



GOAL SETTING FOR TEACHERS



**Professional
development -
what's next?**

First, determine your needs

Start by figuring out where you need work. Determine what areas of your practice need the most attention. Go ahead and take that, and once you've decided on some key areas for improvement, it's time to set your goal. To help you, here is a list of possible paths you might take toward self-improvement as a teacher.

1. Strengthen your tech skills

We don't know anyone who doesn't have some room for growth with technology. But it's one thing to say you're going to "get better at technology" and quite another to take deliberate action to improve your skills. Here are some steps you might take:

- **Become a Google Certified Educator.** This is a certification that marks you as having a solid foundation in Google's online tools. Becoming a Google Educator is the first step toward becoming a Google Certified Teacher, Coach, or Innovator, all of which are more advanced levels. Learn more at [Google for Education Exams and Certifications](#). And if you'd like help in the process, check out [Kasey Bell's Google Certified Educator Academies](#), which give you all the tools you need to be successful in achieving your certification.
- **Complete my JumpStart Course.** JumpStart is a self-paced, 10-module course designed to move moderately comfortable tech users to the next level. I designed it to mimic the same way I learned, a process that took me from being a basic Word-Facebook-PowerPoint-email user to being really, really comfortable with technology. Learn more about the course [here](#).
- **Attend an Unconference.** If you want to keep it simple, you might want to just focus on exposing yourself to new tools. A fast, fun, and inexpensive way to do this is by going to an "unconference," a grassroots professional development gathering organised and run by teachers. These are often called EdCamps or TeachMeets, and though they don't exclusively focus on technology, most seem to lean pretty heavily in that direction. Learn more about attending an EdCamp or TeachMeet in your area.
- **Get Better at Twitter.** Plenty of people have a Twitter account, but not everyone uses it to its full potential. Learn how [here](#) and you just might discover why educators call Twitter "the best professional development I've ever had."

2. Brush up on your pedagogy

No matter how long a person has been teaching, there's always room for pedagogical improvement. Whether you're learning new theories, brushing up on the basics, or just adding a new technique to your arsenal, improving the way you teach should be a recurring feature on every teacher's to-do list.

- Add some new teaching strategies to what you're currently doing. To learn one fast, take a look at my collection of instructional strategy videos demonstrating techniques like concept attainment, reciprocal learning, the Jigsaw strategy, and lots of others.
- Learn more about learning. This site has years of posts, book reviews, and interviews about how people learn best. Take a few moments to browse through everything with the Learning & Memory tag, and you'll find some great ideas.
- Improve the way you differentiate instruction. If you're like most teachers, you think you could be better at differentiating. Check out my Starter Kit for Differentiated Instruction, a collection of articles, videos, documents, and tools that will help you improve in this area.

3. Improve your classroom management

Here's another area we could all improve on. If your class isn't running well and your students aren't focused, it's pretty hard to get anything else done. We have looked at the topic of classroom management from many different angles on this site over the years. Browse through all the articles in the classroom management category here.

4. Get more politically active

If you're tired of feeling frustrated by policies that negatively impact your work, it might be time for you to start taking more action to influence those policies. Here are some ways you can move in that direction:

- Listen to Episode 18 of my podcast, where I interviewed activist Anthony Cody about how teachers can get more involved in educational activism.
- Download a copy of my Education Activist's Starter Kit, a comprehensive list of resources to help any teacher learn how they can start taking action.
- Find a group of like-minded colleagues and make a plan that includes learning about the issues and participating in one of the many events around the country and online pushing for saner and more effective educational policies.

5. Adjust your mindset

One of the most significant improvements you can make to your teaching is changing the way you think about it. Mindset has a powerful impact on how you experience your work and whether or not you continue to grow and thrive. Here are some ways you can systematically work toward developing a healthier mindset:

- Read a teacher mindset book like Angela Watson's *Awakened: Change Your Mindset to Transform Your Teaching*, and you'll notice a big difference in how you process the daily challenges of teaching. Pair that up with Watson's newest book *Unshakeable: 20 Ways to Enjoy Teaching Every Day...No Matter What* and you'll find yourself experiencing your work in a different and happier, way.
- Create a support group with other teachers who want to make the same kinds of changes in their own mindset. Read either of these books together and set aside some time to talk through the insights and questions that come up as you read.
- Build mindfulness practice into your regular routine, which will help you reduce stress, feel more purposeful, and actually become more productive. Meena Srinivasan's book, *Teach, Breathe, Learn: Mindfulness In and Out of the Classroom*, talks about the value of mindfulness practice for teachers and includes a mindfulness curriculum you can use with students.

6. Freshen up your presentation skills and slides

Chances are, you probably use PowerPoint or Keynote to create slide presentations. But are you familiar with best practices for slide creation? Most people aren't, meaning the world is chock-full of less-than-effective slideshows. To start improving yours, take a look at my post. Let's **make better slideshows**.

7. Get organised

We left this one for the end because the guess is that this is one of the most common goals for everyone. If organisation is your issue, the first tip we can give you for getting more organised is to narrow that goal down to something more specific: Do you want to manage your time better? Organise your digital files. Pull together all the pieces of dozens of little projects you have. Here are some tools that can get you started:

- To organise your time, try Google Calendar. It took a little while to learn it, but now keep all important events, daily tasks, birthdays, and everything on it. And what we love is that it's also synced with your phone, so you get reminders on the go.
- To organise your digital files, consider using a cloud-based storage platform like Dropbox or Google Drive.
- To organise your projects, a note-taking tool like Evernote can really help you keep all the pieces in one place.
- To really get serious, consider a year-long program that will teach you systems and mindsets that will put your work and life back in balance. The 40-Hour Teacher Workweek Program does all of this and more. Learn more here.

How are you growing as a teacher?

We would love to hear about the goals you've set for yourself as a teacher. Surely we left some things out (actually, as I was finishing this up, we realised we completely forgot about building content-area knowledge), so let's keep building this list together. In the comments below, tell us about a past goal you've set for yourself as a teacher and how successful you were at meeting it. Or share a future goal and tell us your plans for reaching it.

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