



Collected Ideas from the Field

Strategies, Questions, Prompts and Ways to Think About Goal-Setting Work with Adolescent Students

Get To Know Your Students

- Think about how the student best learns. There are different approaches with different students!
- It can be awkward if you jump into your first meeting to discuss goals (especially students new to the country/area). Start with “get to know you questions” (i.e., How do you like living here? How’s it going?). Ask about their feelings *IN THE MOMENT* (i.e., How are you feeling today?).

Help Students Name Their Feelings and Experiences

- Many students experience stress. Many are learning a new language and they are learning new content at school. Work with them to name their current experiences.

Chunk the Chats, Break it Down, Focus on The Now

- Adolescents live in the moment, talk about what’s going on RIGHT now with them. What are they excited about? What worries them?
- Connect with them multiple times across year. Show them they can master smaller bits and then plan a little further out (evolving and multiple conversations).
- Ask questions like, “What do you like to do? What might you want to do in future?” Example: a student likes cars. Turns out he wants to help sell engines with uncle. Help tie interests to possible job options/avenues.

Chunk the School Year, Break It Down, Focus on Quarters

- Focus on this marking period and smaller chunks of time (like 3-month blocks). Ask questions like “What do you need help with?” During Spring, think about a student’s schedule for the following year with them. You can find out a lot about students (dreams) by what courses they are interested in too!

Look for the Unexpected, Brief Moments

- It’s very hard to have this conversation(s) when time is limited with students. Plan for 5-10 minutes. Plan for the unexpected opportunity to talk (like walking back in the hallway to class with a student).

Visualizing the Future with Questions

- Pose questions about a student’s hopes, dreams, and goals. Give time for a student to think about these questions and circle back to them.
- For students thinking of dropping out, pose questions like, “What are going to do if you are not in school? How do you plan to support yourself?”
- Remind students that they can change their mind, there’s no rules or right way to dream. Have students run with what they like right now! Example: a student wants to be a dental hygienist one week, lawyer the next.

