

MAKING SENSE OF GOALS COLLECTIVELY

A team practice to build investment in a shared vision for change.

Research shows that students benefit when educators share a common understanding of what they are trying to do and why. Getting to a common understanding of a team's equity goals does not just happen; it takes intentional moves from the facilitator or leader to help all colleagues not only feel bought into a goal but also understand how that goal shows up in their daily practice. This tool is a guide for a leader who wants to build that shared understanding on their team. The practice is not designed to help leaders choose the goal, but instead support leaders to build their team's capacity to develop shared accountability to reach the chosen goal. This activity ideally does not happen only at the outset of the year. It is designed to be a routine opportunity for educators to ask themselves:

- **What are we trying to do?**
- **Why does it matter?**
- **How do we know if we are making progress?**

By collectively answering these questions, teams hold themselves accountable to actions that further their vision for equity.



For more information about the practice, read chapter 4 of the **Lead by Learning Playbook in Adult Learning**.

STEP INTO PRACTICE

Below is the facilitator's guide to get started with **Making Sense of a Goal Collectively** in your community.

IDENTIFY: Select 1 goal to bring to your staff. Identify your non-negotiables or parameters as a leader and why you are prioritizing that goal.

ASSESS: Reflect on your staff's collaborative culture. What conditions need to be in place or what pre-work must happen to have a successful conversation about your goal?

FRAME: Energize staff around the selected goal and its connection to the larger vision. Share why it was chosen, associated data as needed, and broadly what it looks like for learners to be successful.

ENGAGE: Provide staff 5-10 minutes to reflect on the goal within their individual contexts. Page 2 is a suggested reflection guide for staff.

MODEL: Prepare one staff member to vulnerably model what this goal means to them and their context ahead of time. Be explicit about which thinking prompt on page 2 would be most helpful for your team to see modeled aloud.

COLLABORATE: Invite colleagues to share their thinking as a whole group, in small groups, or in pairs as the model did.

SYNTHESIZE: Share out and notice themes, patterns, and unresolved questions. This is an opportunity to surface myths, assumptions, or misunderstandings about the goal.

ACT: Shift from reflection to action by naming individual and collective next steps that support the shared goal.

HIGHLIGHT THE PROCESS: Appreciate your colleagues' collaboration, capacity for innovation, shared accountability, and responsiveness to the goal.

CONTINUE THE PRACTICE: Making Sense of a Goal is not a practice for just the beginning or end of the year, but is designed to be an anchor.

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CURRENT REALITY

Where are my learners in relation to the goal?
Where am I?

FUTURE VISION

What would success look like, sound like, and feel like for my learners? For me?

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

What data do I have or what data can I collect to understand progress towards the goal?

MY TEAM'S GOAL:

WONDERING

What is one thing I am curious to understand better?

EQUITY

How will this goal impact our progress towards equity?
Which learner's experience do I need to focus on?

ACTION STEP

What is one action I can take to reach the goal?

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

How will our team hold ourselves accountable for making progress toward this goal?

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CURRENT REALITY

Where are my learners in relation to the goal?
Where am I?

- Some students are comfortable with turn and talks, but don't yet engage in back-and-forth conversations
- I am comfortable with turn and talks, but am scared to engage in full class discussions

FUTURE VISION

What would success look like, sound like, and feel like for my learners? For me?

- The classroom is buzzing with conversations. By March, we will try a Socratic seminar
- All students feel confident to initiate conversation using academic language and feel like their voices are valued

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

What data do I have or what data can I collect to understand progress towards the goal?

- Already have: Engagement tracker
- Want to collect: Audio recording of a turn and talk

MY TEAM'S GOAL:

Increase student discourse by implementing classroom talk routines

WONDERING

What is one thing I am curious to understand better?

Are sentence frames helpful or constricting for my ELLs? What do they need?

EQUITY

How will this goal impact our progress towards equity?
Which learner's experience do I need to focus on?

ELL student reclassification stagnated last year in my classroom and across the school. I know discourse is an important scaffold. I need to focus on my students who are ELLs to build my understanding of what will help them feel more confident.

ACTION STEP

What is one action I can take to reach the goal?

In the next month to increase discourse, I will review talk strategies in the multilingual toolkit and try 2 new strategies.

SHARED RESPONSIBILITY

How will our team hold ourselves accountable for making progress toward this goal?

I think we should set up a rotation to observe each other next month to see how we are trying out different talk routines and how it is impacting students. Then at our next grade level meeting, we can share what we observed, what worked, and what questions each of us are holding. Maybe this will help us align talk routines and accelerate student progress? 😊