

Occupation and Learning Process

WEEK 7 - Developing an Action Plan I

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Objectives

At the end of this session, students will be able to:

1. Set own goals efficiently
 2. Apply effective learning goals
 3. Understand the action plan and its basic components
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1. Introduction

- Setting learning goals is a fundamental aspect of personal and professional development. The SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) framework provides a structured approach to defining and achieving learning objectives.
 - In real life, everyone should have a goal of what they want to achieve. Setting goals is one of the key tasks to be completed in real life. Students achieve academic excellence and personal growth through goals set.
 - If you have set goals, you will always work toward achieving your goals. There are different types of goals such as short term, medium term and long-term goals.
 - Students' success is a multifaceted journey requiring strategic planning, consistent effort, and access to appropriate resources.
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1. Introduction cont'd

- Academic achievement (grades, graduation), Personal development (skills, confidence), Career readiness (internships, networking) are the characteristics of a successful-led student.
- Short-term being like to complete assignments on time by attending all classes on time and concentrated, Medium-term being to improve GPA through study groups while Long-term are to graduate with First Class or Upper Class Honours and secure employment.

(Goal setting | How Can I Get Stronger? | K-2, Erika Murray, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Institute for the Study of the Americas (ISTE Web), 2021.)



1. 1. Setting own goals for learning

- Learning goal orientation refers to an individual's intrinsic motivation to acquire new knowledge, enhance competencies, and continuously improve performance.
 - It involves a strong desire to develop new abilities such as mastering a programming language or to demonstrate proficiency through measurable achievements like certificates or academic degrees.
 - As a student admitted to an Advanced Diploma or BTech program, you will engage in a diverse range of courses, each designed to build your technical expertise, critical thinking, and problem-solving capacity.
 - Together, these learning experiences will significantly contribute to your personal growth, professional competence, and readiness for future career opportunities.
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1. 1. Setting own goals for learning cont'd

- Objectives should be clear and aligned with broader aspirations. As an example, one can set to improve public speaking skills within six months by attending public lectures and practicing weekly within a small group of peers or colleagues.
 - Cognitive goals help students to enhance knowledge like revising the concepts related to a pre-requisite module or watching video lectures online related to specific skill sets.
 - Skill-based goals are those which emphasize on developing practical abilities like the use of Electronics equipment for circuit testing and analysis.
 - Affective goals are related to attitudes such as team and people management readiness, conflict management, ethical dilemma ready to handle, resourcefulness, leadership, among others.
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1. 2. Effective learning goals

- Importance of goal setting is that it enhances motivation, provides direction and improves performance. For instance, students who set study goals perform better academically.
 - Effective goals should be SMART goals.
 - **S - Specific:** What do I want to accomplish?
 - **M - Measurable:** How will I measure or track my progress?
 - **A – Achievable or Attainable:** How can this goal be accomplished? Is it realistic given the current situation and available resources?
 - **R – Relevant or Realistic:** How is this goal in line with my long-term objectives?
 - **T - Time-Bound:** How long will it take to accomplish this goal?
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1. 2. Effective learning goals cont'd

- Applying effective learning goals is essential for translating aspirations into tangible achievements. While setting goals provides direction, applying them effectively ensures consistent progress, accountability and successful outcomes. (The Development of Goal Setting Theory: A Half Century Retrospective, Edwin A. Locke and Gary P. Latham, American Psychological Association (APA), in the journal Motivation Science, 2019.)
 - The SMART framework serves as a practical tool for applying goals systematically.
 - Think of a student aiming to improve programming skills; this may require to break the ambition into actionable (small) tasks such as learning the basics of C and Python within the first semester and earning two online certificates before with the end first year. Effective application of learning goals enhances motivation, focus and long-term personal and professional development.
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1. 2. Effective learning goals cont'd

- SMART goals help learners and professionals create clear, realistic and measurable objectives.
 - They provide a structured way to plan, monitor and achieve goals effectively across academic, technical, professional and personal domains.
 - The following breakdown for each meaning of the terms in SMART for goal setting is taken from (10 SMART Goal Setting Strategies for Managers to Boost Success by Datalligence Team, Datalligence.ai, 2025.)
 - It explains how to make goals specific, creating them to be measurable, make them achievable, setting them to be relevant and finally ensuring they are timebound.
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1. 3. Making goals specific

- Specific goals clearly define what needs to be achieved, why it matters and how it will be done. This precision eliminates confusion and channels effort toward a concrete result.
 - As an example, instead of saying “I want to improve my programming skills,” a more effective goal would be: “I will learn Python for data analysis by enrolling in an online course and completing a small analytics project within three months.”
 - This goal outlines the task, the method, and the expected outcome. Specificity also helps prioritize actions, manage time and allocate resources.
 - When individuals know exactly what is expected, they can plan steps and anticipate challenges. Clear goals foster commitment and make progress easier to evaluate.
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1. 4. Creating Measurable goals

- Measurable goals allow individuals to track progress using clear, quantifiable indicators. This could include metrics like grades, number of completed tasks, or feedback scores.
 - For example: “I will deliver five presentations within two months and aim for feedback ratings above 80%.” This goal introduces specific benchmarks that make success visible and verifiable.
 - Measurability boosts motivation and accountability.
 - It helps learners stay focused, recognize achievements and make timely adjustments.
 - In both academic and professional settings, measurable goals also support fair performance evaluations by defining what success looks like and when it’s achieved.
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1. 5. Making Achievable goals

- Achievable goals align with a person's current skills, available resources and time constraints.
 - Setting achievable goals prevents frustration and burnout while still promoting growth.
 - As an example, rather than aiming to master advanced machine learning in one week, a more realistic goal would be: "I will complete an introductory machine learning course and build a basic model over the next three months."
 - Achievable goals strike a balance between ambition and feasibility. They encourage sustainable progress, build confidence and reduce the risk of goal fatigue.
 - Achieving smaller, attainable milestones also strengthens self-efficacy and prepares individuals for more complex challenges ahead.
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1. 6. Setting Relevant goals

- Relevant goals ensure that your efforts contribute meaningfully to broader personal, academic or professional aspirations.
 - A goal is relevant when it aligns with your long-term vision or career path.
 - For example: “As a telecommunication student, I will develop an IoT-based monitoring system to support my career in smart infrastructure.”
 - Relevance enhances motivation and focus. When goals resonate with personal values or institutional priorities, individuals are more likely to stay committed and overcome obstacles.
 - Relevant goals also guide decision-making, ensuring that time and energy are invested in what truly matters.
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1. 7. Ensuring goals are Time-bound

- Time-bound goals include a clear deadline, which helps prevent procrastination and promotes steady progress.
 - A defined timeframe turns a general intention into a focused commitment. For example: One can say, “I will complete and present my networking project within six weeks.”
 - This deadline creates urgency and drives consistent action.
 - Deadlines also support better scheduling and progress tracking.
 - By setting short-term milestones, individuals can monitor improvement and adjust plans as needed.
 - Time-bound goals maintain momentum and ensure that objectives are achieved within the intended period.
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2. Applying effective learning goals

- Applying learning goals effectively is crucial for achieving meaningful and measurable progress.
 - By making goals specific, measurable, realistic, prioritizing them, keeping track of progress, and assessing outcomes, learners can maximize motivation, performance, and personal development.
 - The systematic application of the SMART framework supports consistent achievement, enhances self-regulation, and promotes lifelong learning in both academic and professional contexts
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2. 1. Prioritizing goals

- Prioritizing goals enables learners to concentrate on the most important and time-sensitive tasks, thereby improving productivity and results.
 - Using tools like Priority Matrix (recall SWOT analysis discussion) or ranking goals based on their urgency and significance helps organize efforts effectively.
 - A final year student might focus on completing a final year project research proposal before completing all semester one modules to be pro-active in line with the academic calendar.
 - Effective prioritization reduces stress, prevents procrastination, and ensures that actions contribute meaningfully to long-term objectives.
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2. 2. Keeping track of the progress

- Tracking progress allows learners to stay focused and make timely adjustments as needed.
 - This can be achieved through to do list, calendar for activities to be done, weekly milestones, or self-assessment routines.
 - For example, someone engaged in extra curricular activities such as innovative projects for open innovation's competitions might develop a check list of ongoing modules ensuring teaching and learning activities are recorded and specifically assessments period is highlighted on the checklist each week to visualize growth.
 - Consistent progress monitoring boosts motivation, helps detect obstacles early, and promotes steady improvement throughout the learning journey.
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2. 3. Assessing the goals

- Assessing goals involves reviewing whether set objectives have been achieved and analyzing the factors that influenced outcomes.
 - This process can include self-reflection, peer feedback, or mentor evaluation.
 - For example, after a leadership training course, a participant might judge improvement through team performance and feedback from colleagues.
 - Regular assessment keeps goals realistic, relevant, and aligned with ongoing personal and professional development.
 - A summary with examples can clarify better the reason why analysis is key to assess the achievement.
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2. 4. Summary

- Specific: The goal setter has clearly set the objective like to be promoted to senior customer services representative.
 - Measurable: Success can be measured by training module completion, filing the application, and earning the promotion.
 - Achievable: The goal setter will complete the training necessary to earn the promotion.
 - Relevant: The goal setter is planning to apply for the promotion after finishing their training modules.
 - Time-based: The goal setter has set a deadline to achieve their objective at the end of the following business quarter.
 - The following examples indicates clear and concise goals for a successful graduate. Alternatives vary by individuals and the expected achievement.
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2. 5. Example of workable goals

Goal	Is Specific	Is Measurable	Is Achievable	Is Relevant	Is Time-bound
I will obtain a job as a high school math teacher within three months after graduating with my Bachelor of Science in Education.	Clearly defines the role (high school math teacher) and condition (after graduation).	Success is measured by securing employment.	Realistic for a qualified graduate actively seeking jobs.	Directly aligned with the degree in Education.	Deadline: within three months post-graduation.

2. 5. Example of workable goals cont'd

Goal	Is Specific	Is Measurable	Is Achievable	Is Relevant	Is Time-bound
I will earn a promotion to senior customer service representative by completing the required training modules in three months and applying for the role at the end of next quarter.	Specifies the target role and steps (training + application).	Training completion and application are trackable.	Feasible if training is accessible and criteria are known.	Supports career growth in customer service.	Timeline includes training and application window.

2. 5. Example of workable goals cont'd

Goal	Is Specific	Is Measurable	Is Achievable	Is Relevant	Is Time-bound
I will develop and validate a low-power wireless sensor network prototype for environmental monitoring using Zigbee modules and Arduino microcontrollers within six weeks.	Task, tools, and purpose are clearly defined.	Prototype development and validation are measurable outcomes.	Technically feasible within six weeks for a skilled graduate.	Highly relevant to IoT and telecom applications.	Deadline: six weeks.

2. 5. Example of workable goals cont'd

Goal	Is Specific	Is Measurable	Is Achievable	Is Relevant	Is Time-bound
I will publish two in-depth technical blog articles on signal processing applications in telecommunication within the next two months, each attracting at least 200 unique views.	Specifies content type, topic, and performance metric.	Two posts + 200 views each are quantifiable.	Achievable with quality content and promotion.	Builds visibility and expertise in telecom.	Deadline: two months.

2. 5. Example of workable goals cont'd

Goal	Is Specific	Is Measurable	Is Achievable	Is Relevant	Is Time-bound
To strengthen my career trajectory in embedded systems, I will complete a certified training program on ARM Cortex-M microcontrollers and build a functional smart home prototype within three months.	Defines both the learning and application goals.	Course completion and prototype creation are measurable.	Ambitious but realistic for motivated learners.	Directly supports embedded systems career goals.	Deadline: three months.

3. The action plan: A glance

- An action plan is a detailed strategy outlining the steps, resources, timeline and responsibilities needed to achieve a specific goal. It transforms broad intentions into concrete, executable tasks.
 - Objectives are the sub-goals or milestones that support the attainment of a broader goal.
 - The action plan will require to set a goal, define objectives, identify tasks, allocate resources, set the time of completion and prepare tools for monitoring and evaluation.
 - These are associated with establishment of the desired outcome, breaking down the goal into manageable parts, listing actions required to meet objectives, setting deadlines and milestones as well as tracking the progress and adjust wherever required.
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3. The action plan: A glance cont'd

- An action plan provides a clear roadmap for achieving set goals by answering the five key W's: What, Why, Who, When and Where along with How and Resources needed.
 - It offers a summarized overview that ensures clarity, accountability and measurable progress toward desired outcomes.
 - **What:** Clearly define the task or objective to be accomplished.
 - **Why:** Explain the purpose or intended outcome.
 - **Who:** Identify responsible individuals or teams.
 - **When:** Specify timelines and milestones.
 - **Where:** Indicate the location or setting where the activity will occur.
 - **How:** Describe the approach or strategy to accomplish the goal, including steps.
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3. The action plan: A glance cont'd

- **Resources needed:** Outline the materials, budget, and support required.
- **Expected Outcome:** Define measurable results.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish methods for tracking progress and performance.
- Thus, a well-structured action plan transforms intentions into concrete steps by providing a quick yet comprehensive reference that aligns goals, timelines, and responsibilities.

(An Action Plan with Shared Ownership and Accountability, Terrence Metz, MG RUSH Facilitation Training, 2020.)



3. The action plan: A glance cont'd

- **What?** Prepare a final-year project on Smart Energy Monitoring Using IoT.
 - **Why?** To apply classroom knowledge to a real-world problem and meet the graduation requirement for the Bachelor of Technology in Electronics and Telecommunication Technology Program.
 - **Who?** The student (project Author), supervised by a Lecturer from the EEE department, with support from an Instructor and a Lab Technician.
 - **When?** Project proposal due in December 2025, prototype development from January to March 2026, and final presentation in April 2026.
 - **Where?** Conducted within Electronics Laboratory and through google drive for report writing progress tracking.
 - **How?** Review existing research, design the system architecture, program sensors using Arduino, test connectivity and analyze energy data.
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3. The action plan: A glance cont'd

- **Resources needed:** Arduino kit, Wi-Fi modules, sensors, laptop, and access to the lab facilities.
 - **Expected outcome:** A working IoT-based energy monitoring prototype and a comprehensive project report ready for defense.
 - **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Weekly consultations with the supervisor, monthly progress presentations, and a final evaluation by the examination panel.
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References

- Goal setting | How Can I Get Stronger? | K-2, Erika Murray, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Institute for the Study of the Americas (ISTE Web), 2021.
 - The Development of Goal Setting Theory: A Half Century Retrospective, Edwin A. Locke and Gary P. Latham, American Psychological Association (APA), in the journal *Motivation Science*, 2019.
 - 10 SMART Goal Setting Strategies for Managers to Boost Success by Datalligence Team, Datalligence.ai, 2025.
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