I pointed out shortly after the book was first published](#), it’s also an imaginary study that’s an urban legend. Other legitimate research, however, reached similar conclusions, and in that post I linked to a piece that could be used in place of the fictitious Harvard study.

This slightly modified lesson plan now omits the fake Harvard study and replaces it with a legitimate one.

## **GOAL-SETTING LESSON PLAN**

**(from *Helping Students Motivate Themselves* by Larry Ferlazzo)**

### **Instructional Objectives**

Students will:

1. Further develop their ability to practice reading strategies to help comprehend a text.
2. Understand the importance of setting goals and designing an effective action plan to achieve them.
3. Identify semester goals and an effective plan to achieve them.

### **Duration**

One 55 minute class period and 20 minutes on the second day

### **Common Core English Language Arts Standards**

#### **READING:**

2. Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

10. Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

#### **WRITING:**

1. Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

#### **SPEAKING & LISTENING:**

1. Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

#### **LANGUAGE:**

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.

2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing

## Materials

1. Copies for each student of two one-page hand-outs:
  - \* "Study Focuses On Strategies For Achieving Goals, Resolutions"  
(<http://www.dominican.edu/dominicannews/study-highlights-strategies-for-achieving-goals>)
  - Michael Jordan Goal Story  
(<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/Siegle/SelfEfficacy/Jordan.html>)
2. Copies for each student of a Semester Goal Sheet, similar to the one pictured in Figure 1.1
3. Copies for each student of a Weekly Goal Sheet, similar to the one pictured in Figure 1.2.
4. A large poster listing the key characteristics of a self-directed learner: intrinsic motivation, self-control, taking personal responsibility, metacognition/reflection, and being goal-oriented.
5. One copy of Concept Attainment examples – Figure 1.3

## Procedure

### *First Day*

1. Teacher writes the word “Goal” on the whiteboard. She asks students to write three things: what they think it means, goal that they once had for themselves and that they accomplished, and what they did to accomplish it. The teacher should share an example from her life for the last two points. Students should write, and then share what they wrote with partners, and the teacher can ask a few to share with the class. The teacher then explains that the class is going to learn about goals today.

Teacher distributes copies of "Study Focuses On Strategies For Achieving Goals, Resolutions" to all students (it discusses a study that showed students who wrote down their goals were much more successful than those who did not make them). The teacher asks student to get into partners and take turns reading paragraphs to each other. While they are reading, they are to highlight two phrases they like in the article (not more than eight words each) and then write a one sentence summary of the information. Then they will share both their highlighted phrases and sentence summary with another pair of students. The teacher will ask a few students share with the entire class.

2. Teacher will distribute copies of the Michael Jordan story, and students will use the same reading process.
3. Teacher will explain that students will be determining their own goals, and their plans to achieve them.
4. Teacher explains that goals are divided into two categories, and that in a little while students will be making their own goals. One group can be called a "performance goal," including G.P.A., test scores, how many books you want to read, etc. The other could be described as a "learning goal" – wanting to be able to write better, to not be as distracted in class, etc.
5. Teacher reviews the list of characteristics of a self-directed learner on the poster that he has put on the wall. He asks students to write them down and try to define them in their own words, then share with a partner and then discuss in class. Teacher explains that improving on these characteristics could qualify as learning goals.

Metacognition/reflection might be particularly challenging for students to understand. The teacher might want to explain it as a sort of "talking to yourself" while

you're doing an activity and afterwards. You are explaining the process you are using to arrive at answers to questions, or to understand a text or concept. It's like in math class "showing your work" and not just the solution. Being aware of the process helps you spot errors you might have made, and makes you more conscious of patterns that can help you learn better. It's similar to why reading what we write out loud makes it easier to spot errors we make.

6. Teacher explains that setting goals require making a plan to achieve them, and reviews the Concept Attainment sheet using the process described in the section of this chapter titled "Designing Action Plans."
7. Teacher distributes a version of the Semester Goal sheet and students begin to work on their form. It will be homework if not completed by the end of class.

### ***Second Day***

1. The teacher reminds students about the goals discussion from the previous day, and checks that every one's semester goal sheet is completed. The teacher then explains that students will begin to prepare a weekly goal sheet focusing on one or two of the goals they listed in their semester goal sheet. They will turn it in weekly to their teacher after their parents sign it. Students decide on which goal they will work on this week and what their action plan will be to achieve it.
2. The Teacher explains that each student will pick a "buddy" with whom they will review their goal sheet weekly goal sheet. Teacher explains that she will review what these weekly meetings will look like the first time they do that (see the Partner Support section

of this chapter). Now, though, all partners have to do is share what they wrote for their goals and action plans and ask their partners for any feedback/suggestions.

3. Students meet in partners, and the teacher identifies a few to share examples of what they wrote – if they are willing to make them public. The teacher writes their present grade on each sheet (perhaps using an ink stamp to sign it) and tells students they are to get their parents to sign it and return it to her by the next Friday.

### **Assessment**

1. Students could be asked to respond to the question: Do you think goals are important? If so, why? If not, why not? The teacher could explain they are to use the ABC (or PQC) framework to respond to the question.
2. The teacher collects each semester goal sheet to make copies before returning the original to each student the following day. The teacher will assess if students followed instructions for both goals and action plans and, if not, will use the concept attainment strategy again using examples from student goal sheets.
3. If the teacher feels a more involved assessment is necessary, he can develop a simple rubric appropriate for their classroom situation. Free online resources to both find pre-made rubrics and to create new ones can be found at <http://larryferlazzo.edublogs.org/2010/09/18/the-best-rubric-sites-and-a-beginning-discussion-about-their-use/>

### **Possible Extensions/Modifications**

1. Implement the idea of weekly goal sheets.

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2. The teacher could ask each student to make a poster picking one of the phrases they highlighted from the two articles and illustrate it to share with other students. The posters could be placed on classroom walls as future reminders.