

# LESSON 6

## SUSTAINED APPROPRIATE FOCUS

This lesson plan is designed to instruct teachers on helping students to consider what approach they would take to achieve long-term goals. It focuses on the second of four key characteristics of successful people: sustained appropriate focus. The importance of breaking down goals into smaller, achievable and less daunting goals is essential so that students can maintain the focus and motivation needed to achieve them.

### LESSON PLAN DETAILS:

Length: 35 minutes

#### INCLUDED MATERIALS

- Teacher's presentation PowerPoint slides
- Teacher's lesson notes
- Student worksheet

### TEACHER'S LESSON NOTES

#### PART ONE:

LET'S THINK FUTURE

#### MATERIALS

##### Teacher presentation slides one to six:

How would you maintain focus on such a long term goal?

##### Students' worksheet question one:

Achieving your long term goals

**Minutes:** 0-10

■ Explain to students that the value of breaking long-term goals down into a series of smaller, achievable and less-daunting short-term goals is that it will help them maintain focus and motivation.

Use the PowerPoint slide to encourage a group discussion about the dream goal of becoming an Olympic swimmer. Then get them to answer these questions on their worksheet:

- How would you approach achieving this challenging long-term goal?
- How would you know where/when to start?

- How do you assess your progress along the way and monitor whether you're on track to achieve this goal?

This is an example of a long-term goal that one could easily lose focus on. There is little immediate pressure to start working hard toward achieving this goal and it would be easy to say "I don't need to worry about this now, I'll deal with it when it's closer to the due date"; a thought process that some students will no doubt be quite familiar with. It would, for example, be easy to put off working towards this goal until the fourth year and try to achieve the required performance increase over a shorter period of time. But would this approach give you the best possible chance of achieving your goal?

Now, show them the following slide to illustrate how they can manage such an ambitious goal, and what steps are necessary to break down large, long-term goals into more immediate and manageable parts. Creating short-term goals helps you to focus and immediately begin working towards the main goal. These short-term goals also allow you to monitor your progress and whether you're on track to achieve your end goal.

#### PART TWO:

BREAKING DOWN YOUR GOALS

#### MATERIALS

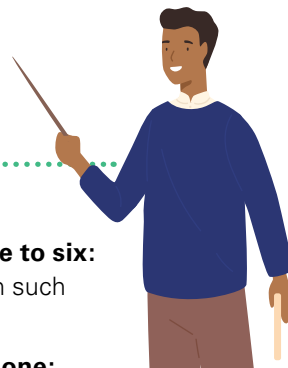
##### Teacher presentation slides seven to nine:

How to break down your goals and achieve it

##### Students' worksheet question two:

Let's break it down!

**Minutes:** 10 - 25



■ Some students may have a career in mind, and achieving success in this career may be their main goal. Others may be unsure about a career, but could have a goal of being accepted into a particular university course.

1. Encourage students to set goals that are realistic and achievable
2. Ask the students: Will achieving your short-term goals allow you to achieve your long-term career goal? If not, do you need to make your goals more challenging?

The next step is guiding students to achieve a “class goal”: finding out who in their class has the most brothers. Let them find the answer on their own. Then, get them to repeat the activity, this time providing them with a plan for how they’re going to achieve their goal. Be sure to explain the plan before they start. Note how long it takes them to achieve the goal this time, compared to the first try.

Ask whether having a set plan helped. Point out that while this is a very simple task that could be achieved without a plan, the more difficult it becomes to achieve a goal, the more important planning becomes.

This exercise illustrates that it is much easier to focus your efforts and start effectively working towards a goal when you have a plan prepared. Planning helps to identify the most effective way to reach your goal, reducing time and energy spent on less effective methods.

## **PART THREE:**

### CREATING AN ACTION PLAN

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#### **MATERIALS**

#### **Teacher’s presentation slides nine to 12:**

Creating an action plan

#### **Students’ worksheet question three:**

Creating an action plan

**Minutes:** 25 - 35

■ Use slide 10 to discuss the importance of identifying the goals you want to achieve, and then creating a plan for how you are going to successfully achieve these goals. Short-term goals are likely to require a more specific, detailed list of actions than long-term goals. If students are not 100% sure about what it will take to reach a goal, they should seek out someone who does know, and can advise them on whether their action plan is sufficient.

Example: If your goal is to become a lawyer, discuss your action plan with an actual lawyer, a law teacher and/or a career advisor to help you determine what is required to achieve your goal.

Direct your students to reflect and write down three goals that they want to achieve by the end of the year. Show them the action plan template on slide 11, and get them to copy this and fill the table with their own goals.

To sum up: stress to students that at times it will take hard work to achieve their goals. Without accountability, it’s very easy to put this hard work off.

Ask your students to suggest ways in which they could hold themselves accountable for doing the work required to achieve their goals. Discuss as a group.