Reflection and Self-Evaluation

Daniel Rogalski

Chaparral High School, Touro University

Abstract

Learning Goals are used as a way for students and teachers to successfully achieve a goal by setting one up. They are used as a broad benchmark to allow students and teachers to interpret what they want to learn about from the content. Some Learning Goals are successful, others are not.

Reflection and Self-Evaluation

Learning Goals are used by both students and teachers. Students use them in order to know what needs to be achieved, and teachers use them to show what students need to do to achieve those goals. Some goals are successful, others are not.

# Learning Goals

World History covers many subjects with too many content to cover in one school-year. Learning Goals are used to take these broad subjects, and make them so that students and teachers can choose to learn what they want. Creating a Learning Goal that covers multiple subjects can help the teacher create unit/weekly/daily objectives to be covered in class. Two examples of Learning Goals I used in my World History class were:

1. IWBAT evaluate origins and characteristics of early influences in World History prior to the Renaissance.
2. Evaluate the characteristics of European influence in World History from the Renaissance to the 1800s.

These Learning Goals were created as a broad interpretation of what we needed to learn. Not just what happened, but how those events effected later events in history.

## Successful Learning Goal1

The second Learning Goal, “*Evaluate the characteristics of European influence in World History from the Renaissance to the 1800s,”* showed much more success than the first Learning Goal. I recall telling students that grades nearly jumped up “a whole letter grade” across all my classes. Unfortunately, access to that data is no longer available as CCSD has moved onto Infinite Campus which doesn’t show this kind of data. I attributed those successes with changing my style of lessons to a more organized approach. As a new teacher, my lessons were pretty simple: notes, journals, videos and a few worksheets. These would create a mess and collecting them would create an even bigger mess. So I decided, with the help of other teachers to address this issue.

I started using packets. These packets were slightly different than other packets they were used to. Instead of worksheets photocopied from teacher resources manuals, I made a unit packet made up of pre-made Cornell Notes for note-taking, pre-made video guides and journal sheets. I still taught the same way, just organized everything into a neat little packet.

Another problem that was addressed was turning in work. Students, but never the teacher…, would lose their work and end up with a lower grade. Or they would have the assignment, but may have forgot to turn it in. I added a front page to these packets of how much each assignment was worth, and a calendar of due dates. This helped with students in due dates and organizations. It also helped the teacher with planning ahead.

Not-So-Successful Learning Goal. The first learning goal, *“IWBAT evaluate origins and characteristics of early influences in World History prior to the Renaissance,”* was not as successful. In the successful learning goal, students showed “a whole letter grade” jump. Problems I faced were students not turning in or completing their work on time. Also, when they did turn in something, I often didn’t know what I was grading or what the assignment was. This created a problem, especially at the end of the quarter when 250+ students were turning in late or make-up work, and I had to grade things I didn’t know what they were for.

Another problem was that this learning goal covered the first semester, and the second learning goal covered the second semester. In the first semester, students were getting used to the classroom and trying to fit in with my teaching style, I was trying to learn from my students and picking up what did and didn’t work. The second semester was more successful as I understood my students a lot more and were doing activities more focused on their different learning abilities. I also organized all of my lessons more effectively. What I would do differently is keep myself more organized.

Reflection. Two professional Learning Goals that emerged from the TWS are:

1. Understand or catch-on how the students learn earlier on in the year.
2. Find different ways of helping students stay organized throughout the year.

It took me a whole semester to learn how the students in each of my classes learned, and by the second semester I learned what works and didn’t work. I’ll keep recycling year-after-year what consistently works and throw out what consistently doesn’t work. Finding new activities and lessons for the same content will help me broaden my teaching abilities, as long as I keep reflecting on things I need to work on in class.

The students towards the end of the second semester started growing tired of their packets, despite their improvement on their grades. They also found out that they can copy each other’s work easily and not get caught. I need to find ways to add more to the packet, and make the packet work harder to plagiarize from each other. I think if I make the packets more essay and project oriented, it would be harder for them to copy, and easier for me to catch them.