Revised Student Growth Goals: 2021 Vignettes

The following vignettes are intended to illustrate examples of how the revised Student Growth Goals might live inside a classroom. They are meant to be examples, not exemplars, and to provide an opportunity for discussion. A key shift in the revised Student Growth Goals is the responsive nature of the process to the students a teacher has at that time, as well as to the community, school, and district context. The process does not exist in isolation, hence the use of vignettes which invite discussion rather than an exhaustive list of example goals for each grade level and each content area.

As you read these vignettes, keep in mind the guiding principles of revised Student Growth Goal work:

1. The process requires reflection and conversation, and favors learning and growth over attainment of a certain level of performance or achievement.
2. It advocates for racial equity and culturally responsive practice at every level for every stakeholder.
3. It provides safety for both students and teachers to be vulnerable learners.
4. It invites personalization to foster student ownership of the learning.
5. It provides an opportunity for teachers and supervisors to return to evaluation as a natural harvest of teaching and learning. It should not be an add-on or check-off, done simply to complete an evaluation.

The setting and monitoring of student growth goals is a very contextual endeavor. For this reason, OSPI will not be providing specific examples. The vignettes are intended to serve as examples (not exemplars) of the process. These stories are not provided for purposes of scoring or calibration, nor to be opportunities to second-guess teacher moves.

We will continue to add vignettes as they are written and offer these as starting points for conversation as you are considering shifting to using the revised Student Growth Goals in your district and school.

Considerations before reading the vignettes – for teachers:

While you may teach a different content area and grade level, consider what aspects of the teacher's process could be replicated in your context. What decisions did the teacher make? What resources did the teacher rely on? What strategies and assessments did the teacher use? How did student progress inform the teacher's thinking about students and their own practice?

Considerations before reading the vignettes – for principals:

As you read the vignettes, consider what your leadership moves might be to promote evaluation as a tool for growth. How might you check in on the Student Growth Goal process with the teacher in your initial planning conference? How might your planned observation be opportunities to collect evidence? What are you reading in the vignette that could be evidence for both the Student Growth Goals and other criteria?

Since the .2 rubrics rest so heavily on reflection, what might you expect to see and hear from this teacher after students moved through this unit of study to indicate what both the students and teachers learned? How can this occur without an undue burden on the teacher (and on you) to involve extensive written communication and documentation?

Secondary English/Language Arts

It's late September, and an 8th grade ELA teacher is preparing to write his student growth goal for 6.1, which he will measure during an upcoming unit of study on research writing. During the first three weeks of school, the teacher has established routines for regular SEL check-ins and has surveyed his students about their preferred learning styles and topics of interest.

In the first unit of study, students shared several ungraded writing samples in response to a range of prompts that included opportunities for the teacher to view the students' voice, ability to organize their thoughts in writing, and skill in conveying ideas clearly through an initial draft. In addition, some of the prompts asked students to explore previous experiences with reading and writing.

During this process, the teacher noticed that students were more familiar with writing projects where the teacher had determined everything in advance, from topic, genre, and structure to graphic organizers. As a result, students tended to view writing (in school) as a compliance activity, not as an activity that engages their interests and curiosities to learn, express, and communicate with others. The teacher sees an opportunity to connect one of the Washington State ELA standards for research writing to students' curiosity and interests: (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.WHST.6-8.7)

Conduct short research projects to answer a question (including a self-generated question), drawing on several sources and generating additional related, focused questions that allow for multiple avenues of exploration.

Generating and pursuing research questions requires curiosity. Additionally, the teacher feels that fostering a habit of curiosity will support independent learning, a key aspect of culturally responsive teaching that is one of his school's focal points for the year. For these reasons, the teacher decides to incorporate curiosity into a meaningful student growth goal.

After three weeks of school, the teacher has connected with the families of his students through two-way communication using this school's learning management system and has met many of his students' families during his school's Back to School Event. From these interactions, the

teacher knows that his students are deeply connected to family stories and are curious about the lives of their extended family members. Based on this, the teacher designs a research project connected to these family stories. Students will interview an older family member about significant life experiences and use that curiosity about family stories as the basis for the students' research project. Because most students are used to a highly structured and scripted writing format, the teacher decides to scaffold their independence by doing a collaborative research project after first interviewing the school art teacher, who is well known as an engaging storyteller. The class develops interview questions for the art teacher together, brainstorms research questions related to her stories, and conducts short, collaborative inquiries. Through this process, students feel more comfortable when engaging in their own research independently.

The skills that students will acquire through the family-interview research project will surely benefit them on standardized measures of writing in the future. However, since the student growth goal is framed around curiosity, the teacher determines that a better measure of success might come from a students' reflective writing after the learning experience is done; he plans to ask students to describe how their curiosity developed and drove the research they conducted.

While feedback about their learning is a well-known component of formative assessment, the teacher suspects that feedback on how curious or not curious students are throughout the project will likely backfire; curiosity requires freedom from self-consciousness, not a focus on performance. Instead of providing feedback on students' level of curiosity, the teacher will engage students whose curiosity has not yet been engaged. He will scaffold this for the entire class by modeling curiosity as he interacts with them and the art teacher. In addition, he will express curiosity about the interviews that students share with him, and work to help students find connection points between the stories that they hear from family members and their own interests and questions. Students will also complete weekly forms that ask them to provide the teacher with feedback about how the workshop model they are using is helping or hindering their ability to make progress on their project. This information will inform the teacher about where he might provide more support to the class as a whole or to individual students.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. Where in the above vignette do you see the teacher using knowledge of students to inform the teaching and learning?
2. Where do you see (or not see) evidence of the critical attributes of:
    - Cognitive and/or emotional engagement?
    - Student engagement in assessment?
    - Formative and summative assessment?
    - Feedback from students on their experience of the learning?
3. What else might the teacher have considered or done?
4. What are the ways in which this teacher could convey his work to his evaluator?

5. Where do you see connections between the teacher's practice and components/indicators in your district's instructional framework?
6. What ideas are you taking away from this vignette?

Secondary Math

The CCSS Standards for Mathematical Practice call for students to "Reason abstractly and quantitatively," which involves "habits of creating a coherent representation of the problem at hand" (CCSS.Math.PRACTICE.MP2).

A math teacher who is teaching quadratic functions knows that the simple act of solving the equation does not mean that students are necessarily reasoning abstractly; it may simply mean that they are following directions. The "habit of creating a coherent representation of the problem at hand" involves understanding how quadratic functions are an abstract description of concrete phenomena. The math teacher is working to craft a student growth goal that allows students to grow in their understanding of how quadratic functions refer to everyday experiences.

In pre-assessing her students' prior knowledge through warm-ups/bell work at the beginning of class, conversations with individual students around the work they are doing, a group open-ended task and class discussions, the math teacher has noticed that some students can solve quadratic function equations correctly, but they have a difficult time explaining what they are doing or why, beyond, "That's what I'm supposed to do." Furthermore, they struggle to apply the equation in the context of a novel problem. Some students can only solve the equation correctly if they are told what to do next, while others struggle with identification of zeros and converting factored form of the quadratic to $f(x) = ax^2 + bx + c$. This may indicate that students are trying to follow the equation without understanding the concrete phenomena to which the equation refers.

In taking the time to get to know her students as they entered her class, working together, talking together and sharing common experiences and interests, the math teacher already knows that many of the students in the class either enjoy fishing or have family members who regularly go fishing. She also has many fond memories of fishing with her family when she was a kid. The teacher knows fishing provides the perfect concrete model for quadratic functions. Since she's more than a bit rusty at casting, she shares with her students that she wants to do a fishing activity with the class and asks if anyone has a family member who is an experienced fisherperson that would be interested in coming in and helping with casting.

The teacher has seen time and time again that her students' engagement increases whenever they do kinesthetic math learning activities in class, so she decides to have students practice casting in the quad. If afforded the opportunity to hold the pole and cast the line, the students get the physical experience of casting: how it feels, the weight of the pole, the tension on the line from small weights and bobber on the end, the sound of the cast as the weights fly, and the excitement of how far (or close) the weights land. The zeros in this exploration are time, 0 when

the cast begins, and whatever time in seconds when the weights land (ex. t = 1.32 sec). In an activity like this, student interest, curiosity, or the connection to the practice of fishing all facilitate engagement. Some students want to be the first to cast the line to show how far they can send the line; others are timid and not willing to try, but the teamwork of the activity, and the hilarity that often ensues, pull students in. The substitution of the time into the factored forms of the quadratic now provides a venue to explore previous learning, to have conversations among students, groups, and the teacher on the calculations that are performed, and what it all means in context with the act of fishing.

As the students are making sense of the math, the teacher notices a couple of students having a difficult time knowing where to start. The teacher takes some time to sit with the students and inquire about the data they have collected and the students' perspective on its connection. Through listening to the students' thinking about the zeros of the cast, and as the students demonstrated what they thought they were supposed to do with those data points, the teacher realized they needed support in understanding the process of multiplying binomials, but not only that, the students needed additional scaffolding within order of operations. The teacher differentiated for the needs of these students by providing more assistance and chunking the assignment so the students were able to work through the data in context one step at a time. She also discovered that some students had no problem converting the zeros to the standard form of the quadratic equation and in that moment challenged them to determine if the vertex form provided any meaning in context to their casts, and to justify their rationale.

Prior to starting the activity, the teacher knew she had few students who had both demonstrated mastery and understanding of working with zeros and the standard form of the quadratic equation. In anticipation of this, the teacher did a little research and found out the force on an object via projectile motion can be carefully derived from *bx,* and she created a scaffolded activity that would walk the students through the mathematical process, all while in context with fishing. The teacher checked in with her students to see if they were comfortable with this exploration and ready for the challenge that tip-toed into calculus. She spoke with her students, not only to gauge their comfort level with the complexity of the concept, but also to encourage them to explore the ideas and the connection between what they did with their casts, how it felt in their hands as rod flexed and the bobber flew, and how they interact with math and physics every day in some way. The students were on board and pursued the exploration activity with interest.

The teacher notices that when students encounter difficulties in solving problems, they not only stop trying, but they label their efforts a failure and then incorporate failure into their identity: "I'm bad at math." Capitalizing on how her students enjoy socializing and collaborating with their peers, she co-constructs with her students a set of strategies and resources students can use to help them work through obstacles. The teacher creates a mini lesson to illustrate how productive struggle leads to the growth of synapses in their brains. This exercise sets the

foundation for a growth mindset in math. Then, the teacher creates math problems for students just outside their level of comfort. They are given guiding questions:

- What is the problem asking you to do?
- What part of the problem makes sense? What part of the problem is confusing?
- What do you need to do first? Why?
- What do you need to know to begin your productive struggle?

During the progress of the unit, students will be asked to reflect on times during the week when they are exhibiting a growth mindset in math through: thinking about how to take apart a word/modeling problem to try and determine what the problem is asking them to solve; being persistent in isolating which parts of the problem make sense and which are confusing; and persistently asking themselves and their peers, "What is the problem asking me to do? What do the numbers and my answer mean in context? Does my work and solution make sense?" The teacher will anonymously share what she is learning from their reflections and challenge them to use different strategies in the upcoming week.

Students who are fully engaged in the fishing learning experience may be able to score higher on homework, quizzes, or tests of quadratic function equations. But since the student growth goal involves the "habits of creating a coherent representation of the problem," the teacher plans to gather evidence of success from students' ability to explain how fishing – or another similar concrete phenomenon – is described by quadratic functions. Students have the opportunity to show what they know in conversations, written reflections, and justification of their mathematical claims.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. Where in the above vignette do you see the teacher using knowledge of students to inform the teaching and learning?
2. Where do you see (or not see) evidence of the critical attributes of:
    - Cognitive and/or emotional engagement?
    - Student engagement in assessment?
    - Formative and summative assessment?
    - Feedback from students on their experience of the learning?
3. What else might the teacher have considered or done?
4. What are the ways in which this teacher could convey her work to her evaluator?
5. Where do you see connections between the teacher's practice and components/indicators in your district's instructional framework?
6. What ideas are you taking away from this vignette?

Elementary – 1st Grade Reading

Ms. M teaches first grade. One of the critical standards identified by her team was for students to know and understand six strategies for readers to use when they encounter a word they don't know in the text they're reading. Ms. M considered how to frame this learning for her students,

who are natural problem-solvers. She decided to tell students they would be learning how to become "Word Detectives." She had also been noticing that her students were helpful to each other, and one way that showed up in reading was that during partner reading, when their partner got stuck, they would tell them the word. Knowing that this would get in the way of students practicing their "word detective" skills and wanting to further develop students' sense of self-efficacy, she decided to make an accompanying goal for students of becoming "Reading Advocates" – students who supported each other in developing their "word detective" skills rather than telling them the answers.

Ms. M taught the six skills with examples and practice. She had students role-play how they would handle the situation when their reading partners got stuck. As students were reading together, she circulated with a clipboard and noticed which students were using strategies and which ones they were using. She also looked for students who were supporting their reading partners in using the strategies. Ms. M used this information to fine-tune understandings of the strategies in both full-class instruction and individual student meetings. She also called attention to examples she saw of students supporting each other in using the strategies.
At the end of the unit, Ms. M asked each student to reflect on what was most important to remember from the "Word Detective" unit, and what it means to be a "Reading Advocate." She videotaped their reflections.

During one of these video reflections, one student, who was intensely interested in Batman, veered off into a Batman story unrelated to the questions she was posing. Ms. M had seen previous evidence that the student understood the six strategies and could use both the word detective and reading advocacy skills. The following day, she came back to the student and posed the following question: "When Batman is reading and he gets stuck, what does he do?" The student proceeded to give not only a clear and complete explanation of all six strategies, but also talked about how, if Batman was reading with Robin and Robin got stuck, Batman would help Robin use the strategies to get unstuck.

After the "Word Detective" and "Reading Advocate" unit ended, Ms. M continued to periodically review the six strategies as the class took on more challenging texts. She was able to use the idea of reading advocacy to address other areas in which helping a classmate didn't mean solving their problem for them, but rather meant supporting them in solving it themselves.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. Where in the above vignette do you see the teacher using knowledge of students to inform the teaching and learning?
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