

Ambitious Target

Introduction

Many students have difficulty when they are asked to attempt a large and difficult task. Many times it will seem overwhelming to them. Teachers will often suggest that the student “break it down” into smaller tasks. Students who have never “broken it down” may not understand what that means or how to do it. There may be several obstacles to accomplishing the task including the student’s lack of knowledge about how to approach such a task and the student’s fear of failure or success.

The real problem doesn’t come from the obstacles but from:

- The large number of obstacles flooding the student’s mind
- One or two serious obstacles that seem to be impossible to overcome, and
- Not knowing where to start.

What is the end result?

“Begin with the end in mind”-- Leonardo de Vinci

We want our students to be able analyze what is necessary in order to accomplish big goals and complete big projects. We also want them to be able to analyze our curriculum and be able to describe what was necessary to achieve ambitious goals in the past as well as what it will take to accomplish them in the future. We want them to recognize that obstacles are there to be overcome and that they have the confidence and capability to overcome them.

Content

Ambitious Target

- Purpose
- Obstacles
- Intermediate Objectives
- IO Map
- Planning Charts

Ambitious Target Tool

The Ambitious Target Tool is designed to analyze difficult tasks, assignments, and goals and assist in the development of a plan to overcome the obstacles to achieving it.

Obstacles

One effective way to deal with all of the obstacles to a major accomplishment is to identify and list all of the major obstacles that prevent achieving the goal. The first step then is to list them in a simple table.

List of Obstacles	
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

A teacher, working with an individual student, follows a procedure to raise the obstacles. The teacher...:

- States the goal and gives some time for reaction by the student,
- Asks the student for an obstacle to accomplishing the task and gives the student time to respond.
- Solicits additional obstacles from the student until neither one can suggest any more. They should all be major obstacles in the student's mind.
- And the teacher and student agree to the list. Agreement is reached if; when all obstacles are overcome the goal will be achieved.

Intermediate Objectives

The first step in overcoming each objective is to turn it into an Intermediate Objective. Intermediate Objectives are merely stepping stones on the pathway to accomplishing the goal.

It's important to write the Intermediate Objectives (IOs) in past tense, as though they have been achieved. For example: My obstacle is that I don't have access to the Internet. Don't write: I'll search for a way to access the Internet. Write the IO as if it is achieved; I have access to the Internet. We'll work on how to get access later in the action plan.

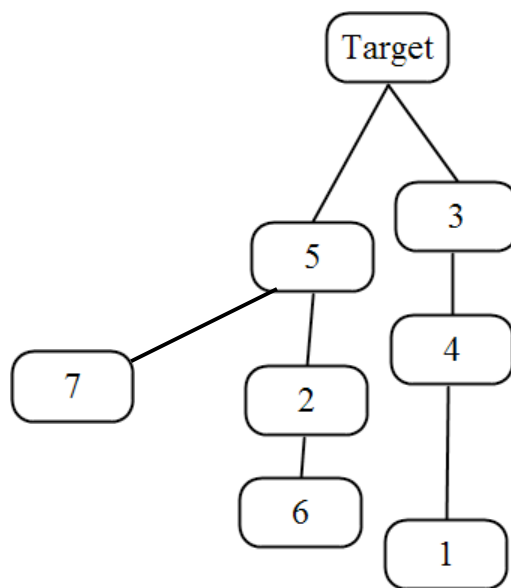
List of Obstacles	Intermediate Objectives (IOs)
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
6.	6.

Every Obstacle must have a corresponding Intermediate Objective. It's helpful to number them and to write them side by side in the same table.

A teacher can guide the student through the procedure for turning all of the obstacles into IOs.

- The teacher selects one obstacle and demonstrates how to overcome it with a well stated intermediate objective.
- The teacher then asks the student to generate an IO for each of the obstacles and provides support when necessary.
- Agreement is reached on all of the IOs and that they will overcome all of the obstacles.

Intermediate Objective Map:



After all of the Intermediate Objectives are identified they should be arranged in the order in which they can be accomplished. Some IOs can only be completed after others. Some IOs can be completed in parallel. Some IOs are not time sensitive or dependent on the completion of others.

If a single IO seems to be a significant accomplishment, it may need to be “broken down” into smaller segments and mapped in a similar way.

If you discover another obstacle during the mapping discussion, it can be added wherever it fits.

The primary purpose of the IO map is to indicate time dependencies and the chronological order of completion of the IOs. It does not indicate a cause effect relationship.

Responsibilities

The IO Map may be followed by a chart of responsibilities if there are two or more people working on a group project.

Person/IO#	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Jim	X		X	X			
Jill	X		X				X
Joe		X			X	X	
Jane		X			X	X	

Gantt Chart

When working on a large project with several people and several intermediate objectives you may wish to use a basic project management tool such as a Gantt chart? With the Gantt chart you assign responsibilities, time for completion and completion dates for your time sensitive tasks.

IO#/day	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
#1--Jim and Jill	■	■	■							
#6--Joe and Jane	■	■								
#2--Joe and Jane			■	■	■	■				
#7--Jill			■	■	■	■				
#4--Jim				■	■	■				
#5--Joe and Jane							■	■	■	■
#3--Jim and Jill							■	■	■	■
Project Time	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■

More detail can be added to your plans and planning documents, but there is no need to overburden people with more than is necessary to accomplish the goal.