Mohammed Khider University of Biskra

Faculty of Letters and Foreign Languages

Department of English Language

Course: Study skills   **Level:** First year LMD

Instructor: Dr. Chahira Nasri   **Academic year:** 2023/2024

Setting Goals and Priorities

Objectives of the Lesson: By the end of this lesson, students will be able to:

➢ Design their short-term, mid-term and long-term SMART goals.
➢ Develop techniques to organize and work for their goals effectively.

Prerequisites

-Students should have a good command of English

-Students should be at least at a lower-intermediate level in English.

Introduction

Going around with open and limitless choices in life can be fun and relaxing until one realizes that they have been taking whatever life has been throwing at them and wasting their time and energy with no concrete achievements. University students have different set of goals; academic, professional and personal. Designing focused and intentional goals can help them to direct their energy and time towards what they really want to do in life. It can also help them to ensure that they maintain their motivation despite the hardship. Some consider goal setting to be an abstract activity that involves wishing or dreaming. In fact, it is an activity that requirescareful thought and planning.

What is a goal?

The simplest definition of a goal could be '*the purpose towards which an endeavour is directed; an objective or outcome*' (Thefreedictionary.com). Scholars in the field of psychology, management and coaching attempt to offer definitions that are more sophisticated and comprehensive. Austin and Vancouver's (1996) define goals as '*internal representations of desired states or outcomes*'. Cochran and Tesser (1996) explain further that a goal is '*a cognitive image of an ideal stored in memory for comparison to an actual state; a representation of the future that influences the present; a desire (pleasure and satisfaction are expected from goal success); a source of motivation, an incentive to action*'.

SMART Goals

Designing goals does not solely consist of writing down things that people dream to achieve. There are certain criteria through which people can ensure that they are building effective goals. Peter Drucker (1981) suggests the use of 'SMART'

criteria for objectives. His work was concerned with the field of management. However, many extended these criteria to work with in different fields such as in education and professional development. SMART is a mnemonic acronym, the following diagram explains its different components:
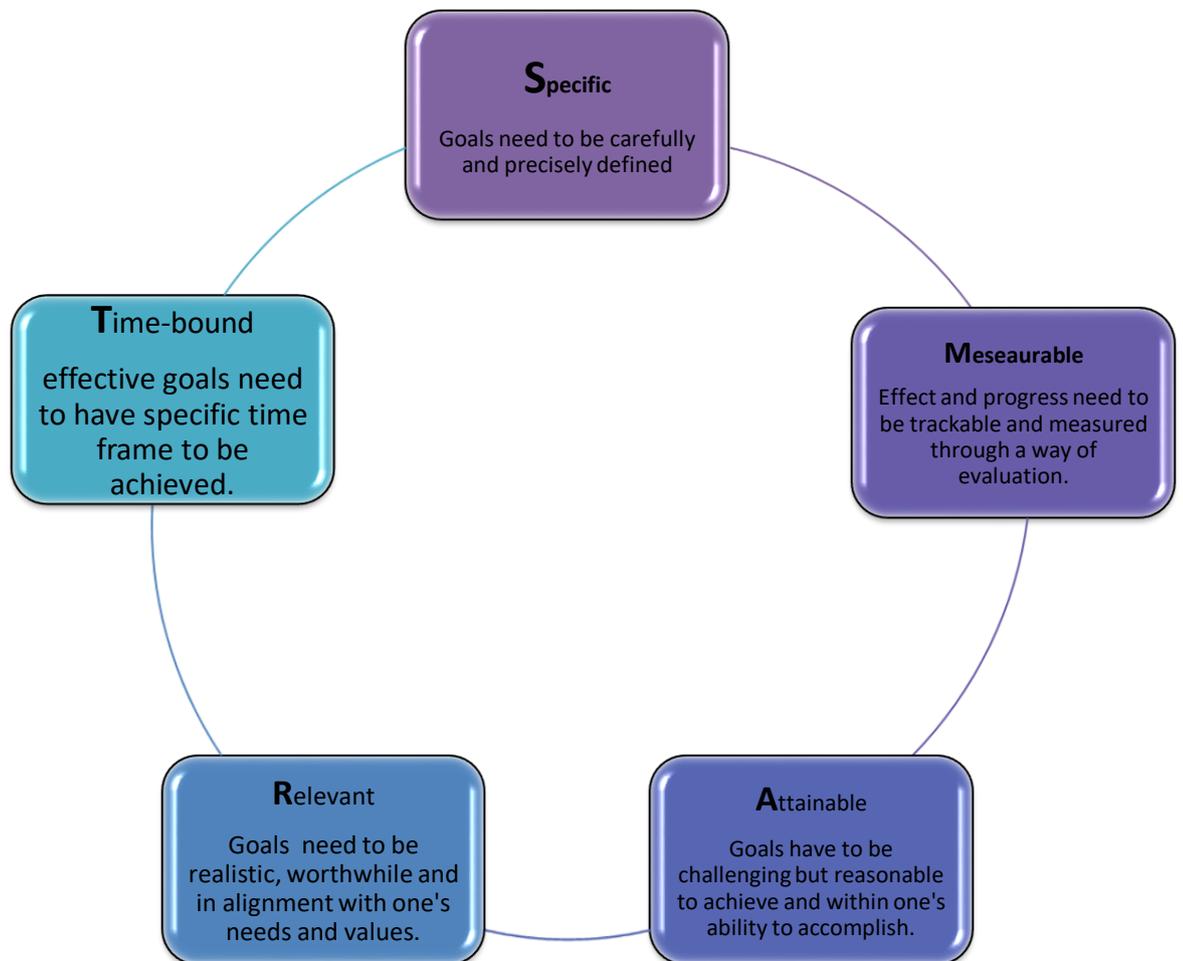
Task1: Do the following objectives follow the SMART system? What is the problem with the ones that do not? How can you improve them?

Goal	Your Comment	Improved goal
I will do well in all my classes this semester.		
I will revise my lessons 30		

mins every day to get an average of 14/20 in my first semester exams.		
I will get a good job when I graduate.		
I will finish writing my written expression assignment sometime soon.		

Types of Goals

In terms of the period,goals can classified into short-term, mid-term and long-term.

- ➢ **Short-term goals** focus on today, the next few days and perhaps the next few weeks.
- ➢ **Mid-term goals** involve plans for this year and the next five ones (probably until graduating university).
- ➢ **Long-term goals** are future goals that often take years to complete (may begin with graduating university and thereafter).

Short-term and long-term goals are not necessarily different goals that vary in the length of time they take to complete.These goals are interlinked in a way in which long-term goals guide the mid-term and short-term ones, and the short-term goals become action steps that help in achieving long-term ones. .

Task2: How can you link goals? Give an example. Complete the following list.

Short-term goals (today, this week, and this month)
………………………………………………………………………………………………… …………………….. ………………………………………………………………………………………………… ……………………..
Midterm goals (this year and while in university)
………………………………………………………………………………………………… …………………….. ………………………………………………………………………………………………… ……………………..
Long-term goals (from university on)
………………………………………………………………………………………………… …………………….. ………………………………………………………………………………………………… ……………………..

Prioritizing goals

Setting goals leads to thinking of the tasks that need to be done in order to achieve them. Having multiple goals can be confusing for certain people. Organizing goals in terms of priorities can help to direct time and energy in an effective way. Priorities could be understood as how important things are to people. Think of certain goals or tasks as top priorities doesn't mean neglecting a goal of a lowest priority . The question of priority is really a question of what is more important at *a specific time* and what is most important to do *right now*. Therefore, the prioritisation of goals

means ordering them and allotting time for them based on their identified requirements or value. The main aim of prioritizing goals is to ensure that the person is focusing on the right goals in their appropriate time.

Task3:

The following table represents 'Eisenhower Decision Matrix' [1]. In order to prioritize goals or tasks, it is helpful to identify their level of urgency and importance.

Complete the matrix with the following short-term goals. Which is of a top priority?

1-Completing assignments and homework.

2-Visiting a new city in my country.

3-Starting guitar lessons.

4-Expanding my social circle in university.

	Urgent	Not Urgent
Important		
Not Important		

Goals and Self-Regulation

In the pursuit of goals, self-regulation refers to the processes in which a person develops a plan of action, begins action, monitors their performance, evaluates their

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[1] Before becoming the 34th president of the United States, Dwight Eisenhower served as the Allied forces supreme commander during World War II and said he used this technique to better prioritise the things he needed to get done.

performance and based on this evaluation change actions to further enhance

performance and better reach one's goals.

Task 4: Complete the diagram using the following words.

Monitor- evaluate- change- success.
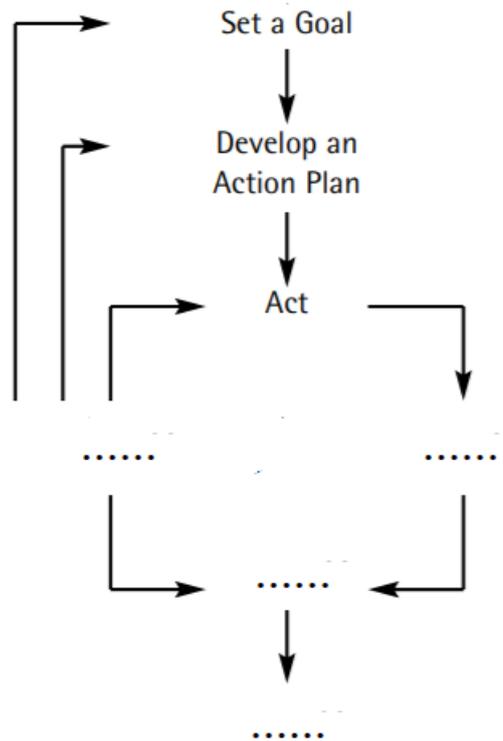
Task5: A- Complete the following list with tips that have worked for you in designing goals and committing to them.

- ✓ Discussing goals with a critical friend may help in the process of designing realistic goals.
- ✓ Writing goals down and keeping them visible can be a reminder of the important things that should be done to reach them.
- ✓ ………………………………………………………………………………………… ……………………..
- ✓ ………………………………………………………………………………………… ……………………..

B- Listen to your classmates share their tips. What would you like to try?

References:

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