



INTERVENTION PLAN

Learning to Set Goals

- Behavior: Unprepared
- What: This intervention teaches students to set realistic academic goals for themselves.
- Who: Students who need to improve their ability to set realistic goals in order to improve their academic performance
- Grade Level: 1 - 12
- Type of Intervention: Antecedent
- Delivery Format: Individual
- Implementation Length: Ongoing
- Special Materials/Equipment: N/A
- Progress Monitoring Option: Percent

Introduction

A number of researchers have determined a positive relationship between self-efficacy and academic performance. Self-efficacy means personal judgment of one's performance capabilities in specific situations. Many students at risk for school failure are unable to specify realistic goals; they set goals that are either too high or too low. If their goals are set too high, the students will experience more failure, thus contributing to their weak self-esteem. If they indicate goals that are too low, they are unlikely to improve, and thus will not be acknowledged by teachers (which would enhance their self-esteem). Whether students set goals that are too high or too low, they are often unprepared to participate in daily lessons and activities.

Preparation

No special preparation is necessary for this intervention.

Steps

1. Give the target student several opportunities each day to set his or her own goals, preferably those that result in increased academic production (e.g., pages read, etc.). Goals should be set as a reachable challenge—too high or too low can cause problems, so the teacher will need to guide this process.
2. Select a number of activities for the student (in reading, mathematics, spelling, or other subjects). Through formal and informal assessment, make certain the student is properly placed in each of these subjects.
3. Give the student the following instructions periodically: "While working on assignments, it helps to have some goal in mind. For example, you might want

to read three pages today in your book, work 25 mathematics problems, and spell eight of your assigned words correctly on today's test." (The examples should be realistic for the target student.)

4. Set an upper and lower range within which the student's goals should fall.
5. Write these self-determined goals on a sheet of paper kept by the student, so he or she is aware of them throughout the day.
6. Have the student proceed with the assignments.
7. Reward the student for meeting his or her goals. Initially, be rather lenient in this respect. Later, the matches between set goals and actual performance should be closer or exact in order to be rewarded.
8. As the student's academic output increases, encourage him or her to re-adjust the daily goals, setting them higher.

Considerations

Participation in this type of goal setting may be more beneficial for students with cognitive deficiencies and who have low expectancies for success than for students who approach tasks with greater self-assurance. When these students are taught to set realistic goals in academic subjects at one level, they may continue to set realistic goals in later years and in areas other than academics.

Progress Monitoring Options

This intervention can be monitored by using percent data to determine whether the intervention is working. Percent data express the number of correct and incorrect responses relative to the total number of responses before, during, and after the intervention. Refer to the Progress Monitoring section in this program for a detailed description of this monitoring method.

Supportive Research

- Garavalia, L.S., & Gredler, M.E. (2002). An exploratory study of academic goal setting, achievement calibration and self-regulated learning. *Journal of Instructional Psychology, 29*(4), 221–231.
- Schunk, D.H. (1985). Participation in goal setting: Effects on self-efficacy and skills of learning-disabled children. *The Journal of Special Education, 19*(3), 307–317.