



**“More Than a Goal: Strategies to Support Future Orientation in Youth”
Activities and Resources**

Learning and Performance Goals

Performance goals and standards are prevalent in our society. However, research suggests cultivating a growth mindset and setting learning goals help a diverse array of people to stretch themselves, enjoy learning more, and persevere through obstacles and achieve goals. This has the greatest potential to positively impact youth who feel they are perceived as unintelligent, have experienced academic course failure or other academic challenges, or think they aren’t smart if they have to work hard to understand the material.

Read each performance goal statement. Create a growth mindset question you could ask of the student. Set a learning goal they might generate from the context of their performance goal.

Supportive growth mindset questions and learning goals highlight:

- Effort and process over ability and talent
- The intrinsic rewards of personal knowledge, growth, or enjoyment versus extrinsic rewards such as praise or classroom grades
- Improvement of skills rather than demonstration of skills

Student Performance Goal Statement	Supportive Growth Mindset Question	Student Learning Goal Statement
1. My goal is to be the best player on the soccer team.	What specific skills are you trying to improve this season?	This season I want to improve my ball control and frequency of assists.
2. My goal is to get at least a B in Spanish class.		
3. My goal is to get good grades so my mom will be proud of me.		
4. My goal is to graduate and get a full-ride athletic scholarship to college.		
5. My goal is to get a C just so people don’t think I’m stupid.		
6. My goal is to show the class I know more about how to debate than anyone else.		
7. My goal is not to fail this test.		



Values Affirmation

What are values? Here is a list of some values to get you started thinking about what matters to you.

- Relationships with family and/or friends
- Creativity
- Learning or gaining knowledge
- Faith/spirituality
- Social/cultural/racial identity
- Honesty
- Wealth
- Our environment/Earth
- Equity
- Food
- Helping other people
- Being part of a community of people
- Status
- Animals

1. Make a list of five things you value.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

2. Rank the list of personal values in order of importance to you, with 1 being most important.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

3. Talk with your partner about your top-ranked value. Why is this value important to you? What do you appreciate about it? When did it first show up in your life?



Goal-Setting with WOOP

WISH: Focus on one of your future goals (possible selves). What do you hope to achieve in the next five years? What is your wish?

OUTCOME: Visualize what it will look like to achieve this future vision of yourself. What would be the best possible outcomes? Choose one outcome and elaborate on it—describe the outcome in detail.

OBSTACLE: What currently stands in the way of you reaching your goal? What obstacles will you face as you try to achieve your wish? Choose one of these obstacles and elaborate on it in detail.

PLAN: Considering the main obstacle listed above, write a plan in the form of an “If _____, then _____” statement for that obstacle. “If I encounter Obstacle A, I will do Goal-Oriented Behavior B in order to overcome it.”

If _____, then _____.

Consider also what opportunities you may encounter that will help you to achieve your goal. Write a plan for how you will take advantage of an opportunity. “If I encounter Opportunity A, I will do Goal-Oriented Behavior B.”

If _____, then _____.



Developing Future Orientation: Sample Timeline of Activities

All Year

- Say hello to youth daily (for example, classroom greetings at the door or greetings in the hall during passing periods)
- Identify strategies to learn student names
- Incorporate name games and other community-building activities into orientation, classroom, or other school activities
- Incorporate small group projects or discussions to build relationships
- Include a reflection or debrief activities to develop youth skills in thinking about what they are doing and learning in a variety of contexts

September (School begins; Focus: Belonging)

- Orientation or pre-first day opportunity to meet school staff members
- Focus on learning names, preferred gender pronouns, etc.
- Set classroom community agreements or group norms with youth input
- Set traditions and procedures, such as how to welcome a new student
- Implement Values Affirmation activity, as written exercise
- Expand on Values Affirmation with interactive activity to show respect and appreciation for diversity of values represented in classrooms or small groups

November (Focus: Possible Selves)

- Introduce concept of thinking about who we want to be and who we don't want to be in the future—individual counseling sessions, classroom activity, or after-school program
- Youth create timelines showing past experiences and goals already achieved as well as multiple possible futures (including futures to avoid) and multiple pathways to get there
- Do juggling activity to spark discussion about goal-setting as part of college and career readiness activities

December (Focus: Goal-Setting, Strategies, & Agency)

- Teach youth about the concepts of growth and fixed mindsets
- Introduce learning and performance goals
- Guide youth through setting learning goals within the context of their performance goals
- Introduce WOOP to identify strategies for implementation of learning goals
- Weekly check-ins on goals—on what is being learned, challenges, strategies, etc. (focus less on whether or not the goal has been met)

January (Focus: Goal-Setting, Strategies, & Agency)

- Weekly check-ins on goals
- Network of support—develop activity for youth to identify their resources for support (people, information sources, services, etc.)