

<p style="text-align: center;">Framingham Adult ESL Plus Countable Outcomes Goal Setting Process 2004</p>
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The Program

This spring marks the 20th anniversary of **Framingham Adult ESL Plus (FAESL+)**. Currently, the program has 30 ESL classes, 3 ABE/GED classes, 2 Family Literacy classes, 2 Citizenship classes and 1 Computer Literacy class. The program offers instruction on a two-semester basis, with registration and placement occurring in September and January. Our overall enrollment is over 600 students each semester. Four of the staff members are full time, while 44 are part time. This presents logistical problems when it comes to testing, goal setting and other data collection. However, since the program has grown incrementally over the past 20 years we have been able to refine our methods to accommodate new changes.

Goal Setting Beginnings

In October of 2002 the Countable Outcomes working group of the Performance Accountability Working Group (PAWG) presented their findings. In an attempt to keep student goals at the heart of instruction, they delineated a list of goals that represents a wide range of educational outcomes- not just job-related or post-secondary outcomes, but goals that involve physical and financial health, improving family communications, community involvement and many others.

The staff at FAESL+ supported the intent of the Countable Outcomes initiative, but was concerned about the challenges of integrating the Countable Outcomes into our goal setting process. We were committed to making this happen, because we believe in the advantages of authentic goal setting, for all parties involved:

- Students- it keeps their goals at the center of the process.
- Teachers- keeping student goal-setting part of the students teacher interaction and using it to inform their instruction.
- Programs- To make sure that we're serving students' goals and needs.

We realized that it benefits all of us to make sure that the full range of outcomes is made manifest, including Massachusetts' ACLS. It is up to programs to support the assertion that the full range of outcomes are valid and important goals for educational program, thereby ensuring that funding isn't constrained to programs that serve exclusively work-related goals.

With this in mind, we realized that our existing goal-setting process needed to be revamped. We began in FY 2003-2004 and developed a process that involved orientation, goal setting, revisiting goals and follow-up. We learned a lot and made several revisions. Here is our current version of this process for FY 2004-2005.

Orientation

During the first class, teachers go over the program rules with their students (conduct, attendance, parking, snow days, etc.) During the second class, the program Director, the Curriculum Specialist, or the Assessment Specialist visits each class to explain overall program policies that will affect the students.¹ We explain that the DOE funds their classes, along with local and private donors, and that these donors want information in return. They want us to take attendance, count the number of people in each class, take tests and ask them about their goals. We explain that their goals are their reasons for coming to the program; we know that they have come here to learn English, but for what reason? Where do they see themselves using English? We want to make sure our classes are helping them meet these needs.

Release of Information form

During the second class, we also discuss the Release of Information (ROI) form. For Beginner classes, we do this with ROI forms in translation² and with translators from the upper levels. We tell the students that the Department of Education has asked them to sign this form, but we want to tell them why:

This is a Release of Information form. You see forms like this at the doctor's office. It lets them share some of your information with other programs and agencies. This way, if you transfer to another program, you will not need to take another test- they can use your test information from here.

Also, the DOE wants to know if the classes are helping you, because they need to show this to the federal government which gives them the money. If students say that they are making more money or they passed the GED, the DOE needs to prove it. The only way they can prove it is by looking in the computer to see if that is true. They can only do that if you sign this piece of paper saying that it is okay.

There is a period for questions, and then we collect forms that have been signed. It takes a long time, but we feel that it is necessary. Most students would sign the ROI without the explanation, simply because we have asked them. However, we feel strongly that our goal is to empower students to use English to become autonomous agents, able to shape their own lives. To simply put a form in front of them and ask them to sign it without informed consent would be a contradiction of our intent.

¹ This idea actually came from our Student Advisory Council. They were surprised to find out that the program was required to report attendance for each student; they thought that it was just their teacher keeping track! They suggested that other students would like to know this kind of thing, and so we decided to share the reporting mandates that drive our data-collection activities.

² Available in Adobe and Word format on the Department of Education website:
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/smarrt/default.html>

The Goal Sheet

After discussing the FAESL+ need for data collection and the ROI, we move on to the actual Goal-Setting process.

We know that the reason you came here is to learn to speak and listen, read and write in English but for what reason? Where do you see yourself using English? We want to know those reasons- those goals- so we can make sure our classes are helping you meet them.

Some of the goals will require some documentation- some proof. If you pick a goal like “I want to get and use a library card” and you do this, your teacher will want to make a copy of the card.

We give them each student a copy of our “ESL Goal Sheet”. Our Goal Sheet is based on the DOE SMARTT Goal Form for FY05³, with some modification.

- G.E.D. related goals have been removed, since they are rarely applicable outside of our ABE/GED program.
- The wording has been simplified.
- The goals have been numbered.
- Each goal has been translated into our four most common languages (Portuguese, Spanish, Russian and Chinese).
- Asterisks have been placed next to goals that require follow-up documentation, to give teachers a visual check for follow-up goals documentation needed.

³ Available in Adobe and Word format on the Department of Education website:
<http://www.doe.mass.edu/acls/smarrt/default.html>

Because every goal is translated in all five languages it is a bulky document: the goal sheet is five pages long. However, it keeps us from needing to look at the language breakdown and count out 7 Portuguese, 5 Spanish, 2 Russian and 1 Chinese copies. Since it is too long to include, here's a sample.

I need to study English at Framingham Adult ESL Program because...

- *Yo necesito estudiar Inglés en el programa de ESL para Adultos en Framingham porque ...*
- *Eu preciso estudar Inglês no Programa Framingham de Inglês como Segunda Língua para Adultos, porque...*
- *Мне надо изучать английский язык в Школе Английского Языка для Взрослых города Фрэммингема, потому что*
- 我要在Framingham成人英文班學習英文是因為 . . .
 1. I want to use English better.
 - *Quiero hablar y mejor el inglés.*
 - *Quero usar el inglés melhor*
 - *Я хочу лучше говорить по-английски и больше воспринимать на слух.*
 - 我想提高聽講英文能力。
 2. I want to practice English so that I can do my job better.
 - *Quiero practicar mi inglés de modo que pueda hacer mi trabajo mejor.*
 - *Quero praticar inglês para que possa fazer meu trabalho melhor.*
 - *Я хочу заниматься английским, чтобы делать свою работу лучше*
 - 我想將現有的工作做得更好而練習英文。
 3. I want to get a different and better job.
 - *Quiero un trabajo diferente y mejor.*
 - *Quero conseguir um trabalho diferente e melhor.*
 - *Я хочу найти другую, лучшую, работу.*

** . 我想得到不同和更好的工作。

The staff member answers any questions, and then works together with the classroom teacher to help students select appropriate goals. Afterwards, the students hand the goals in to the teacher who will have a chance to review them and follow-up with absentees. Eventually, the teacher hands the complete class set on to the SMARTT data-entry person.

Using Goals to Inform the Curriculum

Once the class set is complete, the SMARTT data-entry person will input the goals information. As she does this, she will create a “Quick List of Student Goals” for teacher reference. It consists of a list of student names and their numbered goals. Attached is a blank goal sheet for decoding the numbers.

Here's a fictional class sample:

Quick List of Student Goals		
LAST NAME	FIRST NAME	
Amaral	Joao	1, 17
Aviles	Ruth	1, 5
de Oliveira	Jonathan	1, 17 ,27
De Sousa	Elisa	1, 8, 15
De Souza	Helena	1, 12, 24
...		

This allows teachers easy access to a student’s goals without rifling through 60 pages. It also shows which goals will need documentation when it comes time to follow-up. We encourage teachers to use this information to inform their teaching, but not to be limited by it. It is valuable information but teachers should still keep asking students about their purposes, their goals and their motivations. These are the reasons that drive students to learn; instruction that values them and feeds them will be the most effective. Also, teachers should keep track of accomplishments during the semester and forward this information to the SMARTT data-entry person.

Revisiting Goals at End of Semester

For almost 20 years now, teachers have made time at the end of each semester to sit down one-on-one with each student to discuss placement for next semester. Since this face-to-face interaction was already taking place, it seemed like the perfect time to revisit goals and to double check address and phone information for later follow-up. It capitalizes on the student-teacher trust and keeps goals at the heart of this relationship, on the front line of learning.

It is our hope that the teacher can capture all outcomes that have been met, (even the Column A and B goals which require additional documentation). We give them several tools to do this:

- The original “Goal Sheet” that students filled in.
- “Quick List of Student Goals” which summarizes the goals selected.
- “Goal Documentation at-a-Glance” which summarizes *Goals that need further documentation*.

The “Goal Documentation at-a-Glance” sheet is designed to show teachers which students selected Column A and B goals and what they need to do to collect the necessary documentation.

Students who selected goals that require documentation are entered into an Excel database (created while goals are being input by the SMARTT data-entry person). For each goal, an adjoining cell provides information on what documentation is needed. Then a list is generated from the excel file for each teacher (generally it is only a few students per class) and pasted into a word document with a standard header and footer.

Here's a fictional example from one class:

Goal Documentation *At a Glance*

Here is a list of all the students in your class who have picked a goal that will require additional documentation.

Any other goals your students have set are not included here because they are either self-reporting (no evidence needed!) or assessment-dependent (only test scores will count as documentation, so you don't need to worry about them.)

Thanks for your help in collecting these- we wouldn't be able to demonstrate all of our students' positive outcomes without you!

Teacher	First Name	Last Name	Goal Description	Documentation needed
Jennie	Piter	Chan	Get and Use a Library Card	Copy of the library card and some materials checked out or a description in writing of materials checked out
Jennie	Xiu	Zang	Receive application from INS	A copy of Receipt Notice
Jennie	Denise	Da Silva	Obtain more satisfying employment	Written description, signed by the student**
Jennie	Yuriy	Gagarin	Get a U.S. Driver's License	Copy of driver's license

* Release of Information forms (attached) are only appropriate for Post-Secondary Education and training programs offered by the MA Department of Education or the Department of Employment and Training (Unemployment, One-Stop job centers, etc.). For all other courses and job training courses please obtain a document signed by the student that briefly describes the training program.

** This written description can be a brief dictation, signed by the student.

Teachers are generally relieved to see that it is only a few people and that the documentation requirements are manageable. Armed with these documents, teachers are ready to sit down and conduct their End-of-Semester Goal session. In addition, the counselor and other staff members at each site are always available to help make copies.

After they are handed in, the Goal Sheets and all copies of documentation are attached to the goal sheets and the class sets are stored along with all other documentation (attendance, intakes, student cards, etc.) Per requirements, this documentation is kept for at least seven years.

Follow-up

In addition to the teacher/student goals conferences, at the end of the semester, the Assessment and Follow-Up specialist makes contact by phone, mail or through personal contacts. To do this, he goes to the SMARTT logon screen⁴ and goes through the list of Follow-Ups, making phone calls or sending letters as appropriate. Every teacher-student conference is entered into

⁴ <https://smartt.doemass.org/smartt2/pLogon>

SMARTT as an On-Site Follow-up, and then all students who show up in “Follow-up due” are called. This is usually students who did not finish the semester or students who have follow-up goals from previous semesters.

Each semester we begin the process again. In the end, a student who finishes the year has two personal contacts and at least one Follow-up contact by phone or mail, which comes to at least three contacts per year.

Conclusion

The process may seem cumbersome, but remember that it has evolved over many years. In 2002, we didn't know how we would comply with the DOE Countable Outcomes requirements; in 2003 we had to begin to incorporate the Release of Information form in a responsible way. In the end we found that we didn't need to reinvent the wheel to do these things, the process we had only needed to be revised. It has meant creating a few new forms and adding a few steps to the process of data-flow, but it has worked.

In some cases, this has even led to improvements. Our Orientation piece makes our program plan transparent to students, and helps them see their role in it. Our ROI procedure allows us to reinforce the primacy of student autonomy in our relationship with the students, and I believe that they appreciate our concern over their comprehension prior to signing it. The enhanced focus on goal setting has given us the means and the motive to renew a program focus on goals as the heart of the curriculum. The Follow-Up contacts have allowed the program to reach out to students who have separated, letting them know that they have not been forgotten. These contacts have yielded wonderful and unexpected outcomes and counseling opportunities. Even though students have separated, the program can still be a useful presence in their lives.

This is the good news of Countable Outcomes. You don't need to hire new staff, build new shelves or start classes two weeks earlier to get it done. With modifications, your existing Goal-setting and Revisiting Processes can meet the demands of the Countable Outcomes chart. This was a welcome discovery, and one that we felt able to make, especially in light of the consistent message from the DOE that any good-faith attempt will be considered as such. Programs can start to adapt their process now, knowing that it will need revision but that their experiments will not be punished but praised as growth.

We all want to ensure that the broad range of student goals continues to have a place in publicly funded Adult Basic Education. We are all in this together: students, teachers, programs and the ACLS. It has been our experience that all parties involved are willing to make it work.

This model was documented by Kevin O'Connor, the Assessment Specialist at Framingham Adult ESL Plus. You can contact Kevin at koconnor@framingham.k12.ma.us