

Roles & Goals

Overview

Library literacy services are different from traditional school because we are interested in figuring out what the student wants to accomplish and then in using those real-life goals to set the course for instruction.

Goal setting also helps adult students:

- Think about what is most important to them;
- Define what they most want to be working on during the time they spend with you and the literacy program;
- Take ownership of their instruction;
- Separate what is important from what is irrelevant, or a distraction;
- Motivate themselves; and
- Build self-confidence, based on successful achievement of goals.



Once you figure out what the student wants to accomplish then that information can be used in lesson-planning and to guide instruction. For instance, if a student says s/he would like to “write, send and receive e-mails,” then at least a portion of the tutoring session will be spent at the computer.

Not only does the Roles & Goals data help with decisions about what to do in the tutoring session, it is also aggregated locally and then on a statewide basis to create a big picture of the impact library literacy services are having in California. With this collected information local libraries are able to make the case for the effectiveness of literacy services to stakeholders like City Councils, County Boards of Supervisors, the State Legislature, and to potential funders.

Don’t be overly ambitious! Too many goals set can be overwhelming. Help the student think in terms of what can be accomplished within the next 4 – 6 months. Far-reaching goals are fine too but try to balance long-term goals – like “read the Bible” – with something short-term and more easily accomplished – like “get a library card.”

The process of updating goals is a regular, on-going cycle which will happen as long as a student is receiving instruction. In the Student Tutor Log, always remember there must be a date in the “goal set” column for every “goal attained.” In order to document that change has happened in the life of the adult learner because of his/her improved basic skills we need a starting point and an ending point.

The Roles

As a way to organize this goal-setting process, Roles & Goals are divided into 4 life roles. Students may or may not have goals in all 4 areas. Those 4 roles are:



Life-Long Learner — We are *all* life-long learners but this is especially true of our students who have taken the courageous step to seek out literacy services in order to improve their reading and writing skills as adults. Goals in the Life-Long Learner role include tangible things like “learning the alphabet” and “getting a library card” but could also include intangible things like “reading for pleasure” or “writing creatively.” In this role, help adult students think about how reading and writing can enhance their lives and help them grow as individuals.



Worker — This role is for those who are employed or are seeking employment. The goals in the Worker role might include every-day tasks like reading memos and writing e-mail, but also far-reaching goals like learning new skills or pursuing a new career.



Family member — “Family” and “children” in this case do not have to be immediate or even in the same household. Someone who lives alone also has a network of people who act as family. Goals here center on domestic concerns like taking care of a home or apartment, budgeting, planning meals and managing family resources. They also encompass helping others – children or elderly parents for instance – and building healthy relationships through better communication.



Community member/citizen — This role is about the student in relationship to his/her neighborhood, community, country and world. With stronger reading skills, students will be able to interact with their environs like they never have before – voting, taking advantage of community services, advocating for others, speaking out about literacy services, and more.

There may be some overlap between the roles. For instance, a student might want to write an e-mail both as a worker and as a life-long learner (for personal reasons).

To get the Roles & Goals process started with your student, ask questions like:

- “What would you like to be able to accomplish at work (or at home or in the community or personally) that you can’t accomplish now?”
- “Which goals would you like to reach as a result of your tutoring sessions?”
- “I know you want to read better, but *what* would you like to read?”
- “I know you want to write better, but *what* would you like to write?”
- “Think of yourself at work (or at home, or in your neighborhood) what would you like to do with your improved reading and writing skills?”
- “Are there things you’ve always wanted to do but couldn’t because of limited reading and writing skills?”



There are lesson plans for many of the standard goals selected by the state. However, you can easily create your own lesson plans for other goals your student may have, using this lesson plan outline:

Getting Started

What exactly is the student's goal?

What steps must be taken, forms must be filled out, etc. before meeting this goal?

Books and Materials

Gather together books, forms, websites and other materials that might be useful in completing this goal.

Key Vocabulary

Determine vocabulary words that are needed in the process of meeting the goal.

Reading Practice

Have the student read information found in the above books and materials.

Use flashcards, journals, labels, forms, websites and other media as needed.

Writing Practice

Encourage the student to create flashcards or journal entries, make lists, write notes, or perform other writing activities related to the goal.

Games & Activities

Play goal-related games or activities to reinforce the vocabulary, reading and writing skills learned so far.

Real World Practice

Have the student practice their skills in the community; at the bank, school, or library, as appropriate.

Independent Practice/Homework

Have the student perform tasks at home to strengthen the vocabulary and skills they have learned.