**In this post, I will reflect on each step of my SRL process.**

# Distal Goal:

# I will develop a one-semester Grade 8 course that includes local Indigenous content, study skills, and career education and also covers the topics of positive relationships, mental health, online safety, and the principles of SRL.

It was not hard to come up with this goal. My principal asked me to teach this course in September, and I am excited to do so. As I read about SRL, I realized that it has always been a part of my conscious thought process since I was in university, if not before. I set goals and I work to achieve them. As a teacher, I say to my students, “I want you to be successful in this class, and here is what you need to do.” I know that they appreciate that. Usually, it takes students until about halfway through Grade 10 (especially for boys) to realize how much control they have with regard to their success in school, but I am optimistic that if I emphasize the principles of SRL and build a positive relationship with my students over the course of an entire year, they will learn this concept much sooner.

## Proximal Goals:

## Write out the learning outcomes for the course:

## By June 30, 2023, students will be able to …

## By June 30, 2023, students will know …

## Etc.

## This will be completed by Friday, July 29.

Writing down my proximal goals eased a lot of tension. I no longer had a course to put together, I had bite-sized chunks of work to accomplish. I also had the reward of watching an episode of Ted Lasso after I completed the step to look forward to. Given that the proximal goal already stated many of the learning outcomes for the course, this step was easy to achieve, and I think I enjoyed two episode of Ted Lasso. I was rockin’!

## Proximal Goal:

## Comprise a list of potential teaching resources or teaching strategies for each of the stated learning outcomes.

## This will be completed by Monday, August 1.

This was a good next step because I knew that it would make the following steps much easier to accomplish. If I knew where each resource fit in with learning outcomes, when it came time to plan out the course schedule for the school year, everything would fall nicely into place.

## Proximal Goal:

## Analyze each of the resources and decide which resources and/or strategies will be used to teach each of the learning outcomes, noting that there will be some overlap (for example, SRL includes study skills)

## This will be completed by Friday, August 5.

Proximal goals 2 and 3 were almost redundant in practice, and that got me into a bit of a funk. I am really thankful that this is when small group discussions were scheduled. Here are my reflections going into that process:

Monitoring Inquiry

**Regarding working toward your distal goal and engaging in the SRL process:**

*Continuing to reflect about and potentially revise proximal steps and strategies will still be central to your SRL process.*

One aspect of the proximal goals I need to continue to revise is the resource list. I need to add resources for certain topics, I am seeking out these resources, AND I know that I will add resources as I begin teaching the course.

Another aspect I need to add is that the course will evolve as courses tend to evolve (at least in my teaching experience). I will need to add another proximal goal to evaluate and revise the course in June 2023.

*Be sure to be documenting any and all SRL strategies you are engaging in as you monitor your process, and for building your final inquiry project for sharing!*

A key point of the SRL process that I have not been following has to do with following a schedule. I am meeting the dates for the proximal goals I have laid out, but I am not honouring my breaks. As a result, I am finding myself feeling tired and unmotivated, and like there is always something I need to do.

In this sense, I find it challenging to be a student. As a teacher, I generally know what is coming in the upcoming week or weeks and can pace myself. As a student, this is not always the case. I am also only two weeks away from completing two courses and not taking breaks has added/adds to the stress and fatigue of this time of any program.

**Regarding our course**

1. *Reflecting on your inquiry project around 4 specific questions (i.e., What is going well for me?, Where are areas where I am struggling?, What supports would assist me?, How are my SRL skills increasing?*
2. *What is going well for me?* I am getting my course for the new school year planned out. I have most of my resources purchased and ready to use and I know where they fit with regard to the learning outcomes for the course.
3. *Where are areas where I am struggling?* I have tried to line up resources to help with certain learning outcomes, namely for helping students set goals and monitor their progress toward those goals, but it is summertime and people haven’t gotten back to me. I am also not taking the breaks I need and I find myself feeling tired and unmotivated. I also don’t do well making my work look attractive like others in the course. I’m more a black and white Word document type of planner.
4. *What supports would assist me?* It will be good to talk to my classmates about the areas where I am struggling. Does my work posted on my website look OK? Do you have any good resources for goal setting and study skills for Grade 8 students? How about for weekly planning? Do you have any resources on relationships appropriate for Grade 8 students?
5. *How are my SRL skills increasing?* Observing myself as a student makes me much more mindful of the struggles my students will face in self-regulating in my classes. Hopefully I can find resources that will help them and help me (both as a student and as a teacher).

I cannot overstate how significant the group dialogue was for me. It changed everything.

Here are my reflections after the dialogue:

*Group Discussion, August 6, 2022*

Ashley, Sarah, and I checked in to discuss how things were going on our SRL projects. Distance education has its advantages, but it was certainly wonderful to converse with other students.

One of the barriers I discussed was simply the challenge of being a student and not a teacher. I don’t set the agenda, I follow the agenda, and that can be unpredictable and even stressful. If I have a hard-working student, I may suggest that the parent reward the child or that the child reward themself. I need to follow through on my reward/rest times otherwise I have a harder time focusing and meeting my learning outcomes. It was good, fun, and affirming to dialogue about this topic with other teachers.

Another barrier I discussed was finding resources for goal setting and planning. Sarah sent a calendar template and also a link to a helpful calendar-making site. She also gave me links to the Fraser Academy, which has workshops for teachers on self-regulation, goal setting, study habits, etc. Here are some links: <https://fraseracademy.ca/x/professional-development/wellness-in-the-classroom-series/>

<https://www.timeanddate.com/calendar/create.html?typ=6&hol=0&d2=12>

Another struggle I had was finding appropriate resources for Grade 8 students which presented the topic of relationships. Ashley suggested talking to my school counselors to see if one of them would present on this issue. She also suggested I look at a resource her school has used called “Character Strong”: <https://www.timeanddate.com/calendar/create.html?typ=6&hol=0&d2=12>

I also tried to answer the questions of my colleagues. I hope this collaboration was as helpful to them as it was to me!

## Proximal Goal:

## Given that SRL will benefit students in their entire school experience, devise a program to collaborate with core subject teachers in applying SRL study skills (for example, a self-evaluation program for students to assess their study habits in core subjects and monitor improvement).

## This will be completed by Monday, August 8.

This task is outlined in the post “Message to Core Subject Teachers.” It was a useful activity for me to outline what I was doing. I emailed my principal and the other Grade 8 core subject teachers. I heard back from one of my colleagues and she was kind enough to forward the information to a new person who was hired to work with our group in September.

I will have to follow up with all of these teachers over the next two weeks so all necessary adjustments can be made, and we’re ready to work together to help our new Grade 8 students learn the SRL process and have a successful year.

## Proximal Goal:

## Create a course outline for the 2022-23 school year.

## This will be completed by Friday, August 12.

To be honest, this was right around the time I came down with Covid. I got this step done, but then spent the next several days in bed, unable to put together a sensible series of thoughts.

It was good to be back on track watching my episodes of Ted Lasso. Not only was it a great reward, but the laughter helped me to feel better physically. I spent my convalescence watching “The Waterboy”, “Happy Gilmore” and a great deal of Monty Python. In fact, I was quite thrilled to find all four seasons of “Monty Python’s Flying Circus” on Netflix!

Once the preliminary work was done, this step was rather easy to accomplish. What I realized, however, is that even this final step of the SRL process in this course was not a final step. A course is NEVER done.

## Final Proximal Goal:

## After the course is developed, I will email an electronic copy to the Grade 8 core teachers and to my principal. I will ask them to provide feedback and ask if we can meet to go over the course sometime **before classes begin in September**. I will listen to their feedback and make changes as necessary.

**FINAL REFLECTIONS ON MY INQUIRY PROCESS**

Being given the assignment to apply the SRL process to my professional practice proved quite serendipitous.  SRL is central to the BC K thought 12 curriculum, and my principal asked me to design a Grade 8 course that I will begin teaching in September.  The choice of a distal goal was therefore quite straightforward for me.  The next step of writing down proximal goals was also not difficult because I’ve designed numerous courses in my career.  In fact, writing proximal goals made achieving the distal goal seem more attainable.

As I got into the inquiry process, I realized how much I value professional collaboration.  I found myself overthinking ideas and doubting myself.  Self-doubt is a very valuable tool for personal and professional growth, but when it occurs in isolation it becomes stifling.  I was also neglecting to reward myself for the work I was getting done, and this resulted in procrastination.  The discussions I had with my small group were extremely helpful and gave me renewed energy.  These experiences brought me to a better understanding of my primary resource, the *7 Habits of Highly Effective Teens*.  When we “synergize” (habit 6) we come up with the best ideas, and it is vital to take time to “sharpen the saw” (habit 7) in order to maintain balance and productivity.

In concluding my work on this assignment, I realize it is not done.  In fact, it will never be done.  The art of teaching requires constant evaluation and adaptation.  I watched an interview with the comedian John Cleese and I realized how similar teaching is to comedy.  Cleese talked about how he can write jokes, but he doesn’t know if they are funny until he tells them (Cleese, 2022,  28:30 to 30:55).  Similarly, you don’t know if a lesson is effective until you teach it.  If it’s not effective, then you need to make changes.  I also know that I will continue to discover new resources as I develop individual lessons, and that I will continue the synergizing process as I work more with my colleagues in my school.

My ultimate goal as an educator is to inspire my students to be the best people they can be.  Working on this project has helped me to realize how much joy and satisfaction I find in figuring out ways to make that happen.

References

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