

SMART Goals

Specific

Measurable

Attainable

Relevant

Timely

Specific goals are well-defined and have a greater chance than general goals of being accomplished. It is possible to track ongoing progress toward a clear, specific goal. When writing specific goals, beginning teachers should consider the five W questions – Who? What? When? Where? Why?

- Who is involved in this goal?
- What am I hoping to achieve or accomplish with this goal?
- When will the work happen?
- Where will the work happen?
- Why is this goal important?

Measurable goals can be monitored and easily assessed for successful attainment. It is important for everyone involved to understand how progress toward a goal will be measured. This should be decided when the goal is created. Progress should be recorded and celebrated. When writing measurable goals, beginning teachers should consider the following questions:

- How much ____?
- How many ____?
- What percentage ____?
- How will I know when I reach my goal?
- What are the success criteria?

Attainable goals have clearly defined steps and can serve as a source of motivation. There is no point in creating a goal that cannot be reached due to work schedules, financial considerations, and/or the beginning teacher's current level of expertise. Mentors should consider Vygotsky's "zone of proximal development" when helping beginning teachers create goals. Just as teachers scaffold learning for students,

mentors must scaffold learning for beginning teachers. When writing attainable goals, beginning teachers should consider the following questions:

- Do I have necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to achieve this goal?
- Am I prepared to make the necessary changes to achieve this goal?
- Am I comfortable with the required next steps?
- Is this the most achievable goal we can set?

Relevant goals are important to the work at hand and should focus on results. They represent a worthwhile objective by addressing the identified, often urgent, needs of the beginning teacher. When writing relevant goals, beginning teachers should consider the following questions:

- What are my identified needs?
- If I achieve this goal, how will my practice improve?
- Why is this goal important to me?

Timely goals have a start and end date. Deadlines too far in the future can encourage procrastination. Short deadlines may be unrealistic and discouraging. Goals should have a target date that motivates the beginning teacher to take action. When writing timely goals, beginning teachers should consider the following questions:

- What steps can I take today to achieve my goal?
- What steps can I take tomorrow or next week to achieve my goal?
- Do I know the deadline for my goal?
- Is this an internal or external deadline?