**The Role of the Goal: Perspectives on Goal-Setting by Undergraduate Students**

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Goals and goal-setting are important to planning, assessment, and reflection in teaching. Pre-service teachers are often asked to establish goals for their teaching development, their instruction and their students’ learning. However, little research has provided insight into pre-service teachers’ understanding of goals and goal-setting, nor how they learn to set goals for teaching and learning. Therefore, the purpose of this embedded case study (Yin, 2014) was to examine music education pre-service teachers’ value, understanding, use and development of goal-setting within a field-based methods course.

Schunk’s (2012) definition of goals as specific, proximal, and difficult guided this investigation. Based on previous research (Thornton & Gossett, in press), the course instructors developed assignments and course meetings aimed toward growing students’ understanding in goal-setting. In addition, to include the pre-service teachers’ voice in this investigation, some students in the course served as co-investigators, journaling about their experiences with learning about goals and goal-setting throughout the course and analyzing their journals at the end of the semester.

Main case (instructor perspective) identified themes of attention to progress, expression and delivery techniques. The embedded case (student perspective) identified themes such as achievement/continued progress, planning/prioritizing, and creating engaging lessons. Preliminary results indicate the students seem to effectively identify appropriate goals, but the interaction of pre-set goals and experiences is complex. Further, goal-setting perhaps limits student growth if goals lose fluidity.

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**Applications**

* Mentors for pre-services teachers can help new educators not only develop meaningful goals, but help them to reflect and revise goals as they gain experience.
* Goal-setting for all students (elementary through high school) can be an effective means of tracking progress, if goals are created in a meaningful way and are allowed to evolve as students gain experience.
* Goal-setting practice could be helpful in developing meaningful SLOs.
* Mentors can assist pre-service and novice teachers by helping them develop, track and evolve both short-term (near proximal) and long-term(far proximal) goals.