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for the future

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THE FUTURE
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LITERACY



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EFF HOT topics

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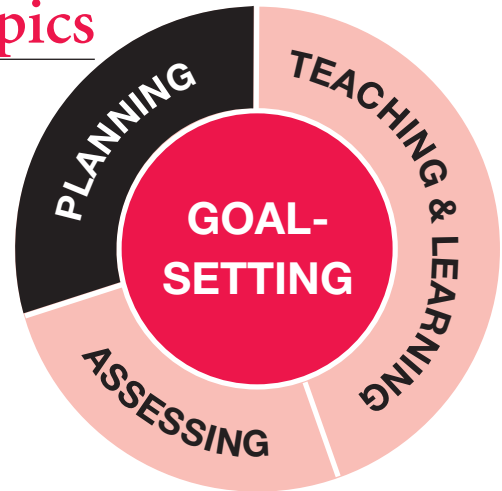
Welcome to HOT Topics

HOT Topics is a new quarterly publication from the Equipped for the Future National Center. HOT stands for Highlights On Teaching, and this publication is committed to providing you, as teachers and tutors, with tools and ideas for teaching using the EFF Framework and Standards. We want this to be a user-friendly publication that provides you with concrete strategies for classroom and tutoring situations. Topics will vary from planning to teaching to assessing.

This first issue of HOT Topics focuses on strategies that use the EFF framework for goal-setting. These strategies, developed by practitioners, help move learners from generalized long-term goals to more specific short-term goals. Using components of the EFF Framework, you can move the learner from global goals – "I want my GED" or "I want to speak English," to more clearly defined goals – "I want my GED because I can't apply for any other positions in my company without it," or "I want to speak English so I can talk to my child's teacher."

We present two different tools useful in goal-setting. In *3 Mind Maps*, teachers share how they have adapted the EFF Mind Map for their specific learners. The examples serve to illustrate that tools can be adapted to meet your specific program and learner needs.

EFF Frames the Goal-Setting Process describes the importance of goal-setting and the need to revisit goals as an ongoing process. *The*



Goal-Setting Form article includes a full-page reproducible copy of one example of an effective goal-setting tool. There are also two mini-articles, *Setting SMART Goals* and the *Basketball Goal Activity*, that describe ways to engage learners in defining achievable goals. Finally, *But I've Got New Learners Coming into My Class Daily* provides insight into how one state is working to ensure that all adult education programs consciously address goal-setting with the learners in an effective manner.

Future subjects for HOT Topics will depend on your feedback. You already have a wealth of examples that are worth sharing with others. Send your thoughts and comments to the 4EFF online discussion site, or you can email me directly at donnac@clinic.net.

Donna Curry

Dedication to Elizabeth West

It is with great respect that we dedicate this first issue of HOT Topics to Elizabeth West. It is for people like her that we are committed to adult education. At the age of 55, Elizabeth overcame her personal struggles and enrolled in an adult education program to learn to read. Even though she had family responsibilities and worked a demanding job, she persisted until she became too ill to participate. Elizabeth was

never able to completely achieve her goal. In July of 1999 she was diagnosed with cancer. She died a month later.

Only one family member knew that Elizabeth was coming to the Sumner Adult Education Program (East Sullivan, ME) one day a week for reading. Four days before she died, this individual shared her secret with the rest of her family. They were very proud

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EFF Frames the Goal-Setting Process

From the moment a learner first enters an adult education program, the purpose for enrolling should be clear. EFF lays the foundation for purposeful goal-setting, which will inform instruction and assessment. Without this strong foundation, instruction will be driven by what the teacher thinks needs to be taught, and learners will struggle to see the application of the instruction. More importantly, learners will be less likely to remain in the program long enough to achieve their goals.

The EFF Framework can help learners clarify their goals and purposes for enrolling in an adult education program. Teachers and learners use the four Purposes, the three Role Maps, the Common Activities, and the Standards to develop both long- and short-term goals.

Although purposes are difficult to measure, they are useful for the learner to begin a discussion of goals. The broader purposes help tie together the goals for the learner, similar to the Common Activities tying together the skills. In reflecting on the goals s/he is striving for, the learner also needs to reexamine the purposes for being in the program.

Because goals change over time, learners need to continually revisit their goals in light of what they are learning, always monitoring whether they are still aligned. Opportunities for learners to reflect on and evaluate their goals and purposes for learning need to be inten-

Four Purposes for Learning

ACCESS

To gain access to information and resources so they can orient themselves in the world.

VOICE

To give voice to their ideas and opinions with the confidence that they will be heard and taken into account.

ACTION

To solve problems and make decisions on their own, acting independently, as parents, citizens, and workers, for the good of their families, their communities, and their nation.

BRIDGE TO THE FUTURE

To keep on learning in order to keep up with a rapidly changing world.

tionally structured into instruction. This intentionality leads to better transfer of learning.

According to a number of research studies, “transfer is enhanced by helping students see potential transfer implications of what they are learning.”¹ The components of the EFF Framework are useful in helping learners see the implications. From the time learners enroll in an adult education program, EFF offers a transparent approach to learning in order for transfer to occur. Transparent Approach to Education is “an approach to teaching and learning that seeks to uncover the mysteries of learning by communicating explicitly the concepts, skills, and processes being utilized in any learning activity. The Content Standards are important in this approach because they clearly define the skills adults require to meet their goals and purposes.” (From the EFF Glossary: www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/eff_sitemap)

How can EFF support that transfer? First, the goals set by learners become touchstones for whether or not the material is relevant and transferable to real situations. With the aid of the Role Maps, learners can develop goals that are detailed and specific. Rather than learners stating, “I’m here to learn to read better,” or “I’m here to get my GED,” they are able to clearly articulate their purposes for those broader

goals. Knowing what learners want to do with their skills and knowledge then informs the types of activities and lessons the teacher and learner need to develop.

Second, EFF helps learners identify the skills that will prepare them to move toward their goals. Once the skills are named, the connection to the contexts addressed by the curriculum and adult goals and purposes can be monitored and reviewed, and transfer to new situations can be discussed. EFF provides the common language to support these dialogues in the classroom, as well as among educators and between systems.

The Equipped for the Future Framework and Standards are the key to helping learners clearly articulate their goals for participating in adult education programs. By using components of the Framework, learners are not only able to mention a specific goal such as “help my children,” but are able to be even more explicit. Using the EFF Framework from the intake process on, teachers help learners formulate and revise goals so that they will remain in the program in order to meet those goals and purposes. The Framework helps align curriculum, instruction, and assessment so that the learner’s educational experiences are transparent and purposeful – ultimately, meaningful and long-lasting.

¹Bransford, J., Brown, A., and Cocking, R. (1999). *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

.....
WHEN A LEARNER says, “I only want to learn English,” ask prompting questions such as, “If you could speak English well enough right now, what would you do differently?” or “Whom would you like to speak English to?”

The three Role Maps can help the learner answer these questions. Use pictures – or have the learner select pictures – to illustrate situations in which s/he would like to use English.

Mind Maps Guide the Goal-Setting Process

AMY PREVEDEL originally created the Mind Map for use in her one-to-one tutoring program in the South San Francisco Project Read Program. Since then, many teachers and tutors have used her idea in a variety of adult education situations. To illustrate how this simple tool has been successfully adapted, three teachers share how they used the Mind Map in their particular situations.

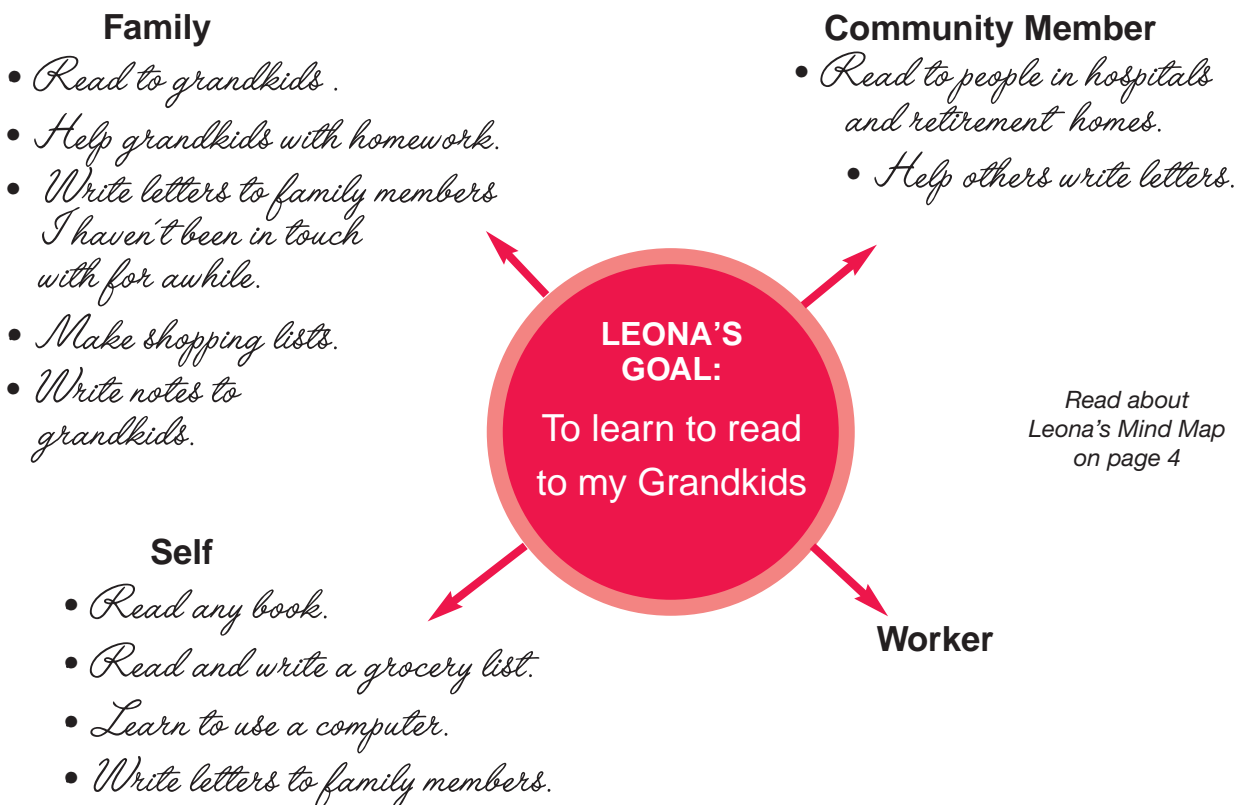
Amy and her learner, Leona, explain how the tool was used in a tutoring situation as well as in a tutoring training program. Janet Smith and her learner, Tammy, used the Mind Map in a home-based family literacy program. Even today, Janet and Tammy revisit the Mind Map to check progress. Ann Marie Barter and Mandi, her learner, describe an adaptation of the original mapping activity, in which the entire class of adult learners document on their individual Mind Maps their strengths as well as potential barriers. The results are used by the teacher to plan group activities.

In each example, notice that the teachers began with the learners' own language about goals. From

there, the learners and teachers used the EFF Role Maps to put more definition around what learners want to achieve in their various adult roles. (In Ann Marie's example, learners used the Role Maps to further articulate their strengths and barriers in each role).

As a tutor or teacher, you can also use this process. While learners have the three EFF Role Maps in front of them, have them begin to make connections across the roles. They should begin to see how skills and activities performed in one role play out in another role. When learners comment that a strength in one role is a weakness in another, use this opportunity to have them begin to examine why this is so. How can they turn weaknesses into strengths in all roles?

As the three examples that follow illustrate, the results of the Mind Map guides the development of learning activities to address the learners' articulated goals. (In the next issue of HOT Topics, we will further explore the development of purposeful learning activities to meet learners' goals.)





3 Mind Maps: Leona, an example from One-to-One Tutoring

Leona is an adult learner at Berkeley Reads, the adult literacy program of the Berkeley Public Library. When she first enrolled in this library-based program, she was asked what she wanted to learn about or be able to do in the following four areas: home/family, work, community and self. Her responses were recorded on a Mind Map. (See page 3.)

Leona said she liked doing the Mind Mapping activity because it showed her that the staff at Berkeley Reads is interested in her as a person. She thinks it is very important that tutors and learners get to know each other, saying: “You have to know something about them. How are you going to know about the person if you don’t ask? They do care about all your needs.”

Leona has been building basic skills through the goals she expressed in her intake interview. She has attended the program’s computer learning lab. With a computer tutor, she was able to compose and send a letter inquiring about her brother. Leona also participates in a small research group of students who discuss and think critically about the ways that school and home-work impact family life at home.

Despite feeling that progress comes slowly, Leona is excited about what she has been able to do with her volunteer tutor Barbara. Her accomplishments correspond to the goals she communicated on her Mind Map during her intake interview. When she received a Valentine’s Day card from a friend, Barbara helped her write a letter to thank the friend and ask about her kids.

Being able to see results that have an impact on her everyday life has been a powerful experience, and Leona has expressed surprise at what she can do. On her Mind Map, Leona mentioned being able to “read any book,” and looking back on that, she says: “For me reading was a real task; I didn’t think I could read a lot. I couldn’t believe I could do that... I honestly read that! I can’t believe that I got that far.”

In reflecting back on her progress in the program, Leona says: “People don’t know what they’re capable of. I thought, ‘I’m too old, I’ll never learn nothing.’ My tutor’s shown me something different. There’s a way to learning. It might be time-consuming, but I can do it.”

Tutor Training Uses Mind Maps, Too

Leona’s volunteer tutor, Barbara, learned about the EFF Mind Map during her tutor training workshop. During the first part of the training, tutor trainees brainstorm about their own daily activities that require literacy skills. Then they categorize these activities into the four areas of the Mind Map. After completing this exercise, the tutor trainees discuss the many meanings of literacy, taking into account the four Purposes, and the impact that literacy skills can have on an adult’s everyday life. From the outset, they get the idea that literacy education is not about mastering a discrete set of skills, but instead

revolves around the real-life needs and interests of adult learners.

The Mind Map is also helpful in communicating to volunteer tutors the idea of life-long learning. Literacy is not an “us/them” issue; learners who come into the program create Mind Maps that look very much like the one that tutor trainees have just completed. More concretely, in completing this activity, new volunteer tutors have a fine list of materials and activities they can use in tutoring. Later in training, they create literacy lesson plans that address different items from this Mind Map.

Basketball Goal Activity



EDITOR’S NOTE: Metaphors can be used to illustrate difficult concepts. Michelle Goodwin-Calwile, a teacher from the Greenville, SC Family Learning GED Program, adapted this activity from Martha Hyland of the Canton, Ohio ABLE program. This simple basketball goal activity uses concrete examples to demonstrate the importance of establishing goals that are achievable.

ITEMS NEEDED: Basketball goal and three different size balls: one that fits (i.e., basketball), one that’s too small (i.e., tennis ball), and one that’s too big (i.e., beach ball)

We began by having the students talk about what they think a *goal* is. They wrote down their definitions. Then we used this basketball goal activity to help them be clear in setting goals.

We looked at goals in three different ways: size, distance, and obstacles. The small ball was too easy to get through the basket. (*Analogy: Maybe the goal was so easily attainable that it did not make us “stretch” or work to attain it.*) The large ball would not go through the basket. (*Analogy: Maybe the goal was unachievable, unrealistic. It is better to “trim down” the goal to make it more attainable.*)

We examined the goal to determine whether it was reachable or unreachable by moving closer or farther from the basket. (*Analogy: How far is the goal? For example, a GED may appear to be unreachable because it’s such a long way to the end goal. Here is an opportunity to talk about setting shorter-term goals that do not seem impossible to reach.*)

We used a blindfold on some students as they tried to shoot for the basket, to stress that the goal should be clear. (*Analogy: You need to know in what direction you’re headed, or you will not know where to aim, nor will you know if you’ve achieved your goal.*)

3 Mind Maps: Tammy, an example from the Family Literacy Program

Tammy, a learner in the Farmington (ME) Even Start Program, used the Mind Map to articulate her goals for participating in the program. Although Tammy was able to readily define her goal, she was not clear about how that goal would impact all areas of her adult roles. Over time, Tammy's Mind Map evolved into the one shown below.

Tammy's teachers, Janet Smith and Sue Kelly, asked Tammy what skills she thought would be required to get her son back. Then, together they looked first at the various EFF Role Maps, including the Key Activities listed under each. Through lots of discussion, Tammy began to realize that it would be a big challenge to accomplish her long-term goal. Tammy had to look at the EFF Common Activities and the Generative Skills in order to really understand what performing the Key Activities might entail. Her Mind Map contains a series of smaller goals that will hopefully lead to the achieve-

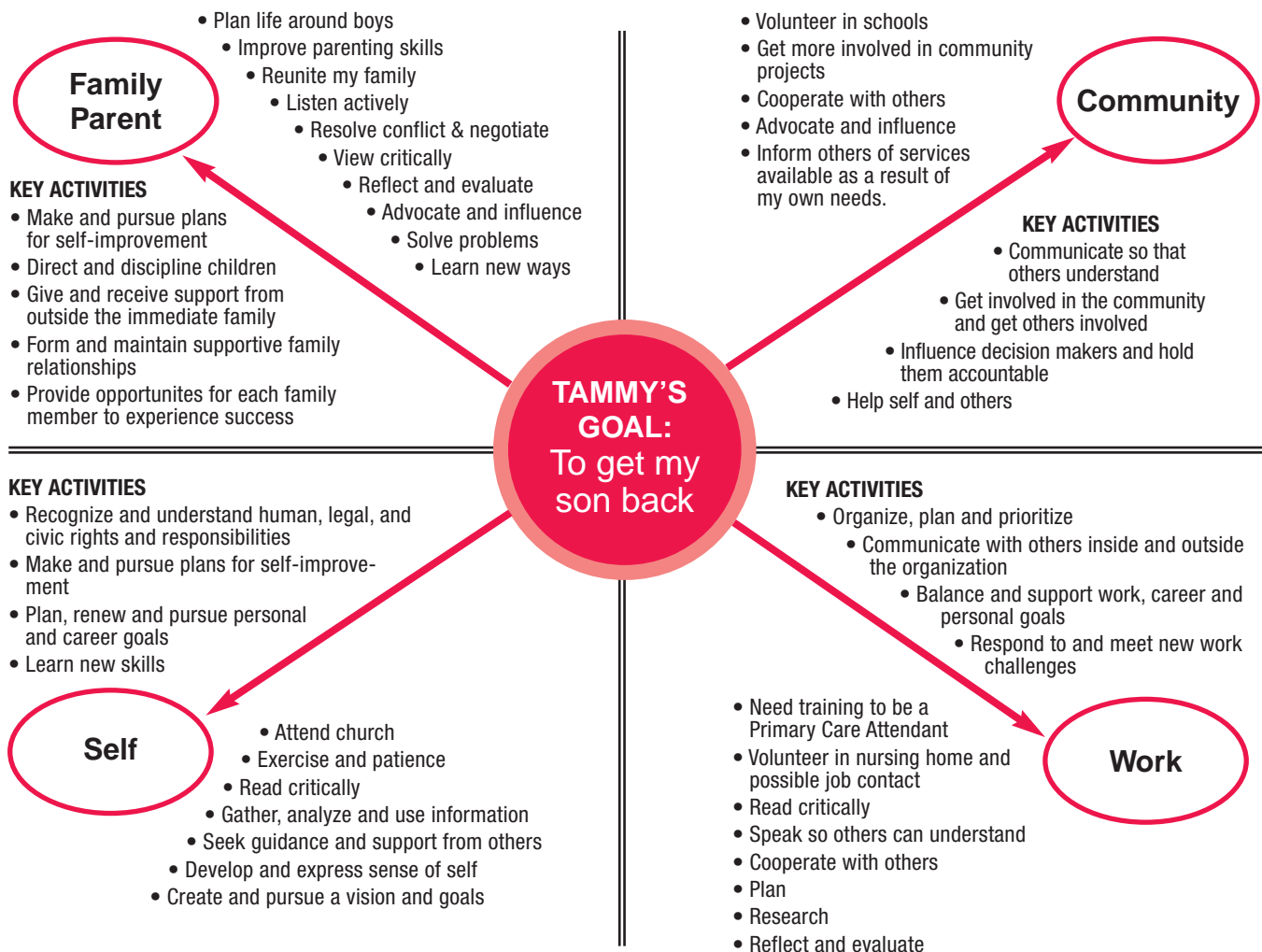
ment of her larger goal.

Tammy feels using the Mind Map is helpful because she now knows what she has to do. It was helpful to set goals with her teacher. "I'm further ahead now than I was a year and a half ago. My main goal hasn't changed, and I have been able to work through smaller goals as they came up." (Tammy is still enrolled in the program and continues to make progress.)



Tammy's major goal has been reunification with one of her sons. Smaller goals included the ability to plan for visits with her son, both for two-hour visits that take place at the courthouse and for overnight visits they were having at home. Other smaller goals included learning how to control her temper at her networking meetings with DHS, counselors,

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3 Mind Maps:

Mandi, an example from High School Completion

Ann Marie Barter, from Windham (Maine), adapted the Mind Map for her mixed class of Adult Basic Education, and high school diploma learners, all enrolled to work on “English.” For Ann Marie, it was important for learners to be able to articulate their goals and purposes for participating in the adult education program. Just as important was the opportunity for learners to relate strengths that would help them reach their goals, as well as potential barriers that might get in the way.

In the example below, the learner, Mandi, first jotted down her strengths in each role in one color (shown in italics). Afterwards, she used another color to list what she considered potential barriers (shown in bold). Mandi then referred to the EFF Framework to discover whether the list of Common Activities or Generative Skills might suggest something else to add to her own lists. In following this process, she took a con-

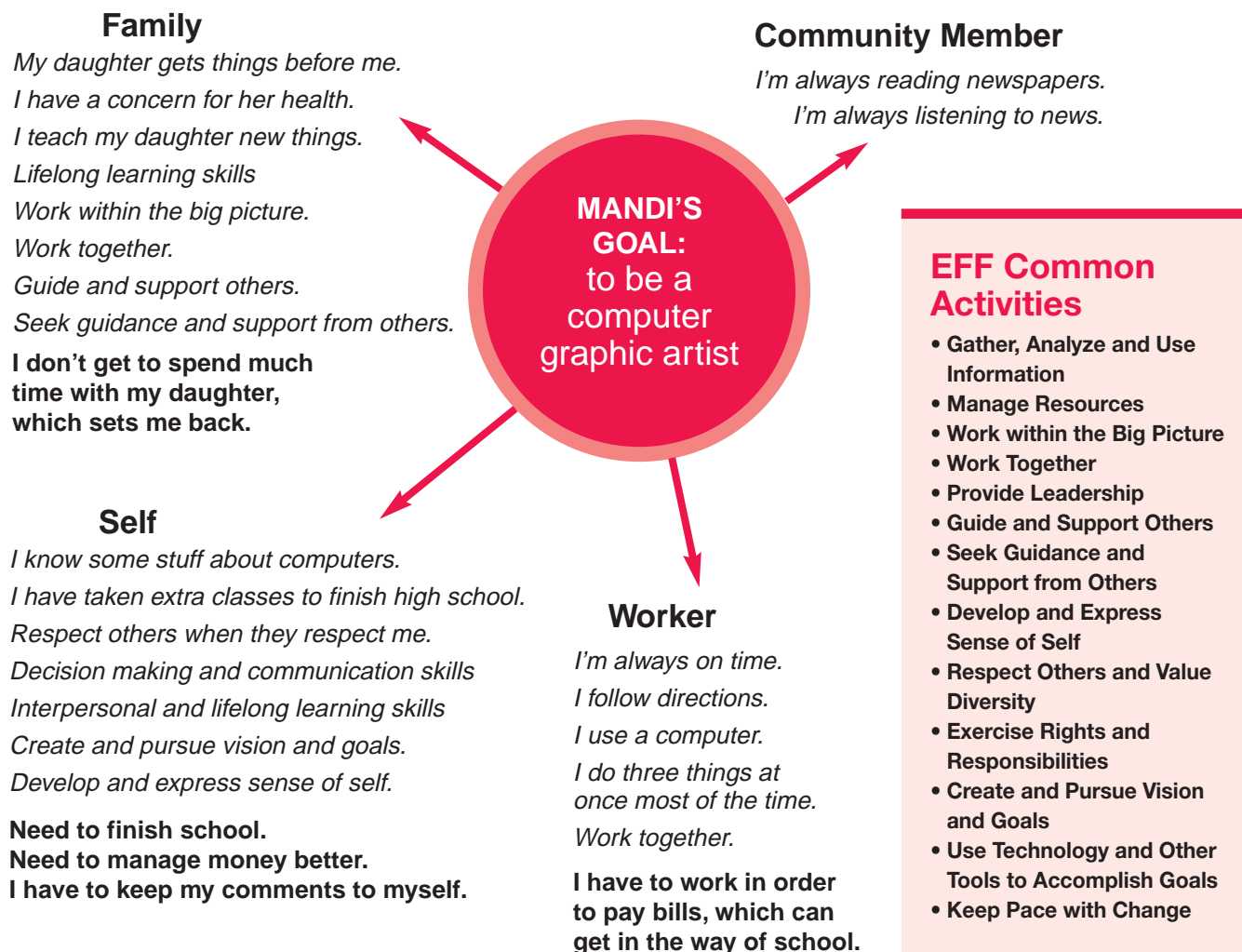
structivist approach by beginning with her own language and understanding about skills and activities, then relating her own thinking to the EFF Framework and Role Map.

According to Mandi, “At first I struggled trying to do the Mind Map activity. I had never thought about my different adult roles” (even though she worked part-time while attending classes and was the mother of an infant). “Once I started writing things down, I began to feel better about myself because I realized I had a lot of positive things about me.”

Because Mandi had not previously had the opportunity to reflect on her role as worker, she did not see herself as one. Examining the Role Maps, especially the Worker Role Map in Mandi’s case, can serve as a powerful strategy for helping learners see the strengths they bring to adult education programs. EFF is a strengths model. EFF Role Maps and



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An ESL Practitioner Comments

Susan Rowley,
ESL Specialist,
Tacoma Community College,
Tacoma, WA

When using EFF with classes, goal-setting in terms of the three roles is our starting point. If there are ten or twelve students, in order to arrive at a measurable objective for the creation of a real world learning task, it is first necessary to reach consensus. This means much discussion about what is a priority in terms of learning and language acquisition. Feedback from students is very positive. They report that the discussion is a motivation for self exploration and examination of what they want to learn as well as how they learn.

On the first day of the quarter I ask the questions “What is it that you want to be able to say in English?” and “Who would you like to be able to talk to in English?” I allow students to translate and speak with one another in native or shared languages, and if I share a language with a student, I use it. The point is to consider the questions that will allow thoughtful and intentional work in role-mapping.

I ask the students to take the Mind Maps and the questions home, seek help from bilingual friends, brainstorm lists for each category (family, worker, citizen) in terms of the questions, think on it, sleep on it, do anything that helps.” This becomes the basis for the ESL course.

I find that after a quarter of work my students are ready to role-map anew and discuss the four Purposes with an eye to their own futures.

Setting SMART Goals

*“A dream is a wish your heart makes,
but a goal is a dream with a deadline.”*

Author unknown

One way to introduce goal-setting to learners is to talk about “SMART” goals. Using this acronym, learners can begin to understand how to transform their dreams into realities.

S Specific
M Measurable
A Achievable
R Realistic
T Timely

Carolyn Beiers, from the Family Learning GED Program in Greenville, South Carolina, does more than simply tell her learners what the acronym for “SMART” goal-setting is. She works with learners through each step of the process.

For example, in working with a parent to develop short-term goals, Carolyn first asks, “In your role as a parent, what would you like to do, or do better?” A typical response might be, “I want to be able to read to my child.” This is the *dream*. The challenge is to turn this into a SMART goal.

Carolyn suggests, “Let’s make that a *specific* goal.” The parent may respond with “I WILL read a book to my child.” To make the goal *measurable*, the parent suggests, “I will read four books to my child.”

Making a goal *measurable* sometimes isn’t as difficult as making it *achievable*. So Carolyn continues to work with the parent. The parent thinks about what is *achievable*, then offers, “I will read two books to my child.” Carolyn continues to help the parent narrow the goal. The parent makes it *realistic* by suggesting, “I will read one book to my child every night.”

The next question is when will this happen. Without a deadline, a goal continues to be a dream. The parent pro-

vides a SMART goal by offering a deadline – making it *timely*, “I will read two books to my child every night for one week.”

After the parent has set a goal using the SMART strategy, Carolyn then asks the parent how s/he will know when the goal is reached. Together, they work out a plan, using a calendar, chart, or checklist to provide evidence.

At the end of the week, it is now much easier for the parent to see whether the goal was achieved. The parent can then reflect on the success of that goal, and move one step toward his or her larger goal. If the goal was not reached within the time limit, the teacher can guide the parent to look at the reasons for not accomplishing the goal, and then work through the goal-setting process again, making changes as necessary.

Caroline Beverstock,
South San Francisco:

“Even though I’ve felt that I was reasonably good at helping students to articulate their goals, I found that the structure of the roles made visible on paper (using the Mind Map form) helped students to say more and, I suspect, articulate more significant goals. For example, a young mother of two volunteered that she had never registered to vote and that she’d like to do that and prepare to vote. I doubt that it would have come out in past, less focused conversations.”

The Goal-Setting Form: Another Tool to Focus Learners

The Goal-Setting Form is another useful tool for helping learners set and monitor goals. The form (see page 8) was designed for use in either individualized or group settings. Each learner is responsible for completing his or her own form. If the learner has difficulty completing the form independently, the teacher is encouraged to write down the learner's thoughts. If done in a group situation, it would be helpful for the teacher to model the activity, using him or herself as an example. Modeling is an effective teaching strategy and a powerful way of helping learners understand that learning does not stop with the GED or high school diploma.

The EFF Framework and this goal-setting tool work in concert. Once learners have begun to think of an activity and skills that they need to improve on in their own lives, they can reference the EFF Role Maps for further ideas. (See Appendix A, *Equipped for the Future Content Standards: What Adults Need to Know and Be Able to Do in the 21st Century*, pp. 9-11. Available for downloading at: www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff_roles.)

The EFF Common Activities are another source for referencing activities for real life. Again, the learners' lan-

guage may not be the same, but the concepts and ideas should be. A discussion about the Common Activities, including a brief history of how they came about, communicates to learners that what we teach is useful in all their adult roles. We need to be explicit about what we teach and why.

It is the teacher's responsibility to help learners make connections among the roles. When that happens, learners begin to understand how activities performed in one role translate into outcomes in other roles. The types of skills used might vary from role to role, but they should begin to understand that everyone "gathers, analyzes, and uses information," whether it be at work, at home, or in the community. The way the information is gathered and used may vary, depending on the environment and the individual – these are all important discussions for a transparent approach to learning.

Once learners have articulated an activity they would like to improve and have determined what skills they need in order to perform the activity effectively, it is important to turn to the standards. The standards describe what effective performance of the skill looks like. These descriptions will be key to

learners being able to articulate what evidence of improvement in the skill looks like. Without the learners and the teacher thinking ahead about the evi-

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Elizabeth West

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of her efforts and let her know so.

In the *Equipped for the Future Standards Guide* (p. 24), Marty Duncan remembers that when Elizabeth began to use her new knowledge of letters and words, people around her noticed. On one occasion, after Elizabeth left her granddaughter a note, her granddaughter seemed to look at her differently. Another time, when Elizabeth was visiting her sister in Florida, the two had gone grocery shopping together. Because Elizabeth and Marty had worked extensively on vocabulary for grocery items, she was able to recognize words on various packages. Her sister was surprised when Elizabeth located just the right type of cheese without help.

Marty recalls that Elizabeth was excited about her part in the *Equipped for the Future* research. She had several breakthroughs in her reading the day that Marty read her the field notes describing their work together. At the end of the session, Elizabeth stood up and said, "I think I'm gonna pat myself on the shoulder. I think I did that really well."

Elizabeth said she wanted to learn to read because she wanted to be more independent and because not knowing how to read made her feel inadequate. Far from being inadequate, she was, like many others who have not yet learned to read, an intelligent person with goals and gifts. She was reading the world long before she gained access to the tools many people take for granted. In the time allowed her, she was able to extend her knowledge, gain some confidence in using it, and use it in ways that mattered to her.



Goal-Setting Form	
Name _____	Date _____
Purpose for Participating _____	
What do you want to be able to do?	Use of EFF Role Maps, Common Activities, 4 Purposes would be helpful for this step.
What skills are needed?	EFF Skill Wheel is helpful for this step.
What strategies will you use?	Individual EFF Standard with its Components of Performance needed here to understand what it looks like to actually perform the skill.
How will you know when you've achieved your goal?	Reflect and Evaluate Standard could be useful in these last two steps.
What evidence of progress toward your goal will you collect?	

Goal-Setting Form

Name _____

Date _____

Purpose for Participating _____

What do you want to be able to do?

What skills are needed?

What strategies will you use?

How will you know when you've achieved your goal?

What evidence of progress toward your goal will you collect?

Have you heard this before?

“...But I’ve Got New Learners Coming Into My Class Daily”

Maybe you’re one of those teachers who has responded similarly when asked about taking time to explicitly work on individual and group goal-setting with learners. “What if the learners and I work together to develop group goals, then someone new comes in and doesn’t buy in to what the rest of the group wants?” Or, “I don’t have time to work with learners on more than superficial goal-setting. I’m always having to spend class time orienting new learners who walk in the door.”

Equipped for the Future is about system reform. For reform to work, change has to happen from the top down and from the bottom up at the same time. The open enrollment, drop-by-anytime process is one aspect of system reform that can be addressed at a variety of levels – from state policies to ABE program practices and individual teachers’ expectations.

Let’s look at an example of how one state has taken systematic steps at all levels to address the issue of goal-setting with adult learners.

Ohio State Policy

The National Reporting System, in response to Workforce Investment Act, requires that programs document students’ achievement of goals while in an ABE program. The NRS will assess program performance by comparing students’ outcomes to their stated goals. In response to this requirement, the Ohio Department of Education has developed a Student Experience Model based on adult learning theory, researched retention principles, and effective practices from the field.

This Model was designed to “ensure that all students are provided with the information and technical assistance they need to make informed decisions

about their participation in ABE. This Model also encourages effective quality goal setting, ensures statewide consistency, and compliance with the NRS.” (*O-PAS Teleconference Handbook*, pg. 70) Since July 2000, all ABE-funded programs in Ohio have been using this Model, which includes several elements: rapport and support building activities, program and student information sharing, initial goal-setting instruction, learning style assessment, and a locator or initial placement assessment. (For more information about the Student Experience Model, visit Ohio’s website at <http://literacy.kent.edu>.)

During the orientation process, learners begin the ongoing process of goal-setting. They learn the fundamental skills and knowledge needed to set effective and realistic learning goals. Before learners can set effective goals, they must understand the objectives and benefits of goal-setting, and learn the basic principles, components, and action steps involved. By teaching learners how to set goals, both the teacher and the learner can monitor progress. The learner sees the relevance of the learning activities, and the instructor has an easier time documenting whether the learner is making progress toward his or her goals.

Program Practices

Programs have developed different strategies to address the intake process. Some programs have a group orientation that is held at the same time once a week, or in some cases, once a month. Learners who walk through the door are asked for some initial intake information and are provided with a brief overview of the program. They are told when the next orientation session is scheduled and are encouraged to return

at that time.

Other programs have completely done away with open entry learning centers. They have defined beginning and ending dates for classes, whether it is an ABE, ESL, or GED class. Learners know when they enroll that they are expected to make a commitment for a pre-determined number of weeks. At the end of that time frame, the learner and teacher re-evaluate their progress toward their goals and decide next steps, which may include another class in the program.

According to Kathryn Jackson, Southwest ABE Resource Center Director, the process of orientation in general, and the processes of program information sharing and goal setting in particular, have the side effect of helping to “weed out” those students who would not be committed to attending class regularly. Many teachers say, “They won’t attend a two day (or whatever) orientation.” My response is “then they won’t attend my two-day-a-week class either.”

No matter how programs implement the Student Experience Model, it is important that they view the orientation as teaching. Learners learn the skill of planning. Other things – such as time management and the advantage of knowing learning styles, for example – can also be introduced during the orientation. When students learn something they can use in the orientation, they automatically expect to learn things they can use from the classes they attend. Orientation can set the tone for the entire program and help ensure that learners have a successful experience.



Mandi's Mind Map

Continued from page 6

Common Activities can help learners increase their sense of self when they begin to see that they are already able to perform various activities.

After placing the strengths and barriers lists for each learner together on one chart, Anne Marie looked for commonalities. These commonalities were incorporated into learning activities that included the core English concepts required for a high school credit. Learners' strengths and barriers could be addressed at the same time that English concepts were covered. Ann Marie used this activity as a goal-setting strategy and an initial assessment tool, as well as an icebreaker for consensus building around the curriculum (since an "English credit" can encompass a huge area). (In the next issue of HOT Topics, you will see examples of how teachers designed group learning activities based on learner goals.)

Mandi agrees that learners should have a part of the decision about what goes into the curriculum. "Because we're adults, we should have a say in what is taught in class. Ann Marie let us decide as a group what we wanted to do. We brainstormed ideas, then we compromised and had to give up some things. For my last high school credit, I was able to design my own independent study. I thought it would be easy, but I found it to be hard, and I learned a lot. I could not have done this when I first started in the adult education program. Over time, though, I got more comfortable thinking about choices. In high school we didn't have a say; now that we're adults we should be able to make our own decisions."

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mandi was 18 and pregnant when she enrolled in the adult education program. She is now 20, has a Windham Adult Education high school diploma, and is a member of the Windham AE advisory board. She is proud of her accomplishments, just as we are.



The Goal-Setting Form Continued from page 7

dence of successful performance, it will be difficult to adequately assess progress. (Further discussion on assessment will be covered in future HOT Topics.)

If learners have difficulty thinking outside of the conventional assessment model – "The teacher will tell me if I'm learning" or "I'm making progress because I finished workbook pages 10-25" – ask the learners to describe an activity they would like to do better at home or on the job. Learners think very differently about "evidence" of progress in areas other than the classroom. It means much more to them than the results on a paper-and-pencil test.

This goal-setting form also serves as an initial assessment strategy. The learner can begin to see that, in order to perform an activity, an integration of skills is needed, and begins to think of assessment in a different light. Using this form also shows learners that the responsibility for learning is theirs; they must take action in order to improve.

Tammy's Mind Map

Continued from page 5

and others working with her and her son. To reach her goal of making these meetings more effective for herself, she worked on the EFF skills *Listen Actively*, *Speak So Others Can Understand*, and *Advocate and Influence*.

Over time, Tammy has learned that the same skills that she needs to be an effective worker are needed to be a responsive parent. Her teachers are continuing to work with her on transferring skills and knowledge from one role to another, beginning with learning activities done in the home. When asked whether it was important for teachers to encourage learners to set goals as part of the class, Tammy responded, "Yes, they get you motivated. I can get along better with my teachers if I know they are on my side." Setting and working towards goals help Tammy make connections to her adult roles because it teaches her to look for other resources.



Because the Common Activities are needed for adults to carry out their roles as worker, family member, and citizen, they naturally interconnect. For examples of the links across the adult roles, key activities and the skills adults use to carry them out, visit: [www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/common_](http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff/common_activities) activities.



Recent research through NCSALL's (National Center for the Study of Adult Learning and Literacy) Persistence Study Group suggests that a learner's goals are critical to his or her persisting in an adult education program.

Students who were interviewed as part of the research stated four supports that helped them persist in adult education programs:

- Awareness and management of the positive and negative forces that help and hinder persistence
- Self-efficacy about reaching their goals
- Establishment of a goal by the student
- Progress toward reaching a goal

EFF "offers an approach to understanding and defining the educational objectives needed to reach the most common goals expressed by adults in this study... It focuses on the broader purposes of education, which include the adult roles of worker, family member, and citizen. Goals related to both work and family are certainly the most common in this study, but other goals such as EFF's category of citizenship are especially important to some learners".

– NCSALL Reports #12, December 1999, p. 9. *Persistence Among Adult Basic Education Students in Pre-GED Classes*, John Comings, Andrea Parrella, and Lisa Soricone

EFF HOT Topics

(Highlights On Teaching Topics)
is a quarterly publication of the EFF National Center for EFF teachers. Each issue concentrates on a specific topic of interest, highlighting examples of actual practice and offering strategies and tools for using EFF in the classroom.

We encourage submission of letters, articles, and other items of interest from the field of adult education. Please direct all correspondence, including editorial comments, to:
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Online Resources



- **LINCS** is the NIFL's online one-stop connection to adult literacy information. Regional technology center staff is available to connect state and local organizations, practitioners, researchers, and learners. The site address is: www.nifl.gov/lincs/. Also check out subject-organized resources at: www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections.
- **The Equipped for the Future website** is a *LINCS* Special Collection. Visit this site to learn more about EFF, the NIFL's standards-based system reform initiative. The EFF website will provide you with information on such topics as: the history of EFF, the Content Framework and Standards, EFF publications, EFF resources, and EFF training events. The site address is: www.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/eff.
- **The Equipped for the Future Online Discussion** features targeted discussion about the EFF initiative. Subscribe to the discussion, or read the archived messages for this or previous years. This online forum is the logical place to turn for EFF information and resources, and to join in the ongoing conversation about EFF by people using EFF. The site address is: www.nifl.gov/lincs/discussions/nifl-4eff/equipped_for_future. You can also subscribe to the list by sending an e-mail message to: listproc@literacy.nifl.gov. (Leave the subject line blank. In the body of the message type: Subscribe NIFL-4EFF your first name your last name.)
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