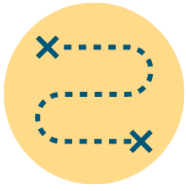


PERSONALIZED PATHWAYS TOOL



Using Goal-Setting to Motivate and Personalize Learning for P.E. Students

By Libby Bacher

TOOL DESCRIPTION

A process and accompanying worksheets to support student goal-setting in the interest of supporting students in creating their own “pathways” for learning within a given course.⁵¹

CRITICAL CONTEXT INFORMATION

This activity was developed for elementary physical education students (3rd-5th graders) in a public school within a medium-sized urban district, but it can be applied to other subject areas.

TOOL & LINKS

- [Goal-Setting Worksheets](#)
- [SMART Goal Check-In Worksheet](#)
- [Video about How to Write a SMART Goal](#) (Khan Academy via Youtube)

About this Tool & Guidance for Adaptation

First, before delving into goal creation, we prepare by watching [videos about SMART goal-setting](#) practices, discussing why goal-setting is important now and in the future, and give various examples of different goals that may be applicable to different kinds of students.

Then, students are guided using a **SMART goals worksheet** to ensure their goal is **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant, and **T**imely.

S	Make it S pecific	What do you want to accomplish? Getting at least 7 more laps on the PACER Test.
M	Make it M easurable	How will you know when you have accomplished your goal? When I get to at least the third level (10 laps).

⁵¹ While much more complex, an analogous practice example would be a Personalized Learning Plan, which might be developed by a student in partnership with one or more educators to guide their pathway throughout their time at a given school. For an example, see [this Personalized Learning Planning guide from Edmentum](#).

A	Make it Attainable	How can the goal be accomplished? Exercising my lungs by practicing running in PE and at soccer practice.
R	Make it Relevant	Is this goal worth working hard to accomplish? Explain. Yes, because after it will help me later in life.
T	Make it Timely	By when will the goal be accomplished? Latest, June 2020.

Students are excited to set goals that are specific to their own personal lives and that they can connect to outside of school. In PE, they are encouraged to set a goal related to any part of physical activity or nutrition as long as it has all of the SMART goal requirements. **We then [check in on their goals](#)** about halfway through the school year and again at the end of the school year to see where we're at overall. I also participate in our goal-setting and share my successes and failures alongside my students.

Guidance: As I develop my own curriculum to incorporate personalized pathways based on student goal-setting, I keep these questions in mind.

- **Flexibility.** How can my curriculum be flexible to truly focus on student goals in a personalized way?
 - Understanding that this unit and activity will be completely shaped by the specific students in my classroom each school year, so being open to change is paramount.
 - Using this unit to adjust future curriculum based on student goals. For example, weaving more cardio-specific activities into the curriculum if many student goals are based on running more laps on the PACER test.
- **Focus on Marginalized Students.** How can I use this activity to center historically marginalized students?
 - Considering student examples, my own examples, and inspirational goal-setting videos that represent diverse perspectives, races, and identities.
- **Identity.** How does my own identity as a white woman who loves physical activity and sports affect the student goals I choose to focus my curriculum on?
 - Reflecting on my own biases and love for PE is important considering not all students feel the same way. I want all students to feel welcome and comfortable to set physical activity goals, especially if they do not typically succeed in PE.

Teacher Narrative

In my previous job as an afterschool coach, I noticed the effectiveness of our fitness testing program for our students to set achievable goals and work towards them in a structured way throughout the year. When I started teaching PE, I noticed that my students often struggled to connect an academic goal-setting mindset

to “real-life” situations that often come about naturally in PE. I wanted my students to be able to set their own fitness goals and be able to personalize them in order to increase motivation and participation in PE for all students, regardless of their skill level at the beginning of the school year.

As students progress with me as their teacher from 3rd to 5th grade, it’s rewarding to see the structure fall away as the students are able to set their own fitness goals rather than adjusting a prewritten goal that I have created for them. As students progress toward their goal or complete it, I share their excitement and enthusiasm. I also notice as they take goal-setting and apply it to a different pathway in their life, whether academic or personal.

MEET THE AUTHOR

Libby Bacher teaches elementary (JK-5) Physical Education at the Amigos School in Cambridge, MA. She believes that P.E. as a subject embraces many components of Student-Centered Learning naturally by granting students autonomy, choice, and organic pathways for students to succeed in an environment outside of the academic classroom.

