

# Self-Motivation: Connecting Learning to Goals

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## Goals

- Examine the different connections one could have to school content
- Identify how school and school content is linked to accomplishing personal goals

## Duration

60 minutes to complete

## Prerequisites

Completion of the AchieveWorks® Learning & Productivity assessment

## Materials and Preparation

Students will need:

- printouts of their AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity reports or an Internet-enabled device to view these results online
- copies of the Connecting my Goals and Classes Table handout (optional)
- paper and a writing utensil

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## Method

### Motivational Set (15 minutes)

1. Share with students the following two case studies and ask them to write down what they think are the adults' responses.
  - Bobby is a 9th grade student who is eager to make next year's football team. He loves playing football and hopes to one day be a starting running back. However, he despises math class and is in danger of failing it. Bobby has always struggled in math but now that he is close to failing, he is losing more focus. His math teacher, Mr. Williams, knows of his ambitions for the football team and tries to connect these two areas one day in class. Bobby looks up at Mr. Williams and asks, "What does math have to do with football? Yeah, there's stats and stuff. But why do I need to know math if I just want to play football?" What does his teacher reply with?
  - Filza is an 11th grade student who loves drawing and is hoping to get into art school after graduation. She finds it both relaxing and challenging at the same time and loves to draw from inspiration. However, she hasn't been able to concentrate on drawing lately because she's having trouble in her science classes. She doesn't want to focus on chemical combinations or where vectors go. She just wants to sketch. Her mother, a medical research technician at the local university, asks her why she doesn't enjoy these classes. Filza replies, "because they are all formulas and chain reactions and stuff. Art is about freedom and drawing what I want." Her mother shakes her head and replies, "Art and science have a lot more in common than you think." What does her mother mean?
2. After students have written down their answers, ask them to share their ideas and start a discussion. If students are having trouble coming up with answers, use the following points and questions to generate a discussion.
  - Mr. Williams might mention how being a running back involves problem solving — in your head, quickly, just like math does. They also both have set formulas (or plays) to follow and rules you have to abide by. All of this is computed mentally, very quickly, as your brain is already thinking about your next move. Math can help develop these quick-thinking and problem-solving skills needed for football.
  - Filza's mom might mention that although there is a lot of freedom in art, there are also unwritten rules an artist abides by. Certain styles and techniques require precision, just like some science classes. And some art is so precise that it involves sequential steps, which also has similarities in the sciences. Both have limits and boundaries, and problem solving, all of which helps to develop our critical thinking skills.

## Overview

Tell the students they will be reflecting on things they care about and finding out how to connect these to what they learn in school. If students can clearly see how school can help them accomplish their goals, they will be more self-motivated to learn. They will need to have completed the AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity assessment prior to the activity as they will be examining the concept of self-motivation and reviewing their preference in this area.

### Identifying Goals (5 minutes)

1. Ask students to write down five goals they would like to achieve by the time they reach the age of 21. They can write on the Connecting My Goals and My Classes handout or create their own table on a separate sheet of paper if they need more space. These goals could be major or minor life goals, they could be about getting into a certain school or job after high school, being successful in their extracurricular activities, traveling to a new country, etc.
2. When they are done, ask students to reflect on their goals. Why did they write these goals? Why are they meaningful? Have students write a sentence or two explaining these goals and their personal significance.
3. Once done, ask students to rate their goals from 1-5, with 1 being the most important to them and 5 being the least, and to note the rating in the page border next to their goal statements. Students will take their top three goals and use them in the following activities.

### Access AchieveWorks Results (10 minutes)

1. Have students review their AchieveWorks Learning & Productivity reports and navigate to the self-motivation preference. Ask students what self-motivation means and to formulate a definition.
2. Once done, ask students why self-motivation is important for our goals. What does it do for us? Why do we need it? Do we always need to be self-motivated?
3. Ask students to write down their current level of self-motivation (Low, No Preference or High) as noted on their report and, in their own words, define what that means. Have students explain how their level of self-motivation impacts their ability to achieve their stated goals.

### Making a Connection (20 minutes)

1. Now that students know their current level of this preference, have them think about how their classes and self-motivation can help them achieve their top three goals. First, in the second column next to each goal, have students list all the classes they are taking in school that will help them achieve that goal.
2. In the third column, have students explain how these classes can help. Use the following examples to illustrate this idea.
  - If students have a goal of traveling to a new place, social studies or history will help them understand different cultures and English can help them express themselves and understand others.
  - If students have a goal of playing university volleyball, they may need a high average. Certain classes, like math, English, a science and a social science, will count towards their average.

3. In the fourth column, have students write how self-motivated they are in this class using the labels Low, No Preference or High. Ask students to briefly explain their reasoning for each label.
4. In the fifth column, students will address the Low and No Preference categories. Explain to students that there is always a connection to what they're learning. Whether they are developing a new skill, honing a personal trait, gaining experience or just pursuing an interest, there is always a connection for them in a class they do not particularly enjoy. Also point out that one's level of self-motivation can be improved with practice.

Have students consider how the Low and No Preference classes help them achieve their goal. Can they learn a skill or gain experience from this class that contributes to achieving the goal? Refer back to the case studies and discussion in the motivational set to help students find connections. Have students write three or more sentences explaining how these classes help and how they can connect to them.

### Closing Activity (10 minutes)

Ask students why it is important to partake in classes or activities that we are not at first motivated to do? How does finding a connection change our experience? Are connections always a “thing we are interested in”? What are the different types of connections we can have in a class? Create a concept map with the students on the board with the word “class connections” in the middle. In the outer branches, list all the ways we can be connected to a class.

Handout

## Connecting My Goals and My Classes

Goals and Significance	Classes to Help	Rationale for Classes	Motivation Level	Making a Connection
Goal:   Significance:				
Goal:   Significance:				
Goal:   Significance:				