

CPD activity: Getting better at target setting

This activity helps you understand how to construct effective Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Time-related (SMART) targets. It shows how targets fit into the scheme of things and illustrates how effective targets are a natural source of evidence of achievements.

Target components

You will need a set of Getting better at target setting cards and some dry wipe pens.

We use these definitions to identify the components of a target. They are used on the header cards, which offer alternative terms, so that you can use the activity later with learners.

Goal	What the learner plans to achieve within a course or defined period of learning.
Target	The smaller steps of learning that will help the learner achieve their goal.
Outcome	What the learner will be able to do.
Range	Details of the task.
Situation or purpose	Where the learner will apply the learning.
Activity or work plan	What has to be done to achieve the learning.

- Sort out the text cards. Set aside the blank cards for later.
- Lay out the header cards in the order:
Goal/Target>Outcome>Range>Situation>Activity>Plan.
- Use both 'tutor' and 'learner' cards to do this. Note the definitions.
- Use the cards with text to reconstruct goals/targets 1-3 (only 1-3 have Activity Plans).
- Reconstruct goals and targets 4-5 using the blank cards to create activity plans for these.
- Take goal cards 6-8 and use the blank cards to create targets for these.
- Consider one of your own learners and use blank cards 9 and 10 to create relevant and effective goals and targets for them.
- Exchange targets with colleagues and ask for constructive feedback.

Things to consider

- Are the targets you have written measurable? How would you address relevant timescales?
- Consider how to assess achievement. Does a well constructed target help to assess achievement naturally?
- Use the National Curricula for Literacy, Numeracy and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) to attach curriculum references to the targets.
- Learners need to work towards realistic and achievable targets. For example, it is unrealistic to expect someone who is habitually late for work to reverse this habit within a one-week timescale. Consider how a sequence of bite-size targets can help by forming a 'ladder to success'. Create some examples of bite-size targets that can form a ladder for one of your own learners.
- Is the acronym SMART really essential or helpful to communicate the components of effective goals and targets with learners? Do we sometimes use the term SMART as shorthand without real understanding?
- Are there better learner-centered terms to explain how to construct targets and activity plans more meaningfully?
- Learners may have personal and social goals that relate to confidence. These are 'soft targets' and should be recorded in the same way.

To adapt this activity to use with learners

Create some goals and targets cards that your learners will find relevant.

Introduce and discuss goals, targets and the meanings of the terms used in the activity. Ask about, or explain the significance of each component. Ask learners for examples from their own experience.

Select a small number of the goals and targets cards for learners to work with. Ask to work in pairs or small groups to reconstruct the goals and targets. If you have learners who are not confident readers, make sure that the pairs or groups include both confident and unconfident readers.

Then ask learners to use blank cards (or sticky notes or sheets of paper) to create their own targets. These can be written up and shared with the whole class.