

BE S.M.A.R.T. ABOUT ONLINE LEARNING

Having clear goals in place from the beginning can help in choosing the right program to help meet those goals. Be sure to plan time for goal setting and monitoring throughout the year, and your program will be on track to success!

Specific

Focus on the primary intended outcome of an online learning program. What must be accomplished for the implementation to be deemed successful? Your S.M.A.R.T. goal does not need to encompass all possible uses. There are many other benefits from using online learning tools, but keep your program anchored with a specific goal.



Measurable

Online tools can provide a wealth of data to track student achievement, progress, and engagement, in addition to data you may already have from other sources. Select measures that can be tracked over time. Be aware of the timing of data. Some metrics are only calculated on a limited schedule (e.g. annually, quarterly). If these measures are to be used with this goal, you may also need to identify data sources that can provide interim benchmarks.



Agreed Upon

Ensure buy-in from the team that will be working toward the goal. This may be a departure from the "A" in other S.M.A.R.T. models, but it is particularly important when many students and teachers will use a resource. Educators are likely to have a variety of plans for how they hope to use online learning in the classroom, and creativity should be encouraged. However, if having a clear, shared goal to work towards that is important, be sure that the perspectives of a variety of stakeholders are present when setting goals for and selecting any online learning tool.



Realistic

While a goal should always be challenging, an unrealistic goal can undermine a successful implementation. Set a goal that aligns with the potential of the unique inputs in your setting. An online learning program may tout fantastic results from other implementations, but these should not necessarily serve as benchmarks for your situation. What is realistic for your educators, for your students, for your environment? The right goal will realistically challenge your circumstances.



Time-bound

Set a definitive date when the goal will be accomplished. Keep in mind that there is a learning curve for both educators and students when implementing a new online learning tool. Scheduled checkpoints can serve as opportunities to review progress towards a goal and make adjustments if necessary. Choose specific dates, add them to a calendar, and remain steadfast in reviewing progress.

