



Goal setting can be a powerful force for positive change, and it can also be a time-consuming challenge without the right resources. I've created this document that lists out resources for you to calibrate with your team what a good goal should look like and how that goal will result in positive change for your students.

[SMART goals](#) have been a popular choice for many years as a format. Goals should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic and Timely.

Another framework for establishing professional growth is the [PEERS](#) goals. These goals should be Powerful, Easy, Emotionally Compelling, Reachable and Student - Focused. Dr. Jim Knight talks about PEERS goals with Instructional Coaching, and while you may or may not have anyone in your district with the title of "Instructional Coach," you have many instructional leaders in your district that are helping to support other teachers in their professional learning. When you are developing your PD plan, it might help to reflect on Dr. Knight's Impact Cycle, as shown below. (I encourage you to read [this link.](#))

The [Impact Cycle](#) consists of three stages:

- **Identify**
 - The coach and teacher collaborate to set a goal and select a teaching strategy to meet the goal.
- **Learn**
 - The coach explains and models teaching strategies so the teacher can learn how to implement the strategy.
- **Improve**
 - The coach monitors how the teacher implements the teaching strategy and whether students meet the goal. Then coach and teacher decide any adjustments necessary for the practice to be as effective as possible.

In PLCs, teachers are always asking themselves the following questions:

What do we want students to know and be able to do?

How will we know when they know?

What will we do if they don't know?

What will we do when they do know?

In order to easily connect that to a professional learning plan, add the following questions:

What do I need to learn to better serve (students, teachers, community, whatever your target group happens to be depending on your license)?

{Knowledge level}

How can I use that information in my classroom?

{Application level}

How will I know whether or not that strategy or resource that I learned and utilized was effective? (This portion requires data collection)

{Impact Level}

If, when you write your goals you can answer the above questions, you know you have written a high quality, action-oriented professional learning goal!

To test your knowledge, evaluate the following goals to see whether or not they are of high quality, action-oriented goals. (This might be a useful staff meeting activity for teachers to look at goals and decide whether or not they meet the appropriate criteria.)

- 1) In the next school year, I will increase my use of best teaching practices.
 - a) This goal could be better if they were more specific about what they plan to learn about which teaching practices.
- 2) In the next school year, I will increase relevance and rigor in my classroom by learning more advanced strategies for project-based learning.
 - a) This goal is good because we know how this teacher is planning to improve their instruction and the student-focused reason for this strategy.
- 3) In the next school year, I will become a better monitor for reading comprehension questions.
 - a) This goal is not instruction related, nor does it specify how the students will benefit from this professional learning activity. No matter what the goal is, the end benefit should be for the teacher to become a better support for the student or school community.
- 4) Students in my classroom will increase their math knowledge this year.
 - a) That's great, but how and why is this important now? Is there baseline data to support math is weak? What area of math is weak and what teaching strategies would you need to learn or improve upon for students to increase their math knowledge?
- 5) In the next school year, I will become a better support for my teachers by learning and implementing strategies to improve climate and culture.

- a) These kinds of goals can be tricky because it's difficult to measure climate and culture. However, if, in their learning plan, this teacher can identify what strategies they will utilize and how climate and culture will be different as a result of this activity, I would approve it. However, please remember all approvals are a local decision based on your PDC's decisions.