Student Created "If-Then" Plans | Activity Guide

Social-Emotional Learning Connections:

- Self-Efficacy
- Self-Management
- Responsible Decision-Making
- Growth Mindset

What are "If-Then" plans?

"If-Then" plans are a core goal-setting strategy that helps students meet goals and build skills to process their emotions under stress. While creating an "If-Then" plan is a seemingly simple activity, it is important that educators and students understand their purpose.

Decades of research points to the notion that creating implementation intentions is one of the most effective strategies for achieving goals—nearly doubling an individual's chances of meeting those goals.

While many goal-setting strategies focus on achieving the goal itself, "If-Then" plans flip the script and help students shift their focus to the specific actions that will lead to meeting their goal. These actions are paired with recognizable cues that remind them to take the right actions. When created correctly, "If-Then" plans can change the daunting process of meeting a goal from one that requires constant mental energy to one that is almost automatic.

Activity Goals:

- _Student Agency:_ Help students feel heard, seen and empowered by finding ways to support their goals.
- _Self-Efficacy:_ Increase students' belief in their own abilities to achieve a goal or outcome.
- _Navigating Change:_ Guide students through the process of anticipating potential obstacles to their goals that might arise during the reopening process.

Directions

1. Give students time (5-10 minutes) to reflect and think about a goal that they want to achieve.
2. Once they've picked a goal, prompt students to identify the single action (the "Then") that they plan to focus on in order to meet their goal.
   - _Explain that this action should be straight-forward and something that they can achieve on their own; if it's a more complicated action that requires other people or is reliant on a specific schedule, it likely won't work._
3. Have students identify a specific cue for the action (the "If"). What will remind them to take action?
   - _Remind students that the cue should be easy to identify and specific._
4. Periodically check-in with students about their plans and carve out time for them to rehearse them. The ultimate goal is for these "If-Then" plans to become second nature for students.

Sample If-Then Plans

Goal	If-Then Plan
Study for my science exam.	If it's 2:30pm, then I'll spend time reviewing practice problems for 30 minutes.
Stay calm when someone makes me angry.	If my hands start to clench or my throat starts to feel tight, then I'll take three deep breaths and relax my muscles.
Stay focused during dedicated reading time.	If someone is talking to me while I'm trying to read or focus, then I will politely explain that I am trying to concentrate.
Ask for help when I feel stuck with my math worksheets.	If I start to feel frustrated while completing my math worksheets, then I will take a few deep breaths and ask my teacher for help.
Complete three lessons from our SEL Choice Board during remote learning days.	If I am learning at home, then I will refer to our SEL Choice Board and pick three activities to complete.

About Panorama Education

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