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A Goal-Setting Approach to Increased Self-Motivation

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Abstract

This teacher action research study investigated the effects of a goal-setting program on a female college soccer player's intrinsic motivation over the duration of a season. Thirty-four female college soccer players between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two participated in the study conducted in a liberal arts college containing approximately 2,000 students in eastern Pennsylvania. Methods of gathering data included student surveys, journal prompts, student work, and reflections. Methods of analysis included qualitative coding, constructing bins, constructing theme statements, analysis of theoretical perspectives, analysis of figurative language, and the construction of a mid-study analytic memo. The participants were asked to take part in a goal-setting program where they wrote their own team goal, a game goal, and a practice goal in order for me to measure the effects of setting goals on their intrinsic motivation. Findings suggest that setting goals increased self-motivation in the form of focus and work ethic within practices and games. Furthermore, self-reflections allowed the participants to understand the progress they had made so far and what else needs to be done in order to achieve their goals. Ultimately, team success became the greatest motivator as the season neared its conclusion.

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Researcher's Stance

Becoming a teacher was a career I had always thought about pursuing even when I was very young. I would play school with my stuffed animals and give them each a nametag. My mom, who was and is still a teacher, would bring me into the teacher supply stores where she always allowed me to get stickers so I could grade my students' thoughtful work. Stickers turned into hall passes, which turned into report cards, and before I knew it I had a successful classroom with my five stuffed animals. The nice thing was that they were so quiet I did not have to reprimand them much. As I grew up, I no longer played school because I was living it. I still was unsure about actually pursuing a career in teaching, but I knew it was something I would think about. In elementary school, my dream of becoming a professional soccer player was so realistic in my mind. How hard could it really be? As middle school approached, I played with the idea of becoming a veterinarian and a doctor. Even as a younger child, I knew I wanted to help people or living things in some way.

When I finally reached high school, life was getting to be more serious and a career path was not far away. I began thinking about becoming a speech pathologist or an occupational therapist. Neither of these choices, though, seemed to excite me the way teaching and playing soccer had ignited my passions as a child. Finally, junior year of high school approached and life started to move

faster than ever. I was taking the SATs one weekend and visiting a college the next weekend. During this crazy time, I had the opportunity to participate as a counselor for the middle school heritage day. This is something I participated in as a sixth grader so I knew what was going to happen that day. While I was there, the students were separated into different groups. Each group had supplies and together, they had to create a robot with those supplies. It did not have to act like a robot, but it was all about their creativity and collaboration with one another. As a counselor, I would visit each group and offer my help whether it was putting supplies together or helping groups brainstorm. Looking back now, I was acting as a facilitator would in a classroom. When the day came to an end, a young girl came up to me and said, "I hope you'll be our counselor on our sixth grade trip." It was a small moment, but it meant everything to me. I went home that day and I told my parents that now I knew clearly I wanted to become a teacher.

After I decided I wanted to become a teacher, I thought about what kind of teacher I wanted to be. I always learned through physical activity and being hands on. I was inclined to athletics and valued a healthy lifestyle. Throughout high school I had the best coaches and physical education teachers. These teachers helped me make my decision to become a health and physical education teacher as well as continuing to coach. They inspired me to do what I love and help others along the way.

Many of these teachers shaped my view of good teaching. As I went off to college and took education courses, I started to mold my own view of effective teaching. From my personal experience, I knew that teachers should be a guide and a facilitator for their students' learning. Students should have the opportunity to create their own learning and have an opinion on what they should learn. I am a firm believer that classrooms should form a democracy between the teacher and students. Students should not have the overall say of what they should learn, but I think there are ways to teach the curriculum while also teaching to the students' interests. While I do believe students should have an input in their learning, I also think it is the job of the teacher to introduce new concepts as needed. In physical education, we have the opportunity to inspire students with different physical activities if they are not into team sports. As a physical education teacher, I believe there is an activity for every individual to enjoy. We have the chance to inspire those who may not find exercise a priority. Last but not least, I believe it is a teacher's job to relate any concept to the students' lives. Teach them why this material is important and how it can impact them. Teachers will have a variety of students in class with different backgrounds. Each topic may be more related to one culture compared to another, providing an excellent learning opportunity for the other students in the class to understand one another.

There is a giant connection between coaching and teaching. I believe being a teacher can help a coach, and being a coach can help a teacher. I am

blessed to be able to pursue both of my passions and incorporate them into each other. In the classroom, we structure our lesson plans in certain ways. There is usually a warm up, instruction, structured activity, and then application in an open activity. I use this same format in my coaching. This allows me to have a structured practice while also be able to see my team's participation and application of the skill in a game environment. In both coaching and teaching, we have to learn about our class or team. When we learn about our students, we are able to plan lessons and practices around their needs. This is incredibly helpful for both settings. In coaching, I have learned to be a good reader of body language. This will absolutely help me as a teacher when I have 25 students to keep track of. As a teacher, we are used to giving feedback often. In coaching, I utilize this skill every day within practice, meetings, and conversations on the sideline. We have to be honest with our students and teams so they can continue to grow. Teaching and coaching are very similar. The goals for both of these professions are to educate and inspire. We look to develop these young minds and teach them skills that will help them outside of our classroom or team.

When we were developing ideas for our thesis, I tried to make a list of everything I had noticed throughout the fall soccer season. My list ended up being longer than I thought. This list contained items that I wanted to be improved on our team as well as thoughts on how to improve my practice as a coach. One memory I had from the fall is looking at the head coach and saying, "What else

can we do to motivate them?” We had to plan carefully what we would say and how we would say it. After reliving that memory, though, I wondered why we as coaches should be responsible for the players’ motivation? I added on to that memory from our players’ summer workouts. Some players admitted they had a hard time finding motivation to run over the summer, and I found this to be a huge problem and felt this is something we can help our team improve.

Teachers and coaches are always trying to improve their practice anyway they can. We are looking for something our students struggle with and find ways to help them. One thing that is common between education and sports is motivation. Motivation is key to learning, and I have noticed a lack of self-motivation within some of the members of my team. As a coach, I feel I have to motivate my team to perform at its highest ability. There is, of course, only so much a coach or teacher can do if students are not self-motivated to learn.

Motivation is different for everyone, and there are many factors that play into why we are motivated for some things but not all. One factor is our enjoyment towards the content we are learning and the ability to apply it to our lives. If our students or players do not enjoy what they are doing or do not find the information relevant to their lives, their motivation will certainly drop. In school and sports, there are outside factors that are used for motivation. This includes grades, fear of failure, playing time for sports, or free time in the classroom. All of these play a part in motivation, but we need to do a better job at enhancing our students’

intrinsic motivation. This can stem from finding what interests them and apply it to our lessons.

In my own playing experience, I have noticed teammates who are highly motivated and those who had a natural ability to play the game of soccer, but no motivation to improve. We had motivational speakers come to visit us in the locker room and our coach was also a big motivator before games. When I was playing, my biggest motivator was my teammates because I did not want to let them down. As a coach, I have become aware of my players who have the highest level of motivation and those who are content with their level of play. I just cannot understand how a member of a college soccer team does not have the motivation to improve especially if they are not getting the amount of playing time they would like.

One way to increase intrinsic motivation is through goal setting, an excellent way to self motivate, but in my experience, I have not seen it used enough. In particular, on our team, we set a team goal in the beginning. The problem is, we never revisit it. We do not assess our progress or make changes if necessary. Some coaches and teachers do not even utilize a goal setting approach. I believe the problem lies within not constantly evaluating our goal setting and goal attainment progress. My plan for my action research is to begin with a goal setting program and evaluate its effect on my team's self motivation. My research

question is, “In what ways can a goal-setting and goal-attainment program increase intrinsic motivation within a collegiate women’s soccer team?”

Literature Review

Introduction

According to the National Research Council Institute of Medicine (2003), 40% of students are unmotivated to learn (2006). A recent survey conducted by *Education Weekly* reported by Lorna Collier (2015) that only 40% of teachers believed a large percentage of their students were motivated (2014). Studying student motivation or lack thereof is not a new phenomenon. In fact, Abraham Maslow, one of the leaders in motivation theory “proposed that people are motivated by a variety of needs that are organized hierarchically. At the base of the hierarchy are physiological needs, such as the needs for food and water. These needs are followed in ascending order by the needs for safety, love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization” (Dominguez & Carton, 1997, p.1093). It is important to know that with Maslow’s theory of motivation, the needs in the hierarchy are never permanent and never fully satisfied. Human beings are in a perpetual state of constantly trying to fulfill those needs (Dominguez & Carton, 1997).. “Generally, motivation refers to an internal process that initiates effort and direction toward a behavior” (Buning & Thompson, 2015, p.346).

Motivation is also a popular topic when discussing athletes’ performance in sports. Depending on the level of athletics, the participants may not be as motivated as others. At the college level, it is often assumed that all of the athletes will be intrinsically motivated. Unfortunately, this is not always the case.

“Intrinsic motivation can generally be described as engaging in an activity for the pleasure and satisfaction derived from the activity itself” (Hollembeak & Amorose, 2005, p. 20). In this research project, intrinsic motivation is defined as one’s self-motivation. It is what drives an individual to accomplish something without the need of an external reward. Just as in education, athletes are driven by different factors. A 2012 study revealed that female collegiate athletes had many reasons why they were driven. The top three motivation factors included enjoyment of the sport, skill and mastery, and competition (Pacheco, Mas, Olivarez, & Avila, 2012). Some are motivated by the success of the team, while others are concerned about personal accolades. The traditional-age college student is between eighteen and twenty-two years of age. Therefore, “Many college students are still in transition from adolescence to adulthood and are still learning to balance meeting others' expectations with thinking for themselves” (Lowman, 1990, p.138). How, then, is it possible for a coach to promote intrinsic motivation within these young adults?

One of the best ways to channel our intrinsic motivation is through goal-setting. “Goal setting is a component of mental skills training found to be effective for enhancing commitment, effort, self-confidence, and perseverance and motivation of athletes although its origins lie in organization settings,” (Bullard, p. 1). This research defines goal-setting as a way to motivate an individual through her inner desire to achieve something.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory, created by Richard Ryan and Edward Deci in 1985, states that individuals distinguish between different types of motivation, depending on the rationale or goals that individuals set (Ryan & Deci, 2000). They distinguish mainly between intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and go on to define amotivation or non-motivation. Self-determination theory focuses on three factors that explain why an individual would or would not be intrinsically motivated, namely competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000). If an activity fills these three needs, the individual will be intrinsically motivated. Self-determination theory also discusses a continuum that includes amotivation, extrinsic motivation and intrinsic motivation:

The reasons why individuals choose to participate, exert effort, and persist in an activity can be classified along a continuum of self-determined behavior... Intrinsic motivation (IM) is the final and most self-determined type of motivation identified by SDT. IM can generally be described as engaging in an activity for the pleasure and satisfaction derived from the activity itself. (Hollembek & Amorose, 2005, p. 20).

Intrinsic Motivation Versus Extrinsic Motivation

Which form of motivation actually works? As stated above, intrinsic motivation is defined as, “engaging in an activity for the pleasure and satisfaction

derived from the activity itself” (Hollembek & Amorose, 2005, p. 20). Intrinsic motivation is a critical element in cognitive, social, and physical development. As a person acts on his or her interests, motivation yields new knowledge and skills. Intrinsic motivation affects performance and persistence throughout one’s life (Ryan & Deci, 2000). This shows that intrinsic motivation is better for people from the skills it provides from performing activities. In the classroom, it has been shown that teachers who give their students more choice increase students’ intrinsic motivation along with creativity (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.59). It is, however, important to remember that people are intrinsically motivated for some tasks, but not necessarily all.

On the other end of the spectrum, extrinsic motivation refers to doing something because it leads to a separable outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p.55). It is often thought that extrinsic motivation is a quick fix to get someone to do something or to get yourself to do something. Extrinsic motivation does not always have to be a bad thing. Ryan and Deci (2000) propose that, “There are varied types of extrinsic motivation, some of which do, indeed, represent impoverished forms of motivation and some of which represent active, agentic states” (p.55). The attitude a person has towards an activity is what determines whether the extrinsic motivation presented is good or bad.

Extrinsic rewards have been found to decrease intrinsic motivation. When extrinsic rewards are offered, a person’s self-determination is diminished, which

means intrinsic motivation will decrease (Lowman, 1990). For example, if a teacher gives grades rather than feedback, students' intrinsic motivation will also decrease. In sports, if a coach presents his players with a consequence of fitness for performing poorly, this likely decreases intrinsic motivation. Most long-term objectives for students involve independent behavior based on internal satisfaction (Lowman, 1990). Overall, intrinsic motivation is more productive for our students and athletes as they grow into adults and enter their own profession. It is also important for everyday activities.

Female Athletes and Motivation to Participate

Female and male athletes seem to have different factors, though, that motivate them to participate in a collegiate sport. As much as we want to treat everyone equally, doing so simply may not work when it comes to sports and motivation. "Trying to treat everyone the same does a disservice to the athletes" (Bernstein, 1999, p. 175). A 2012 study researched the motivational factors of females participating in collegiate sports, and the three top factors included enjoyment of the sport, competition, and skill mastery (Avila, Mas, Olivarez, & Pacheco, 2012). Research has also determined that female athletes are more intrinsically motivated than extrinsically motivated (Cicomasclo, Shim, & Younes, 2013). Female athletes also seem to be motivated by their coaches more than male athletes: Women athletes believed their coaches provided them with the desired level of task-involving climate, and therefore, influenced

their intrinsic motivation that reflected generalized feelings such as pleasure, fun, and enjoyment. Thus, the coach has the capability to influence the athlete's desire to continue sport participation" (Andrew, 2004).

Relational Factors and Intrinsic Motivation

Besides a person's individual need for achieving goals, outside influences can also affect intrinsic motivation level. One article titled "Subjective Beliefs Among Athletes About How Relational Factors Affect Intrinsic Motivation, Responsibility and Development in Sport" indicates that the interactions between the coach and the athletes generates the athletes' learning and results (Moen & Verburg, 2012). This relationship between the athlete and coach is a major factor of motivation level. Buning and Thompson (2015) researched further into the relationship between coaching behaviors and athlete motivation. "The common theme from this line of research is the coach is an important factor in athletes' motivation. The type of motivation athletes' possess will greatly influence the athlete's sport experience, and while coaches are responsible for shaping athletic talent and strength, they are also responsible for facilitating athletes' motivation to perform" (p.348). A major reason a coach or a teacher can influence the motivation of a player or student is communication.

Communication, whether verbal or non-verbal, can help or hinder motivation. Communication is "a multifaceted phenomenon that involves the

transmission or exchange of thoughts, ideas, feelings, or information through verbal and non-verbal channels” (Young, 2016. p.3). A teacher or a coach can influence motivation by showing confidence that the student or athlete can succeed. Buning and Thompson (2015) found that one major contributor of a coach’s behavior that affected motivation was clear confidence in the athlete’s ability to perform. Examples of this were given as a verbal statement, but also as a non-verbal action. As educational leaders, it is important to communicate belief in students, which can instill even a small part of motivation within themselves. It is important to remember when teachers or coaches want to show confidence in students or athletes that there is an awareness of body language as well. It is estimated that as much as 50% to 70% of all communication is nonverbal (Weinberg & Gould, 2003). It is very difficult, but coaches and teachers must be aware of their body language and even the tone of their communication.

Another form of communication that enhanced motivation was re-assuring language or encouragement after a performance. This paired with positive feedback has been shown to create more confidence within athletes. 65.9% of the subjects involved in this study said that verbal praise was another form of communication that helped to keep them motivated. (Buning & Thompson, 2015). “Some athletes believed that when the coach made an effort to personally recognize their effort, their confidence also increased because they felt they were bringing a valuable element to the team and contributing to success” (Buning &

Thompson, 2015, p.357). The most influential factor to motivate these participants was through open, clear, and direct communication. 95% of the participants agreed with this statement. This direct communication came from individual meetings where coaches would discuss the expectations they had for the player (Buning and Thompson, 2015). All of these communication factors and tips are an essential part of coaching or teaching. Educational leaders need to form a relationship with their students to encourage motivation. A central principle of effective communication is to seek first to understand the individual, and then seek to be understood (Covey, 1990).

Research has also suggested that the current generation of traditional college age students and athletes prefers frequent positive training and instructional feedback (Buning & Thompson, 2015). Positive feedback is another form of communication that improves intrinsic motivation. Within the classroom, grades and evaluations actually decrease a student's intrinsic motivation. "In order to remain interested in learning, students must feel challenged and must receive feedback on their progress. Using grades or other inducements to emphasize teachers' control over students rather than to give feedback on performance has been shown to reduce intrinsic motivation" (Lowman, 1990, p.3). Feedback is key to showing confidence in students and athletes. Buning and Thompsons (2015) note that feedback is found to be influential when there is encouragement followed by additional instruction. Athletes said the pairing of the

two enhanced motivation and confidence (Buning & Thompson, 2015). Many studies have looked at the effect of positive and negative feedback on motivation. “These studies consistently revealed an association between positive feedback and high perceptions of competence and IM (intrinsic motivation), whereas, negative feedback demonstrated the opposite effect” (Hollebeak & Amorose, 2005, p.21). In Hollebeak and Amorose’s study, a unique finding occurred. They found that, “Positive feedback was a significant predictor of both relatedness and perceived competence. Interestingly, however, the relationship between Positive Feedback and Perceived Competence was negative” (Hollebeak & Amorose, 2005, p.33). Relatedness and perceived competence are two of the components of the self-determination theory’s intrinsic motivation discussed earlier. From this, it seems that the athletes involved in the study felt that the frequency of praise and feedback was a sign that the coach did not think they were competent at the sport (Hollebeak & Amorose, 2005). This is important for coaches and teachers to remember. If teachers are always correcting students on the same topic, students lose confidence in themselves.

These studies have helped to form a way to communicate with players and students to motivate them to perform to the best of their ability. One part of this study that is important for future coaches and teachers is how educational leaders can facilitate the goal setting process and increase their students’ intrinsic motivation.

Goal-Setting

Goal-setting is a common practice that individuals partake in everyday. It also has a connection with intrinsic motivation. Goal-setting is a tool that has been found to be effective for enhancing self-confidence, effort, and motivation of athletes (Bullard, 2014). This is a topic that is widely diverse with different types of goals, theories, and practical uses.

Goal-setting in education depends on the individual's wants and needs. Goals can be something specific or something broad. Sometimes the teacher sets the goals for his or her students to achieve. Researches usually refer to two types of goals when referring to education: mastery achievement goals and performance goals (Usher & Kober, 2012). A mastery achievement goal is the individual focusing on achieving mastery in a task or developing a competency (Dishon-Berkovits, 2014). "Researchers have consistently found that students who have a mastery goal mindset exhibit deeper cognitive processes, strategize more effectively, and are more adaptable to the challenges" (Usher & Kober, 2012, p.2). Performance goals involve reaching a pre-defined performance level or outperforming others (Usher & Kober, 2012). This can be related to scoring higher than a classmate on a test or even looking to pass an exam based on the teachers rubric. Performance-oriented students show more adverse reactions to failure, see less of a link between effort and outcome, and focus more on their performance relative to the performance of others (Pintrich, 2003). Mastery

achievement goals seem to be the better of the two, but it is not uncommon for a student to have some mastery achievement goals and some performance goals. This combination is called a multiple goal perspective (Dishon-Berkovits, 2014). Results from Dishon-Berkovits' study shows that successful students are those who adopt a multiple goal perspective. There is a connection between goal-setting and academic achievement, but the right goal has to be set for the right reason. Another way to assist in academic achievement is by setting learning goals for the students (Dishon-Berkovits, 2014). In this case, the students are not setting the goals, but the teachers are giving them something to strive for. Many teachers have to write objectives on the board when they get to the classroom, which in turn, is considered a learning goal. The objectives help to specify the goal and show a student what he or she should be able to accomplish from this lesson.

Sports have many skills that need to be learned throughout a career. Goal-setting is a popular method to achieving these skills. Within sports there are three types of goals that can be set. These goals include process, performance, and outcome (Gillham & Weiler, 2013). Process goals are very specific goals of a certain task or skill the athlete wants to do in a game. Performance goals are a more general goal like wanting to score 10 goals. Outcome goals are even broader than performance goals and look at the bigger picture like wanting to have a winning season (Gillham & Weiler, 2013). "Research has suggested that that the addition of short-term goals as opposed to long term goals alone, improves the

effectiveness of goal-setting” (Hvid Larsen & Engell, 2013). Instead of just having an overall team goal, it is important to set smaller individual goals that relate to the team goal. All of these goals are helpful for athletes, but it is important for athletes to make sure they are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound (Gillham & Weiler, 2013). Goal-setting has been found to improve soccer performance and has shown positive performance effects in a team environment (Gillham & Weiler, 2013). There are many impacts that come from goal setting including being more focused in training sessions (Weinberg, 2010). In sports, there are different forms of motivation for training and competitions (Dragos, 2014). This means, that goals must be different as well. “90% of the studies with goal setting had a powerful and continuous effect on behavior”(Hvid Larsen & Engell, 2013). This is also reassuring that the goal setting programs have been effective on sports team. Throughout this goal-setting process, it is important for a coach to help aid the player. Feedback and encouragement will allow for the player to reach their ultimate goals.

Goals are only helpful, though, when they are set correctly. There are certain things that must be included while setting a goal. It is important to ensure that goals are S.M.A.R.T., meaning, specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound (Gillham & Weiler, 2013). Specificity within goals means stating exactly what you want to do. Measurable means providing an assessment within your goal. Attainable means making your goal within your reach. A realistic goal

means that it is relevant towards your purpose. Time-bound goals include a deadline to reach your goal by (Davis & Carman, 2010). Including all of these factors will help the individual achieve the goal. Increased goal difficulty, goal specificity, and goal efficacy results in increased effort toward goal attainment (Smith, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2007).

Another way to make goals more effective is for them to be set by the individual who is trying to achieve them. “Reflecting the interests and values of the individual, goals pursued because of autonomous motives are proposed to lead to sustained effort over the period that the person strives to meet their goals” (Smith, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2007, p. 746). When individuals set their own goals, they are using their individual wants and needs. This creates ownership of the goal and makes the individual put forth more effort towards achieving that goal. In some cases, like education, students cannot always set goals especially the learning goals the teacher creates for them. “If they are encouraged by an outside party, then they should at least be founded in students’ internal, intrinsic motivation” (Usher & Kober, 2012, p.3). As long as the goals reflect the unique interests of the individuals and what is best for them, they can still be an effective tool. When possible though, it is important for the individual to set the goal for himself or herself.

In sports, there has been a positive link of group focused individual goals and intrinsic motivation (Bullard, 2014). Group focused individual goals were

also found to enhance group cohesion and goal achievement (Bullard, 2014). These goals are individual goals with the group goal as this biggest purpose. These goals can also mean learning a certain skill that will ultimately lead to achieving the team goal. The study presented in *The Structure of a Team: The Influence of Goal Setting Type on Intrinsic Motivation, Group Cohesion, and Goal Achievement Orientation of Division III Female Athletes*, focused on two types of goal orientations and how they also related to intrinsic motivation and goal achievement. Orientation of motivation concerns the underlying attitudes and goals that give rise to action (Ryan & Deci, 2000). “Task orientation involves an individual establishing goals with the intention to master a skill, whereas ego orientation involves an individual feeling successful after outperforming others” (McCarthy, 2011). McCarthy (2011) found that individuals who set task orientation goals had increased performance and mastered the skills set. Task orientation has a significant correlation with group focused individual goals (Bullard, 2014). This means that athletes who utilized these two were more intrinsically motivated. It is significant for this study because these are the types of goals and orientations the participants in this study will be using.

Backward Design

Backward design is a common approach used by educators where an individual begins with setting one end or outcome goal. In the classroom, educators focus on what the overall purpose of the content is and, from that,

create learning goals and objectives for their students from the outset (Linder, Cooper, McKenzie, Raesch, & Reeve, 2013). When relating to sports, an individual begins with the outcome goal, then writes the performance goals, and finishes with the process goal. Instructors begin by focusing on desired results and then focus on content and activities to achieve those results (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005).

There are three stages of backward design. The first stage is to identify desired results; the second stage is to determine acceptable evidence; and the third stage is to plan learning experiences and instruction (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005). Backward design is helping teachers avoid focusing on unimportant content material that will not lead to the end goal.

Self-Reflection

Self-reflection is a very valuable tool to use in our everyday lives and our work. Eric Casaburi, the founder of Retro Fitness, states, “It’s important to take time each day to reflect on your goals, the progress you’re making and what factors might be holding you back from achieving them (2017). Self-reflection has also been found to improve self-confidence within athletes during performances (Cropley, Faull, Neil, & Wilson, 2013). For individuals to achieve their goals, they must be confident that they can do so. Including self-reflection within a goal-setting program will ultimately help the athlete to achieve them. In recent research it has been found that self-reflection can help an individual’s

performance in elite sports (Koh, Kokkonen, & Tan, 2016). “It is thought that by establishing more effective reflective techniques the cricketer was able to develop the self awareness required to understand the aspects of his performance that were limiting, as well as those that facilitated positive performance” (Cropley, Faull, Neil, & Wilson, 2013, p,48). Self-reflection not only focuses on the negatives of a performance, but on the positives as well. In order for the participants of this study to achieve their goals, they must self-reflect after practices and competitions to make adjustments to their plans.

Conclusion

Motivation is an important key for students to have to succeed in the classroom and in their everyday lives. Intrinsic motivation is necessary for cognitive, social, and physical development (Ryan & Deci, 2000). The lack of motivation within students is very apparent to many teachers and coaches. How can we, as educational leaders, address this growing problem? Goal-setting is a tool that has been found to be effective for enhancing self-confidence, effort, and motivation of athletes (Bullard, 2014). In what ways can a goal-setting and goal-attainment program increase the self-motivation of a female college soccer player? How will reflection add to the increase self-motivation? What will be the greatest motivating factor for a college female soccer player?

Research Design and Methodology

Introduction

The intent of this action research project was to initiate an anonymous goal-setting curriculum for a female college soccer team in the hopes that the players would be more intrinsically motivated throughout the course of a season. The participants began with setting a team goal and then used backwards design to write two individual goals that will help the participants reach their team goal. As the season progressed, the participants kept track of their goals through reflections, journal prompts, and activities. These data collection sources were reviewed once or twice weekly.

Setting

This action research project took place at a small, private liberal arts college in eastern Pennsylvania. In 2017, this college had 2,016 undergraduate students enrolled. 1,199 of these students were female while the other 817 students were male. 73.3% of students classify themselves as white, 10.9% Hispanic, 6.1% unknown, 5.2% black, 2.4% multi-race, and 1.9% Asian. Throughout this project, the participants met with me in a few locations. The first location was a traditional classroom in the athletics building. The second location was outside on the soccer field usually after a practice. The third location was an online environment where the participants completed work through Google forms.

Every student on this college campus had access to a personal Mac laptop that could be used for the data collection activities.

Participants

There were 34 female college students on the women's soccer team who participated in this study. These participants' ages ranged from 18 years old to 22 year olds. In the fall semester, this group collected a cumulative grade point average of 3.45. One participant among the 34 had a reading comprehension learning disability. Demographically, this group was not ethnically diverse and a good representation of the lack of diversity on the campus. Out of the 34 participants, 31 were classified as white, 1 was classified as Asian, 1 was classified as multi-race, and 1 classified as Asian and white.

Planned Intervention and Curricular Changes

Once all of the students had settled in, I asked them to meet me in the classroom to explain my project. When everyone arrived, I explained my project with a planned script and then read through the consent form. I explained that I would be collecting data through surveys, activities, journal prompts, and reflections. They would each create a pseudonym to maintain anonymity. When I finished explaining, I allowed them to ask any questions they may have. No questions were asked so I handed out the consent forms and left the room. Once the forms were completed, my assistant (former player) collected them and

handed them to me face down. After counting the sheets, I had 34 participants and we were ready to begin.

I collected data for eight weeks. Below, is a detailed week-by-week account of the activities done throughout the project.

Week 1 began with the participants completing the participant consent form since they were all eighteen years of age or older. Once they had done that, I was able to hand out survey 1, which they completed as well which gathered initial data for my project. In week 2 the first activity was conducted. This activity had each participant write their own goal for the team, an individual goal for games, and an individual goal for practices. They were asked to write individual goals that would not only help them, but help reach their team goal as well. After they submitted activity 1, the participants filled out journal prompt 1 which had them explore why their goals will motivate them. They also were asked why their individual goals would help them achieve their team goals. If they could not answer this question, I offered them the chance to change their individual goals. During week 2, we also had a meeting on how to write S.M.A.R.T goals. Week 3 started off with their first game reflection where they reflected on their performance as well as the progress they made towards their goals. In these reflections the participants also planned what the next step was to reach their goals.

After the game reflections were finished, week 4 had the players submit a practice reflection. This reflection focused on motivation of practice goals as well as the steps the individual needs to take in order to achieve her goals. By week 5 we were about halfway through the season and program. Survey 2 was distributed which collected data on the participants' motivation levels and on their goal progress. The survey also asked questions about the goal setting program just in case I had to make any changes. Week 5 also had the players complete activity 2 which gave them the option to change or edit their goals. Week 6 included a game reflection after the team had a win. The reflection had some questions to answer about the game, their motivation levels, and asked what is motivating them the most to succeed. The reflection also asked for them to write about whatever they wanted about the game that had to do with their performance or goal attainment.

Week 7 is when the final journal prompt was distributed. Two questions were asked: Do you believe your motivation levels increased throughout the season? What would you do differently next time? These questions allowed the players to reflect on the program and help me change it for future use. Week 8, which was also the final week of data collection, included the final survey. During this week, the goal achievement activity was also distributed to those who achieved any of their goals. The activity asked them specific questions about the goals they achieved and the process in achieving them.

Data Gathering Methods

Surveys: This project began with an initial survey to gather data on the participants (Hendricks, 2009). The survey conducted asked about the participants' knowledge and use of goal setting. It also surveyed the level of intrinsic motivation the participants had as well as what motivates them to perform their best in soccer. I also distributed a mid-season survey and a final survey. The final two surveys were done on Google forms. Google forms was a more efficient way to collect data because it automatically generates tables for each answer. These surveys were entered into my field log as well as my notes and thoughts regarding the results of each of them.

Activities: Each participant was given two activities and some were given three. The first activity asked for them to write the goals they wanted to accomplish this season. The second activity gave them the option to edit or change their goals. If they accomplished one of their goals, they had the chance to write new ones. The third optional activity was for those participants who achieved their goals throughout the season. The results from these activities were analyzed and recorded into my field log.

Journal Prompts and Reflections: Each journal prompt gave the participants a chance to reflect on her goal-setting journey as well as express her feelings in an anonymous way. Each journal entry had a specific prompt with multiple questions. Some were specific and some were more general. These journal

prompts were completed in the beginning of the project and at the end of the project. There were also two game reflections and one practice reflection during this project. Each reflection focused on the participants' performance and mindset in a particular game or practice.

Field Log: All of the data collected was entered into a field log kept on a Google document. The field log allowed me to code and analyze the data (Bogdan & Biklen, 1992). This was also a space for me to share my thoughts. I would make comments throughout so I could remember them in the future. This allowed me to understand the context of my thoughts. My field log was pretty organized to me, but it may look like chaos to an outsider. My field log also included participant observations as well as non-participant observations. These observations included questions that were asked or body language of the participants. Because this project was anonymous, I could not use observations and compare them with the answers given from a particular person.

Trustworthiness Statement

In order to ensure that the findings and results of this study were valid and trustworthy, I completed a checklist of ethical guidelines, practices and techniques before and during the project. Before beginning the study, I obtained approval from Moravian College's Human Subjects Internal Review Board. The head coach of the Moravian women's soccer team completed a written consent form giving me permission to perform my study (See Appendix - A). I also obtained

consent form from my participants since they were all 18 years of age or older (See Appendix - B). Both consent forms included a brief description of the study and the tools I would be using to collect the data. It also stated that any data collected from members of the team who did not sign the consent form would not be used in the study. Participants were also informed that they had the opportunity to opt out at any time without penalty. The consent forms also made note of students using pseudonyms throughout the study so all data was kept anonymous and data was kept in a locked cabinet.

After I had obtained the signed consent forms, I was ready to begin collecting data for my study. I implemented several techniques in order to keep my participants anonymous and keep the data valid. First, students created pseudonyms so their work could be as honest as possible without fear of retribution. Next, I completed surveys before, during, and after the study in order to collect feedback from my participants about the project (Hendricks, 2013). I also collected a reflection about the action research study itself and this allowed me to change anything about the project I needed to.

Throughout the project, I used an assistant to collect my data so I was unaware of who was participating. This assistant was used to deliver information between the participants and myself. This allowed the participants to speak freely about their progress and the project itself. To ensure trustworthiness and validity of my data, I also allowed my participants to choose what data could be used in

my project and what data (if any) could not be used. At the end of my project I used data triangulation to ensure validity of my answers (Hendricks, 2013). Data were analyzed from the written activities, reflections, journal prompts, and surveys. All of the data was looked at thoroughly until there was a clear indication of a participant's feelings as well as their actions throughout the project.

While data was being collected, I was not in the presence of my participants. I would explain what they were expected to do and then I left the room so there was no chance of me seeing a pseudonym. My assistant would collect the data and then deliver that data to me where I categorized it by pseudonym. When I was done with the collected data, I locked the documents in a cabinet that only I had the key to.

Inquiry support groups provided guidance throughout the project and I received feedback from the members of the group in order to produce a high quality study (Hammerman, 1997). I went over my data with the group and was interested to hear of any interpretations they had that I had missed. This allowed me to recheck my data and see it in a different way. This strengthened the validity of my work because I had my peers reviewing it as well.

If the feedback from the group was in agreement that the project needed to change, I was flexible and compliant to the changes needed. If data was collected that did not correlate to my hypothesis, it was not changed to meet the desired hypothesis.

My Story

Game Time

It was a beautiful Friday morning near the end of August when my players arrived back on campus, some stricken by fear of the fact that in just under 24 hours, they would be taking on the challenge of our fitness test to prove they had done their physical fitness homework over the summer. Yes, even in soccer we still give homework. As you could imagine, I was so excited not only to get the season started, but also to see the players whom I had not seen since May. Over the summer, the juniors turned into seniors, the underclassmen evolved into upperclassmen, the freshmen had a year of college under their belts, and our new freshmen were about to experience a whole new life change as they began their college education. Our first day together was one full of meetings, butterfly filled stomachs (both the players and the coaches), and a nice team dinner to finish the evening. By the end of the night, the team was ready to head back to their rooms to prepare for the upcoming week.

The next morning, the team arrived to the field in silence reflecting on the hard work they had put in over the summer through training. The players got on the line and were ready to prove to the coaching staff how dedicated they are. To our surprise and pleasure, each member of the team passed the fitness test. There were a few differences between each player. Some of the girls passed the test with no struggle. Then there were a few players who barely had passed the test and

were visibly fatigued. Overall, we were very happy with the results because they showed us that the players did their homework over the summer. Now it was time to see their soccer skills.

Over the next week, the players dealt with two grueling practices a day in the late August heat. This may sound terrible, but it is a great time for the team to bond and for the coaches to get to know the players better. By the very last week of the month, the players began their college classes. We all know that they are students first and athletes second, so this is always a tough transition week for the team as they have to balance classes and soccer, but our first game would be played Friday night—whether we were ready or not.

After two weeks of practice, one week of school, and two games played (one win; one tie) I felt the team was settled in. I was very excited, not only because of how well we had played in those first two games, but because I wanted to get my action research started. I met with the team in a classroom and explained my project. The players found a seat in the room and looked curious as to why we were meeting. Once I was able to focus their attention on me, I explained how I am also a student at the college. Most of them knew that already, but I wanted to reiterate for the new freshmen. I then stated that I am doing an action research project to learn more about me as a teacher and a coach, and I would like the team to be a part of it. Then, I described that we would be practicing goal setting and I was research to see the effects the goals had on their

self-motivation. I made it very clear to the players that they would be anonymous throughout the project and their answers would have no implications on their playing time. Before I handed out the participant consent forms (See Appendix - B) and read through it with them, I wanted to make sure they knew this project was entirely voluntary. There would be no consequences if they decided not to participate.

Players immediately shouted out their words of encouragement:

“I’m excited to help you with your project!”

“I can’t believe you chose us to do this!”

I was so pleased with this great response from the group because that’s exactly how I was feeling. I handed out the consent forms, left the room for anonymity, and hoped that I would have a large group of participants. A former player collected the sheets for me and counted them. 34 of 35 players had signed consent forms, with the lone dissenter recovering from an injury. The team was on the bench, ready to get in the game.

Before we could get started, I needed all of my participants to think of a code name to ensure their anonymity—even to me. I chose to proceed in this fashion, allowing for the most honest answers throughout the study without the fear of disapproval from a coach. These college aged young women had so much fun thinking of their own pseudonyms, avoiding the real names of anyone on the

team. As I sat down waiting for them to finish, a sea of giggles traveled across the room. Even though I was not collecting them, I gave the players a note card that they could write their research study name so they wouldn't forget it.

During this point of the season, the spirits of the players were still high. In the beginning of the season, I find that players are usually still trying to prove themselves and receive playing time. This week, we faced two tough teams and our motivation needed to be there. Before we could move on to focus on the games, I wanted to get some background information on my participants' motivation levels and their use of goal setting. I felt this was a good time to begin the project because they already participated in many practices, and our first two games. The players also met with the coaching staff to discuss expectations so they had an idea of skills they wanted and needed to improve on. We met again in the classroom, and I read through the instructions for the initial survey (See Appendix - C). There were a few questions that could have multiple answers, so I wanted to make sure they understood that. I asked if anyone had any questions, but there were no. They began their surveys until at one point I heard, "This question is confusing."

As I was about to walk over to help the participant, one of her teammates next to her explained it, and she now understood what she was doing. After I saw the participants finishing their surveys, I left the room and had my assistant collect them for me.

When the surveys had been collected and the participants went home, I decided to take the surveys back to the office to review the results. I was so anxious as I held those papers in my hands. This was my first data collection, and I could not wait to see what was reported. I knew there might be answers here I didn't expect, and, to be honest, I kind of hoped this would be the case. I sat at my desk and closed the door to my office. It was about 6:00 p.m., so everyone else had gone home already. The hallway was quiet, and I really had the chance to focus in without distractions. I opened up a fresh Google Sheet page and began typing in the code names and then their answers. (This proved to be very tedious, so later I switched to digital surveys on Google Forms, but I'm getting ahead of myself). The surveys ended up providing very helpful baseline data. I was happy to learn that most of the participants had had experience with goal setting in athletics, academics, and their personal lives. The results from the survey showed that they had a positive experience with goal setting as well. I was pleased to learn that nearly half of the group reported planning specific steps to reach their goals. "A goal without a plan is just a wish," said Antoine de Saint-Exupery, I thought, so it's a good thing we would focus on the planning stages. More than half of the group reported being more motivated by games than practices, and I wondered how this would impact the study results, since players would be setting practice goals. One of the most shocking results to me was that a majority of the participants were motivated the most by their fear of failure rather than team or

individual success. For this project, I want to define team success as winning games and for the team to advance from the regular season into the post-season. Individual success can be measured by personal accomplishments whether that is a numerical value from scoring goals or assisting goals to subjective goals like learning a new skill or increasing confidence. Individual success can be anything that the player believes they improved on throughout the season that aligns with their goals. I thought to myself, “What can I do to help them focus on succeeding and not on failing?” One question asked if the participants were familiar with S.M.A.R.T goals, and 22 out of 30 answered that they were not, so I immediately planned a lesson on S.M.A.R.T goals.

X’s and O’s

The team had a great win Wednesday night over a very good team. Everyone was so excited and happy to improve the overall record to 2-0-1. We were ready to keep moving forward and keep getting better. The team met in the classroom the day after the game, and all I saw were smiles around the room. I hoped that meant that they would be into this lesson.

As I began writing on the board the acronym S.M.A.R.T., I asked the team, “Does anyone know what S.M.A.R.T stands for when referring to goals?” An education major was the first to raise her hand, offering, “I know *s* stands for *specific*, *m* stands for *measurable*, and *t* stands for *timely*. I forget what *a* and *r* stand for.”

I thanked her for her answer and added that *a* stands for *attainable* and *r* for *relevant*. I asked the team to give me any goal that they might have. One of the juniors raised her hand, “I want to score eight goals.” I wrote that goal on the board and asked if the goal was specific. I saw many of the heads nodding yes. I asked the group as a whole, “How is it specific?”

Without raising her hand a senior answered, “She said she wants to score eight goals instead of saying some goals.”

I then repeated what she said to the group and explained giving a number to the goal does make it specific. I think we conquered the *s*, time to move on to the *m* which stands for measurable. I went back to the example goal we were using, “I want to score eight goals.” I asked the group, “Can we measure that she scores eight goals?” I received multiple blank stares, so I rephrased, “How can we tell if she scores eight goals?”

A sophomore, without raising her hand, said, “When the ball hits the back of the net and the referee counts it.”

I nodded my head and said, “Right! We can prove that she reached her goal because we can count how many goals she scored. That makes it measurable.” I started to see the girls shaking their heads with an “a-ha” moment. I saw a lot of mouths saying “ooooohhhhhh.” Two letters down, one to go.

Attainable. The player who set this goal scored 11 goals this season. I said, “Based on her statistics last season, do you think this is attainable goal for her to reach?”

All I heard was “yeah” and “yup”.

I pointed to our senior goalkeeper and asked the group, “If she set this same goal, would it be attainable for her?”

The goalkeeper I pointed to shook her head and said, “It would be wishful thinking.” The rest of the participants chuckled.

Crazier things have happened, but it would be very difficult for her to score eight goals from her position. So, that goal would not be attainable for her. I explained that to the group and moved on to the letter *r* or relevant. I thought this letter might be a little harder for them and explained it to them. This goal is relevant because she is a forward and one of our expectations for the forwards is to score goals. If we want to win a championship together, this goal is relevant to get us there because we need to score goals to win games, helping lead us to a championship.

We made it to the last letter, *t*! “We have decided this goal is specific, measurable, attainable, and relevant. How do we write it to make it timely?” I asked the player who set the goal, “When do you want to achieve this goal by?”

“By the end of the season,” she answered.

I went to the dry erase board, took away the period at the end of the sentence, and added by the end of the season to the goal. The goal now read: “I want to score eight goals by the end of the season.”

“By adding a time frame, it makes the goal timely.” I asked someone to give me a goal they have for school instead of soccer with all of the components of a S.M.A.R.T goal.

A junior raised her hand and said, “I want to achieve a 3.5 gpa by the end of the semester.”

“Excellent!” I exclaimed. We broke down the goal to see if each component was met and it was, so I knew that they were ready to set their own goals.

Who’s Hungry to Score?

After going over the S.M.A.R.T acronym for goals, I wanted to move on to activity one where they would actually be writing their goals for the season. This activity was completed right after the S.M.A.R.T goal lesson, so it was fresh in their mind.

The week before, the team came up with an acronym for the team’s culture, deciding on P.U.S.H. *P* stands for pride, *u* stands for unity, *s* stands for sacrifice, and *h* stands for heart. Each player should have pride to wear the Moravian jersey. The group must be united for us to succeed and sometimes that

means sacrificing one's playing time for the greater good. The team must have heart when they play, meaning that talent is not always enough, because you have to play for your teammates and work as hard as you can to get the result you desire. Every player should put the team before herself.

Before the participants began writing their goals, I reminded them of this acronym that they came up with together. I did this because this activity used backwards design to write their goals. I passed out the activity sheets (See Appendix - D) and went through each part with them. Right off the bat, I reminded them to put their code name at the top of the sheet, knowing from prior experience that even in college they often forget to write their names without a reminder. Once the code names were written, we began our goal writing. The first part of the activity asked the participants to write a goal for the team that they would like to achieve, and I explained to them that this first goal should be their top priority. Once I saw pens stop writing, I moved on to the next part of the sheet, where I explained to the group that in order to reach our top goal, we have to write smaller goals that will help us to reach it. The next goal they would be writing was an individual goal they set for themselves in games. I reminded them that they must include each component of the S.M.A.R.T goal acronym. As they were writing I said statements like, "Make it specific," and "Make sure to write when you want to achieve it by." The last part of the activity asked them to write an even smaller goal of something they want to achieve in practice that would

help them to achieve their game goal. I said this goal could be a bit more subjective like work ethic or a measurable goal like fitness or achieving a certain skill.

One of the participants raised her hand and asked, “Can we write more than one goal?”

“For now just write one. You will have the opportunity to write another one after you achieve it.” I ended the conversation with, “I am not overly concerned if you achieve your goals. I hope you do, but I am more interested to see if these goals keep you motivated throughout the season during practices and games.” I asked if everyone had finished and I received a resounding “Yes.”

Before they left, I handed them an index card so they could write their goals on it and tape it in their locker, hoping that these cards would be a refresher for them before games and practices. Just as I had done after administering the survey, I left the room and had my assistant collect the papers so I would not see any names. The room emptied and I took the papers back to my office to lock in my drawer.

The next day, I had the opportunity to look over the goals. The majority of players wrote they wanted to win the conference championship and advance to the NCAA tournament at the end of the year. I assumed this was likely going to be a key goal and ultimately what we wanted to achieve as a team. One player wrote that she wanted each player to better each other (shown below).

Data Collection #2

Activity 1

Code name: _____

Directions: You will write a goal for the team that you would like to accomplish by the end of the season. These must be written as S.M.A.R.T goals which stands for: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely. We will write an example together.

Team goal:
My team goal is that we better
each other and win the
Landmark conference.

Now, you will write two goals for yourself to help reach the team goal you set. One goal must be for games and one goal must be for practices. Your game goal must be something statistical which can, but does not have to include goals, assists, passing percentage, turnovers, or ball winning. It can be any skill that can be measured. Your practice goal should be something subjective that will help you accomplish your game goal. These must all be written as S.M.A.R.T goals.

Game goal: Have 7 assists by the
middle of October.

Practice goal:
Keep my work ethic up and
encourage the girls around me
to keep working hard.

Figure 1. Example of Activity 1 team goal

Here I appreciated the focus on team culture. This may not have been a measurable goal, but I found this refreshing instead of focusing on wins and losses. The next part I looked at was the game goals. I was very impressed here

because each player included the S.M.A.R.T goal components. Some of these goals included scoring goals, having assists, winning 50/50 balls, passing percentage, shutouts, and playing time. I thought they were all great goals to have and seemed to be very realistic. Finally, I looked at the practice goals. Some of the players still wrote these as measurable goals, while others wrote them as subjective goals. These goals included having a positive attitude at practice, working on a skill, work ethic, and improving fitness. Two of the participants wrote how they wanted to improve their confidence as a player. I thought this was interesting because practice is a time to improve on certain skills and aspects of the game. When a player understands these tactics, she can become a more confident player, especially those first year students who just joined the team.

There's no I in Team

The team had another great win on Saturday, and everybody played in the game. It seemed that everyone was feeling positive about the team and their individual performances. On Monday, we met back in the classroom after practice. I was going to meet with them later in the week, but I wanted their goals to be fresh in their mind because this journal prompt was a reflection of the goals they had written. I handed out the journal prompts (See Appendix - E) and went over the directions with them. The first questions asked, "How will the goals you wrote motivate you to achieve them?" The second questions asked, "Will the goals you set help you and your team to be successful?" I told them to please

explain their answers so I would be clear on their meanings. I mentioned that if they had trouble answering one of the questions, they could go back and fix their goals they had written.

Some of the participants looked as if they had rushed through it so they could leave, but many of them were taking the time and really thinking about the questions. I was pleased to see that most of the seniors and juniors were taking this seriously, but wondered why so many sophomores seemed to be in such a rush. When I saw a few individuals finishing up, I left the room so my assistant could collect the papers.

About ten minutes later, my assistant brought the journal prompts to my office. This was about 7 o'clock at night and I had the office to myself again. I went over the data collected and noticed very unique answers. There were a few similar answers that said the goals would push them to work harder. There was also an answer that said the goals allow me to see my progress from practice to games. Another individual answered that the goal allows her to specify what she wants to work on by writing it down instead of just thinking about it. A similar response came from another participant who said the goals will help her to keep focused on what she wants to achieve and what she wants the team to achieve. I didn't really think about that until I read the answers. All of the answers were written differently, but many of them had similar content. There were a couple answers that I really enjoyed that talked about how reaching their individual goals

would also lead to reaching the team goal. Their team is motivating them because they are that passionate.

The second question asked, “Will the goals you set help you and your team to be successful?” These answers were more specific to the goals the participants had written. One example of this can be seen here.



Data #3

Journal Prompt #1

How will the goals you set motivate you to achieve them? Explain.

• The goals I set will help motivate me to achieve them because I am a very self-motivated person. By putting my goals out in front of me, it will help me stay more focused and driven. I will be motivated to not only reach my goals, but go above that as well.

Will the goals you set help you and your team to be successful? Explain.

• I think that my practice goals will help the team be more successful than my game goals. By me being more vocal during practice, and ~~working on~~ more precise on my passes will help make the starting lineup better.

Figure 2. Example of Journal Prompt 1

This question allowed them to reflect on their individual goals to make sure they would help to reach their set team goal. I liked this question because it really made them think about their goals and make sure they weren't only for personal gains. I entered the data into my field log and locked the papers in my drawer. After reading these answers, I was excited to see the progress the team would make over the next few weeks.

Game Breakdown

The week following the last time we met for the journal prompt was a tough one for the team, having started off the week with a win against a below average team and then a win against our rivals a few days later. Unfortunately, that winning streak ended with a tough loss against the conference first place team. During the game, there was a particular incident where the defender on our team fouled the other team and they were awarded a penalty kick. The opponents did end up scoring and were winning 1-0. At this moment, the defender on our team could have been so upset and struggled to continue to play. This is where I really wanted the goals we set to come in to play. A game always has ups and downs that can change our emotions. When a player makes a mistake, the goals they set should keep them motivated and something to keep playing for. Because they played so well, it was heartbreaking not to get the result I believed they deserved. This was one of the first games that a lot of the team members simply did not get a chance to play in. As players begin to see less time, negative body

language appeared, and positive attitudes start to turn. As much as the players reported being in it for the team, everyone has individual wants and desires. Depending on the person, the way these negative feelings are handled differs between them. After that tough loss on Saturday, the team lost again to a below average team. They played hard, but they did not play well together. This was a game where all but two members of the team had time on the field. After the game, the coaching staff reflected on this and felt badly that we did not get those players into the game. I am sure this took a toll on the confidence of these two players and their overall perception of their role on the team.

I had planned to hand out the game reflection (See Appendix - F) data collection on the bus ride home from our second loss, but the team was in a very negative mindset, and I thought this may affect an accurate representation of their play. I also wanted to change the scenery of the classroom where the activities were taking place because some of the participants seemed to rush through the journal prompt. After practice the next day, I met with the players on the field instead of in the classroom. I explained to them that I would let them take this back to their dorm room so they could truly reflect on their performance in the game and the goal setting process. Before I could hand out the papers, one sophomore asked, “What if we forget our goals?”

I must admit that I was a bit annoyed at this because I had given them a note card to write their goals, and I believed that if they truly wanted to achieve a

goal, they would be thinking about it often. I tried not to let my frustration show, even though I thought my head was about to explode. I answered in a very calm voice, “Do you still have the note card you wrote them on?”

She said, “I think so.”

I offered her to look at her goal sheet if she really could not remember.

Then she said, “Just kidding, I think I remember it now.”

I felt like a cartoon character and steam was about to shoot out of my ears, but I smiled at her and continued.

Another player raised her hand and said, “Do you want our answers to be more vague so you don’t know who we are?”

I answered honestly, “If you don’t want me to know, then yes. If you don’t care if I know, then be as specific as possible. This is to help you more than it is to help me.” I handed out the sheets and asked them to return it tomorrow at practice. This was a risky move since someone might forget it, but I knew I had given the option to not hand items in if they didn’t feel comfortable with it. I felt comfortable giving the sheet to them because I thought they could reflect more deeply if they had more time.

After I handed out the reflection papers, I thought about the player who asked about forgetting her goals. I wondered if I needed to do more to remind the team of their goals. Should I refer to goals before practices and games? Should I have them bring their notecard? Should I let them continue to do this on their

own? I felt conflicted here because my intention was to increase self-motivation. My thought was that if they were truly motivated they would not need a reminder from me, but I might need to meet them halfway and remind them every so often.

The next day I arrived to practice hoping the team would remember their reflections. Before I even got there, they had put the papers in a pile face down on the bench for me. They began their warm up and I was very tempted to look through them, but I knew I had a job to do first. I placed the papers in my backpack and returned to the field to set up our first activity. I noticed during the practice that the players were being more serious than usual and were really concentrating on certain drills that focused on the technical aspects of the game like passing and dribbling. A few of them even came up to me asking advice on how to improve their passing completion and how to perform a half turn efficiently. I appreciated the care they had for development. At the end of practice I thanked the players one more time for bringing the reflections in on time and if anyone forgot them they could hand it in tomorrow. I walked back to the office with the head coach to discuss the practice. We both agreed that most of the players worked hard that day and were very competitive. I think it was the two losses we suffered that fired them up.

After looking through the documents, I noticed these reflections had much more diverse answers compared to the previous data collected. Most of them were still very positive, but I started to see the word “frustrated” more. One of the

questions on the game reflection asked the players if they still felt motivated to achieve their goals. Briana wrote, “I worked hard to try to see game time, but did not. I did not achieve or even come close to reaching my goal. I no longer feel motivated to achieve my goals due to my hard work not paying off.” I empathized with Briana when I read this. It seems as though she was focusing more on her individual goals than the team goal, but I still felt bad that she was feeling this way. I wondered how I could help to lessen the frustration some of these players were having.

Peyton had similar feelings to Briana, writing in her reflection, “I do not feel motivated at the moment (in a slump). Throughout the goal setting process I feel pressured to achieve my/our goal. Also, I feel unrelaxed.” Peyton describes that she is in a slump. It makes me think that if she wasn’t in a slump, she would not feel this way. Peyton is a player who is receiving an ample amount of playing time. It seems as though the goal is just an added pressure for her to succeed.

Other players still felt motivated and optimistic to reach their goals. Kerri wrote, “I feel more motivated to achieve my goals now, especially after a tough loss. I feel good during this process because even when I am tired, I am pushed by my motivation to achieve these goals.” I love that the goals are pushing her to keep working hard to try and achieve them.

Similar to Kerri, Beth wrote, “I do feel motivated to achieve my goals and I believe they are definitely attainable. I think goal setting is really important

because it always gives you something to focus on and keep it in the back of your mind. Having individual goals is important because even if your team doesn't reach its goal, you can still accomplish yours and feel the sense of achievement to reach our team goal." She went a little more in depth about the goal setting program, and I think this was reassuring to me that this was helping most of the players, but I wanted to do something to help the others who were frustrated.

The next part of the reflection asked the participants to list the steps they took to reach their individual goals. Some players were more specific, while others stayed more general. Carly referred to her practice goals and wrote, "I worked extra hard in practice this week. I felt more confident in myself, which helped out everyone around me. I think working hard in practice helps us all out because you play like you train." I did not specify which goal to write about so this was absolutely fine to write about. I wondered if she had been a player who did not play much in the game.

Sadie focused on the game and reflected, "I tried to really focus on where I was going to make my next pass. I tried to scan the field before receiving the ball." Sadie's game goal was to have her passing percentage above 65% for the rest of the games this season, and her steps were definitely helping her to achieve her goal. She was planning on where to pass the ball next so she could complete more passes.

Isabella had an interesting response while referring to her individual goals and team goal. “I didn’t take any steps to reach my individual goal. I didn’t play well or put in the effort necessary. Therefore, I couldn’t reach my individual goal. I didn’t help my team reach my team goal on the field, but I tried to cheer on and motivate my team from the sidelines as much as possible.” This was reassuring to me that even though she didn’t feel like she helped her team on the field, she reflected on what she did on the sideline to help.

The last part of the reflection asked about their feelings toward the goal setting program. I was particularly interested in this part because I was looking for feedback on how to adjust the program to fit the participants’ needs. Ava expressed her feelings towards the goal-setting program and explained why. “This goal setting process is really good. It makes me want to do better and achieve a goal I made myself. Sometimes, coaches can make unrealistic goals for their players, so my goals I created feel easier to reach because I know what I am capable of,” she wrote. This answer was actually quite similar to the beliefs I have about self-setting goals. I do not necessarily believe that players should write their own to make it easier to reach because a coach’s job is to push players to be the best they can be.

A few players wrote about the goal-setting program and how it helped them focus on what they want to accomplish. Mackenzie wrote, “This goal setting

process has helped me a lot, due to it helping me focus on the things I need to improve on as a player.”

Other players talk about the goals increasing their work ethic in practice like Amanda who wrote, “This goal setting process has motivated me and pushed me to do my best and take action to actually achieving my goals, as well as my team goal.” Answers like this show me that the goal setting program is helping even if it does not lead to goal achievement.

A few players mentioned that before a game they don’t really think about their goals. Victoria reflected on the process and wrote, “I’ve tried to better myself during this goal setting process so I can reach my goals. However sometimes I forget about the personal goals I set and I just step out on the field and give it my all to help reach the team goal.” This made me think that I should be reminding them about their goals just like the sophomore who asked the question as I distributed the reflections.

Unfortunately, we did have a few negative responses, too. “I feel like the goal setting process didn’t really help me because I always try my best and I’ve known my goals,” said Lilly in her reflection. When I started this project I knew this might not help everyone, but I wanted to find a way for it to help even if it is something small.

Last but not least, Briana wrote a very negative response to the goal setting program, explaining, “Throughout this process I feel more discouraged

about myself as a player and teammates. As I cheer on the sideline I feel I'm helping my team but allowing myself to feel more discouraged about my personal goals." This upsets me because I never want this to negatively affect someone.

How might I intervene to help her eliminate her frustrations?

These game reflections helped my professional practice to understand the overall morale of the team. Any of the negative responses reminded the coaching staff to continue to preach that the team comes first and the individual comes second. They also helped to give me an idea of what technical sessions we should include at practice that would benefit the diverse goals of the participants.

Practice Makes Perfect?

The game reflections turned out to be very insightful, I wanted to continue having the participants complete them. Since the last one focused on the game, I wanted to have a reflection (See Appendix - G) that pertained to practice because they had a separate goal.

After the game reflection was handed in, the team had two great practices in a row. It seemed that they were ready to move on from the losses they suffered and get right down to business. The following Saturday, the team had a big win against a conference team which excited everyone. They played together and really looked like they wanted to win. I was curious to see how the win would translate to in practice.

The practice following the weekend was one of the best ones the team had. They worked hard, communicated well, and really looked like they wanted to improve as an individual and as a team. During the practice, there was a moment where the players were separated into three teams. Each team was deciding what their lineup would be. All of a sudden, I heard one of the seniors motivating her team and she said:

“Think about your team goal! What are you going to do to help reach your team goal?”

I started to think that even though we had lost two games, the team still saw their goals as achievable. This was exciting for me to hear one of the players saying that instead of me.

At the end of practice, I asked them to meet me in a huddle by the home team bench. First, I thanked them for how thoughtful the reflections were. Because they had done such a great job with the game reflection, I wanted to send the reflection home with them again so they could take their time with it. I went over the questions with them and asked if anyone had any questions. Nobody had any questions to ask out loud so I said I would hang around for another ten minutes if anyone had questions they wanted to ask me privately. I reminded them that these reflections were due the next day at practice. I sat on the bench and waited for anyone to have questions, but nobody did. This gave me more time to reflect on practice and the reflection I had just handed out. Did I ask the right

questions? Would this be helpful for them and for me? I had so many questions but I had to stay confident in my work and hope everyone would submit their reflections the next day.

Just like clockwork, I arrived to practice to find the practice reflections folded up in a pile on the bench for me. After counting them, I realized that I had received 31 reflections from the 34 participants. At the end of practice, I gathered the team together and said, “If anyone forgot their reflections today, you could hand them in before the game tomorrow if you want to. You do not have to if you don’t feel comfortable doing so. If you decide to bring it tomorrow, give it to one of the seniors first who will then hand it to me.” I thanked them once again for their hard work and honesty.

The practice reflection was very similar to the game reflection with the focus being mainly on practice. It was very interesting to see the participants who put a lot of thought into it and those who wrote a sentence or two. Below is an example of a short reflection and an example of a more detailed one.

Practice Reflection

Code Name: _____

Date: 10/6/17

Directions: Please reflect on the most recent practice and answer the following questions. What steps did you take to work towards your practice goal? Does your practice goal motivate you to improve as a player? If you don't think you took steps toward your individual goals during a game or practice, what can you focus on to keep you from getting frustrated?

I worked hard and gave my 100% effort into my play. I think that I am taking steps toward my goal but I am not sure when I will reach it.

Figure 3. Example of a short practice reflection.

Practice/Game Reflection

Code Name: _____

Date: 9/28/17

Directions: Please reflect on the most recent game or practice and answer the following questions. What steps did you take to reach your individual goals? Do you feel motivated to achieve your goals? How have you felt throughout this goal setting/goal achievement process? What did you do to help the team reach your team goal?

I worked hard every minute of practice. I constantly watch
what others do to improve my decisions on the field. I'm always
focusing on my first touch and improving my shot. I feel motivated
to reach my goals because I want to help the team win. I also
want to become a better player and a better teammate in any
way I can. I like goal setting because it helps me always remember
what I want to improve and what I need to think about during
every practice or every game. I helped the team to reach
the team goal by constantly motivating others and making sure
my teammates know that I support them.

Figure 4. Example of a detailed practice reflection.

Did they really want to improve or did they just want to hand something in? Was this program becoming a burden to some of them?

The participants first reflected on the steps they were taking to reach their practice goal. I felt that this part of the reflection was likely more helpful to them than it was for me. I wanted them to see the steps they were taking and then plan what they still needed to. One player, Kristina, wrote a very detailed description of the steps she had been taking to reach her goal. She wrote:

At my most recent practice, I did pretty well, minus my foot skills. My agility and foot skill technique needs a lot of work. However, the other parts of my goals for practice are definitely making bigger steps, and I am starting to feel more confident in this process. I think patience has been a crucial piece in me getting better, because it definitely doesn't happen overnight. It comes with a lot of frustration, but I have definitely seen progress. I think I also had to be willing to accept my issues that need work, and evaluate them, before I started to fix them.

Kristina was not only reflecting here on her performance at practice, but on the whole project of goal-setting. Some players who shared frustrations did not realize, as Kristina did, that the goal may take time to achieve. I was proud of how she stated the positives, but also noticed areas that needed improvement for her to reach her goal.

Similar to the game reflection, the players reflected on their practice goals and if those goals were providing motivation. I was very surprised to see that most of the answers for this question were positive. Practice can be a time where motivation drops for some players because it is not considered a true competition. The coaching staff tries to make each practice have some type of competition throughout to raise the work ethic and intensity. Some of the participants reflected on how their practice goal motivated them because that would help them reach their game goal and team goal. Leah wrote, “Yes, my practice goal motivates me because I know that the faster I can achieve my goal the faster and more impactful I can be for my team.” The thought of backwards design is exactly what Leah wrote. The only thing I was concerned about was I didn’t want her to rush to achieve her goal. This may cause frustration if she is not reaching her practice goal.

Ava reflected on her practice goals helping her to reach her game goals as she wrote, “My practice goal motivates me because I know my practice goal will help me become a better player and achieve my game goals.”

Beth also wrote about the completion of a practice goal helps the player to progress to reach their game goal: “I’d say game goals are more motivating than practice goals.” I was also taken back that only a few players wrote this. I always felt like game goals were more motivating, but maybe the players felt differently.

Lilly agreed with Beth and said, “Practice goals don’t really help me as much as game goals because in practice you are focusing on the drill and trying to constantly improve on that.” I’d have to agree with this player. Sometimes in practice we forget to focus on individual skill, and focus on more tactical issues as a team. What else might I do to offer help with individual skills?

Another common theme with practice goals as motivation were that they help the player to focus in practice. Wendy wrote, “Honestly, the goals are what help me stay focused, motivated, and from getting frustrated.”

Carly agreed with Wendy and said, “Yes, my goal helps me to improve as a player because I’m making a conscious effort to work harder all practice long.”

Kerri felt this way as well and wrote, “My practice goals do motivate me to improve as a player. I do not think about them throughout the entire practice, but when I am struggling during a practice I think about my goal to keep a positive attitude in mind to help me push myself.” Kerri used her practice goals to keep her positive and remind her what she wanted to accomplish. I think if someone doesn’t perform her best at practice, it is easy to get frustrated. I didn’t really think the goals would help keep a positive attitude throughout, but I was glad it seemed to be doing that for Kerri.

While the reflections were largely positive, I did have one negative response from Briana. Below is her reflection.

Practice Reflection

Code Name: _____

Date: 10/5/17

Directions: Please reflect on the most recent practice and answer the following questions. What steps did you take to work towards your practice goal? Does your practice goal motivate you to improve as a player? If you don't think you took steps toward your individual goals during a game or practice, what can you focus on to keep you from getting frustrated?

My practice goal was to work as hard as I could & improve lvl. I am not motivated to play hard because I know it doesn't help my situation as a player. I think I personally get better at practice but that doesn't help my game goals. I focus on the positives like my grades & talking to my friends, family, & boyfriend. Its very hard to not get frustrated by all the hard work I put in w/ no results but I know the team is doing well & the girls are happy.

Figure 5. Example of Briana's practice reflection.

I wondered how I might best help her and I thought this reflection would because I asked the girls to think about what they could do if they begin to get frustrated. I wondered if she had begun to lose hope with the team and the goals.

The last question of the reflection came from the game reflection answers. After some of the participants wrote they were becoming frustrated for not reaching their goals or not getting into games, I wanted to ask a specific question to have them really think about. This question would help them to reflect on what they could do if they were becoming frustrated. I was a little disappointed, though, because only a few participants answered this question.

Shannon touched on focusing on the team goal if she is not reaching her individual goals, “What can keep me focused when I don’t work towards my goals is to look at the bigger picture and to look to impact my team positively in other ways.”

Michelle wrote a similar passage that stated, “One thing I can focus on to keep me from getting frustrated is the fact that I am helping out my team at practices by working hard. Even though I may not be taking steps toward my individual goal, I may be helping my team accomplish my team goal.”

Kerri also mentioned her impact on the team helps to keep her from getting frustrated, “It’s hard to keep myself from getting frustrated, but I focus on my impact on the team and to keep spirits high when things get tough.”

When I wrote this question, I have to admit, I wanted more of the players to think of this. If things aren’t going their way, they can focus on the team. Even though only a couple wrote something like this, they had other ways to keep them from getting frustrated which was what truly mattered to me. A few players wrote

about not worrying about their mistakes and just focusing on the next play.

Ashley wrote a very interesting passage which said, “If I don’t take steps towards my individual goals during a game or practice I can focus on my touches and everything I am trying to reach individually is going to affect everyone so I can take a step back to make smaller goals to reach my real goals.” Ashley took her response to the next level by writing even smaller goals for her to reach her bigger ones, directly applying her reflections in different ways than the other participants. This pleased me because I clearly wanted the girls to be able to use their reflections outside of soccer, too.

This practice reflection was more insightful than I initially thought it would be, but it still raised some questions. Particularly, I was curious about the players who weren’t reflecting as thoughtfully as others. I could not make them take it more seriously, but I wondered about how I could make them care more about the goals they set for themselves. Briana’s answers from the last two reflections really bothered me. After all, I never want a player feeling this way because of my coaching practice. I wondered if it was beyond my control. Was she just a player who wasn’t getting what she wanted and this was simply how she felt? Were there, perhaps, also outside influences that are having this impact on her?

Half Time

At this point were about halfway through the season. After the participants handed in their practice reflections, the team won another conference game! This brought their conference record to 2-1. It was a home game and every player got in to play. This always helps morale when there's a game where everyone can contribute. Whether they played well or not, the team received another victory and it was time to focus on the next game, which would be a tough one at another school in their conference.

At this halfway point, I wanted to give another survey (See Appendix - H) to the players to receive more information regarding their motivation. I was hoping I would be able to compare some answers from the first survey to this one. I decided to send this survey out electronically through Google forms. I sent this survey out on the Sunday after the game in an email and a text message. Almost immediately, I had almost half of the responses. As I sat in my living room watching Sunday football, I kept seeing more responses come through. I started to look through them individually, but I wanted to wait until I had them all in to see the group breakdown.

On the first day that I sent out the survey, I received 21 back. I thought this was a really good number since the participants are very busy with schoolwork and their personal lives. I received two the following day (not very happy about that) and then three on the third day. I was up to 25 so I was still

waiting on nine players to answer. I sent out a text to the captains and asked them to please remind the girls to take the survey. I even mentioned that it was very quick. After the captains sent the message, I received five more to bring the total up to 30 and that was all that I would receive. Again, I did tell the participants early on that they did not have to hand in every piece of data. I wish I had received all 34, but I was thankful for what had arrived.

This survey I sent out was 13 questions long and two were open ended. The questions referred to the players' motivation levels, their progress with their goals, and others that referred to the program. So far one person had reported achieving her goals. I was happy to see this because in an upcoming activity, the participants would have the chance to edit their existing goal or write a new one if they achieved it. This was only four weeks into the season, too, so I was curious as to what goal would come next. This particular participant, Sierra, set a goal to earn more playing time consistently throughout the season. I was happy to see that Sierra earned more time through her hard work. Besides Sierra, six of the participants were very close to reaching their goal; 21 had made some progress; and two were not close to reaching their goal. Briana was one of the two who was not yet close to reaching her goal.

The next question asked if the coaching staff was helping the players to reach their goals. 28 responded that they were helping. Two indicated that they were not, and these were the two participants who said they were not close to

reaching their goal. Later in the survey, question 13 asked, “What can the coaching staff do to help you?” Jill, the lone participant who indicated the coaching staff had not helped her achieve her goals, left the question blank.

Briana answered, “Not sure.”

One player said the coaching staff should be honest with their players, give feedback, provide film, and not give false hope. I appreciated the honesty and it really made me reflect on how we speak to the team. The coaching staff prides ourselves on how honest we are, maybe even too honest at times. Did we let that slip for one player?

Question three on the survey came from the answers I received on the reflections. Some players spoke about how they did not really think about their goals. This question asked how frequently they revisit their goals. Eight participants revisited their goals before every practice and game. 19 revisited their goals before some practices and games. Three never revisited their goals. The three who answered that they do not revisit their goals did not include Sierra or Briana. I found this to be very interesting. Two of the participants, Lilly and Grace, who answered that they did not revisit their goals also answered that they felt a little more self-motivated since the beginning of the season. The other player, Nicole, said she did not feel more self-motivated. After going back over some of their work, Nicole and Lilly both indicated that they hold themselves to a high standard. Lilly mentioned how she always makes sure she is working hard.

At first, I thought the girls who weren't revisiting their goals were the ones who didn't care, but this was not the case, perhaps suggesting that the girls who were already self-motivated did not need the extra goals to help them.

29 out of 30 participants responded that their goals were keeping them motivated throughout games and practices. The one person who said that her goals were not motivating her through games and practices was Briana. The next question asked which goal was motivating them the most. 11 participants answered team goal; four participants answered game goal; one participant answered practice goal; and the rest answered that all of their goals were motivating them the same. Briana answered that the team goal was motivating her the most. I wonder at this point if she had given up on her individual goals, which I hoped was not the case. I felt that even if you are not receiving individual success, you can continue to work hard to improve and earn recognition for that improvement. Ava was the one participant to answer that her practice goal was motivating her the most. Her practice goal was to increase her speed of play and more specifically with passing. Question 9 asked the participants whether their game goal or practice goal was more motivating to them. 14 players answered that their game goal was more motivating than their practice goal; four players answered that their practice goal was more motivating than their game goal; and 12 players answered that both goals motivated them equally. I was not too surprised by this answer because a game goal adds the competition piece instead

of the development piece in practice. Overall, 27 players answered that they felt more motivated since the start of the season, and 3 players answered that they did not feel more motivated. I was definitely happy that more girls felt self-motivated, but I was curious about the three who were not. What else might I do to help?

The last part of the survey asked for the participants input on the goal setting program. The last question asked, “Can the coaching staff make any changes to the goal setting program?” One participant wrote to have more individual sessions to work on specific positional areas. I definitely agreed. I mentioned earlier that sometimes practice just focuses on getting better as a team and not always developing as an individual. I knew that I would absolutely take this advice and put it into use. Another participant said to have them look at their goals before a game. While I had begun to do so, that brought me back to a question I had earlier: If the players are truly self-motivated to achieve these goals, do I really have to remind them what they want to achieve? But, this was still good advice. Two players mentioned starting the goal setting program earlier in the season. I have thought about that a lot. At the time, I thought having them go through pre-season and a few games would help them realize areas of improvement. I must give additional thought to starting the program after preseason to give them more time to achieve their goals. The last participant who answered said we should give more feedback. I think this would be easier if it wasn't an anonymous project, forcing me to question an important facet of my

research design. Overall, the few who answered gave me great possible changes to the program. After I read through these changes, I began planning the rest of the project with the advice given to me from the players.

Substitutions

The team had another important conference game right after completing the survey. We loaded the bus with excitement and nerves as the players found their seats one by one. It was a rainy, gloomy Wednesday, and the field we were about to play on was all grass. We all knew that this was going to be a tough game for the team, and I hope that their goals were on their mind. As we got closer to the field, I wanted to remind the players about their goals, so I turned around in my seat and grabbed the team's attention. "As we get closer to game time, please think about your goals. Whether it is your individual or team goal, plan what you need to do to make them happen. If you aren't reaching your individual goal, focus on the team goal. What can you do as a member of this team to help achieve your final goal?"

The game started, and we were successfully attacking, but shot after shot, we simply couldn't score. The team was working so hard and it just wasn't going their way. About a quarter of the way through the game, the coaching staff made some substitutions because it seemed that some of the players were getting tired. The end of the first half did not go in the team's favor. The opponents scored a

goal and that would turn out to be the only goal of the game. It was a pretty disappointing night because the team played really well. We were now 2-2 in the conference, and it was going to be a long ride back to campus. On the drive home, I began to reflect about the game and think how the result of this game would affect the results of the next activity. I still planned to distribute the activity the following day and I would be meeting with the team in the classroom. I felt like I needed to explain this activity more and anticipated that I would get more data back if we met in person.

After practice the following day, we met back in the classroom where we started the next project, activity 2 (See Appendix - I). I had my papers ready to distribute and waited for the team members to find a seat wherever they wanted. I loved seeing that almost every time we met in the classroom, the seniors were in the front row with some of the juniors, then the sophomores were behind them followed by the freshmen. Once everyone settled in, I began to explain the activity. "I wanted to give you the chance to edit your goals if you would like to. Whether you edit your goal or change it completely is fine with me."

A hand quickly rose, "Do we have to change our goals?"

"No you do not have to. If you want to keep working at your original goal that is fine."

"What do we write if you we want to keep our original goals?"

"You can write I am keeping my original goals."

I passed the papers out after there were no more questions. The first part asked for them to write their original goal. The second part asked for them to write their new goal. After the papers were distributed, I waited in the room just in case someone had a question. Once I saw people had finished, I left the room and went to my office that is right down the hall. My assistant could not be there that night so I asked one of the seniors to deliver the papers face down when everyone was done. I was going through my email when one of the seniors returned the papers to me. I asked if everyone had cooperated, and she answered, “Yes, there were no problems.” I was going to look at the results that night, but I was incredibly tired from the trip the night before. I locked them away in my desk and saved them for the next day.

I don’t think I knew how team members would respond. I had the expectation that if people were frustrated because they were not reaching them that they would change them to something more realistic. From the survey, I knew that one person had achieved her goal, so I assumed a new one would be created from that. Otherwise, I did not know which goals would remain and which would be replaced.

I went through the papers pretty quickly, discovering that 21 out of the 34 participants wanted to keep their goals. Many wrote that they were making strides to reach their goal, but weren’t quite there yet. Victoria was one of those players who had seen improvement in her play, but she had not yet met her own standards

set within her goal to achieve a passing percentage of 75% or higher in every game. She wrote, “I have achieved some of my game goal by having a passing percentage over 75% when I have played. However, I have not met this goal every time.” Victoria had been inconsistent with her progress, but wanted to continue to work on achieving her goal.

Jade shared an interesting response because she had accomplished her goal, but wanted to continue to achieve it. From her responses, it was clear that she was one of our team goalies, and she had set a challenging task to continue to achieve. She wrote, “I have accomplished my goal. We still have .98 goals against avg. I would like to keep that for the entire year.”

Other participants achieved parts of their goal, but hadn't yet completed the entire goal. Kerri was one of the players who achieved one part of her goal by scoring one goal this season. Here, I was pleased to see that players who wanted to maintain their goals felt they were indeed making progress towards meeting them.

Other players decided to edit their goals. Taylor originally wrote that she wanted to “get 7 assists by the end of the season, which she changed to read “get 5 assists by the end of the season.” From this, I assumed that she clearly had not gotten as many assists as she would have liked to this point in the season.

Ava's original goal was to get 2 assists by mid October, and she modified her goal in the activity to get 2 goals by the end of the season.

Jill's answer was a little bit negative in her writing. She wrote down her original goal, which was to score 4 goals by the end of the season. After she wrote that she added, "I work hard in practice but have not gotten more playing time." I am not sure exactly why she added that into her answer. On the next line she changed her goal and wrote, "Score 2 because I don't play much." Jill seemed to be sharing her frustration with me here. Perhaps she was venting or taking the opportunity to criticize the decision making of the coaching staff, feeling as though we were getting in the way of allowing her to achieve her goal.

Two of the participants who did, in fact, achieve their goals, opted to write new ones for the second half of the season. Olivia wanted to have a passing percentage of 70% and now wanted to make it even more challenging by making it 80%. I was pleased to see her expand her original goal, demanding more from herself in each game. Olivia clearly set high expectations for herself. Carly also reached her goal by scoring in a conference game and opted to write a new goal about becoming a more confident player which is shown below.

Data collection #4

Activity 2

Code name: Carly

Directions: Look back at the goals you set for yourself. If you need to change or edit them, do that here.

Original goal:

To score in a conference game

New goal:

To become a more confident
player

If you have accomplished any of your goals, please write which goal it is and explain how you know you achieved them.

I scored in a conference game.

I knew I accomplished my
goal when the ball crossed the
line in the back of the net 😊

Figure 6: Example of Activity 2 from participant, Carly.

In many ways, this goal related more to a practice goal, but by becoming more confident in practice, she could become more confident in games as well. I thought this was interesting going from writing a measurable goal like scoring, to writing a more subjective goal about her mentality as a player, wondering if she had come to the realization that improving her own confidence had become more important to her than scoring a goal.

This activity was meant to help avoid frustration within players and give them a chance to achieve some goals. Some of the players wrote very ambitious goals in the beginning because they had high expectations. Soccer is a crazy game, and sometimes games don't allow us to score as many goals or assist as many goals as we might like. I also thought this was a good activity because sometimes you learn there are more skills you need to work on throughout the season, giving the players a chance to add them in their original goals or create a new one.

The Clock Was Ticking

The loss of that conference game really fired the team up to get back on the winning streak. The two practices following that game were energetic, competitive, and full of effort. The team had another tough conference game coming up, and the season was beginning to wind down. On Saturday, the team got on the bus again for another competitive away game. Once again on the drive

there, I told the players to think about their goals and think what they needed to do to help this team succeed. I wanted to focus more on the team goal since this was a conference game, and we really needed a win. Unfortunately, the team did not get this desired win, the game ending with a score of 1-0, and we returned to campus being 2-3 in the conference. The team had two conference games left and, to move forward, these were must wins.

We met in the classroom on Monday just to talk before practice. The coaching staff wanted to gauge the morale on the team. The head coach began by asking the team how the players were feeling. A senior raised her hand and answered, “Most of us are just confused about where we stand in the conference, like what do we have to do to get in the playoffs?”

The head coach began to explain exactly what needed to happen. The team had to win both remaining conference games. In addition, a weaker team in the conference had to beat the current third place team. “We have to focus on one game at a time. Tomorrow night we play a non-conference team that we have to prepare for first.”

After he said that, I took over and told the players to think about their practice goals. “In your seats, I want you to think about what you need to do today to continue to reach your practice goal.” I asked the team, “How will these steps you take today help the team to succeed?” The team looked up not sure if they

should answer. I then answered the blank faces and said you do not have to answer, but if anyone wants to say something you can.

A junior responded, “One thing I plan to do is to continue to work hard at practice. I think hard work is contagious and if we continue to do that then we will have the best chance to win. If we don’t work hard, it is like we are giving up.” I thanked her for her answer and I hope what she said resonated with the rest of the team.

The last thing I asked was, “Is your team goal still achievable?” I saw every head nod yes, so I ended with, “Then the hard work doesn’t stop. We can keep pushing forward and if you ever begin to lose hope, think of your goals and think of how they are still attainable.”

The practice that Monday was not a very good one. It seemed as though the team was pretty down from the loss over the weekend. I just hoped that the players hadn’t lost faith in the team, in the season, or in themselves. Tuesday night resulted in another loss for the team. This was not a conference game, but still a disappointing loss. I wondered how this impacted their mindsets about their goals. How could we continue to use their goals as motivation? After the last survey we took, it seemed like most of the participants were being motivated by the team goal. Should I now focus on their team goal more? The only problem was that I wanted those who felt as if they could still achieve their individual goal to work on that as well. On the way home from the game, I thought about what to

do next. Since we had talked to the team on Monday, I wanted to wait a few days before I collected another piece of data. On the way home, I made a decision to hand out a game reflection (See Appendix – J) after our next game instead of a practice reflection. I added a question on to the game reflection that would ask the players what was now motivating them the most. Saturday was our next conference game, and even though we were sad from this loss, we had to learn from it and move on.

When Saturday morning arrived, we all knew this was a game the team had to win. This game also happened to be senior day where there is a special presentation for all of the graduating seniors on the team, of course adding more pressure to win the game but also adding motivation to win the game for the seniors. We met in the classroom before the game and had a motivational talk. The speech consisted of not only playing to win for the team but for the seniors who had put so much time and effort into the program. The team got onto the field surrounded by the senior day decorations. Senior day is an exciting one, but it can also be an emotional one as they know their time on the team is limited. I hoped the team would use those emotions and channel them through their play in a positive way.

The game began, and by halftime we were winning 1-0. The team had many chances to score, but they just couldn't score any more than the first goal. In the second half, the team managed to score again, making it 2-0. After that

second goal, nobody else would score. The team won the game, and everyone was excited. We were still in it! Not only did we win a conference game, but we were able to have a fun celebration with our seniors afterwards. We celebrated the fact that our team still had a chance to make the conference playoffs.

Yes, there was still hope! It was a great feeling and the team was on cloud nine. After the game, we went and celebrated senior day with the team and their families. It had been a rough couple of weeks, and it felt good to see smiles on their faces. The next day, I sent the players a reflection to fill out. I was clearly curious about their motivation levels but also what was motivating them the most at this crucial point in the season. I also asked them to reflect on what they did to help the team win. I wanted them to think about what they had or had not actually been able to do. From this, I hoped, they would learn what to do next time. The answers for this question really depended on the player's situation on the team. Some of the answers included things the player did on the sideline like cheering the team on. A few wrote that they worked as hard as they could to get the seniors a win. Work ethic had been a common theme throughout this project. The last similarity I saw within these answers that would ultimately help the team to succeed and reach their team goal was players wrote about specific skills they used in the game to positively effect the team. An example of this is from Amanda, who wrote, "I tried to limit my touches on the ball. I also tried to switch

the field as much as possible and connect passes.” I was pleasantly surprised to find that all of these answers were positive.

“What is your current motivation level? Are your goals helping you with your motivation?” I asked.

Ava wrote, “I am currently really motivated, I want to do well and achieve my personal goals, but also achieve my team goal. My goals drive me to succeed and always work hard during practice, or on/off the field.

Lizzie wrote something similar and said, “My current motivation level is high. I want the team to advance after next weekend and since it is a must win we have to be on our best. My goals are helping because I still want to reach my goals. My game goal seems to be out of reach at this point but my practice goal is still motivating me.” Even though Lizzie realized she may not reach her game goal, she was still motivated to help the team succeed.

Melanie had a very interesting reflection with high motivation but not all due to her goals. She wrote, “I am extremely motivated right now because we need to win on Saturday in order to have a chance to get into playoffs, and I'm determined to not lose that game. My goals are somewhat helping me, but my biggest motivator is to not lose on Saturday because I want the team to make it into playoffs.”

Some of the players said their motivation level has been inconsistent. Jill wrote, “My motivation level is up and down. With the end of the season nearing,

it is declining a little bit. My goals are not going to be reached this season.” I felt bad when I read this, knowing a season is unpredictable and this does happen. I hoped she would be able to focus on her team goal.

There were also some players who were losing motivation. Briana said she had little motivation and that her goals were not helping her. Peyton wrote something similar that her motivation was mediocre and her goals were not helping her. It was hard for me to read these passages, considering things I could have done differently to help them. Players like Briana and Peyton will help me change this project for the future to help avoid these negative feelings. If I could go back, I think I would have met with the team again and gave all of the players the option to have more practice goals instead of game goals. I would also go back even further and make it optional to set a game goal from the start. I think the game goal is what is causing the most frustration.

“What is motivating you the most to succeed?” I asked, and there was an overwhelming response of seeing the team succeed. Jill, who realized she probably would not reach her individual goals, wrote, “My teammates are my biggest motivation because everything I do is for them.”

Victoria spoke about the team succeeding and her teammates: “Seeing the team succeed is motivating me to work harder and push myself and others so the entire team can succeed. Also, seeing how badly everyone on the team wants to

succeed is also pushing me to stay motivated and help in our teams success.”

Victoria was a player who had not played much during the season.

Lizzie referenced her team goal by writing, “My team goal is what I ultimately want to accomplish. If I don't necessarily accomplish my individual goals or my practice goal, that's ok as long as the team can accomplish what it needs to.” I think some of the players realized that the team goal, the first goal they wrote, was the most important one. The individual goals were written to help them get to this point by continuing their motivation. It may have taken them longer to understand that.

There were also some answers referring to individual goals. Sierra wrote, “The reward of earning more playing time,” suggesting to me that she may be motivated by individual success more than by team success. Ava referenced her practice goal and wrote, “My practice goals and my drive to get more playing time are motivating me the most to succeed.” Sierra and Ava both spoke about getting more playing time, and I must be honest in saying that these answers surprised me. At this moment, the team had a chance to get into the playoffs, and some teammates were still most concerned with individual playing time. I was glad that their individual goals were helping, but I didn't want this to be their main focus right now. Overall, I felt like most of the team was being motivated by seeing the team succeed and getting into the playoffs. With the team goal the major motivator right now, I was a happy coach.

And The Whistle Blew

On Monday, it was back to work. The team was preparing for their final game, and it was a big one. Practices that week were sharp because all were working towards the same goal of winning on Saturday and making it into the playoffs. The team was working very hard, but we could still see the nerves on individual faces. We understood because that is how the coaching staff was feeling, too. Relying on another team to help us get into the playoffs was not ideal, but this was out of our control. There was one part we could control, though, and that was winning this game. Saturday morning came so quickly, and I couldn't help but reflect on the season on our way there. This could be our last bus trip this season with this group of girls. In mid-August when the players reported to camp, the end of the season seemed so far away, but just like anything in life, it sure did sneak up on us fast. The players got on the bus, mostly wearing headphones listening to music. It was pretty quiet on the way there, some players trying to get some more sleep, while others were just focusing on the challenge ahead. This was not going to be an easy game. Our opponents were the second place team in the conference, and they were looking to keep their second place spot. If they beat us, they would have their first playoff game at their home field, and that is indeed such an advantage. It was also their Senior day, so that added extra motivation to get a win for their graduating players. All we could do is play our best to earn our opportunity to continue.

Our starters went onto the field ready to go. The head coach and I said we would not check the score of the other game until the end of ours. The whistle blew, and the game started. It was back and forth the entire first half. We had some shots on goal, but nothing that went into the net. The other team had a similar problem. At halftime it was 0-0, and all the coaching staff could do was to keep their spirits up. We told the players not to check the score of the other game. We needed to focus on this game. The players went back out on the field, and the head coach gave me a look that I returned with a look of confusion. Yes, he had checked the score of the other game, and the team we needed to lose was winning 2-0 at halftime. Knowing this, I simply couldn't help myself, feeling my attitude becoming more negative, but there was indeed still a chance. Another half went by, and no goals were scored, pushing the game into overtime, where the first team to score wins. The coaches talked to the team and then one of the seniors began to say something. As tears welled up in her eyes and her voice was cracking, "This is it ladies. You have to give it all you have." I began tearing up at this moment, but I hid behind my sunglasses. I assumed they, too, had checked the score of the other game. There is nothing harder than to play a game when you realize there is nothing left to play for. The first overtime ended with the game still scoreless. The second overtime began and within a few minutes, the opposing team had scored. The other team that we need to lose ended up winning 4-0. And the final whistle blew.

The saddest moment in sports is saying goodbye to something you've always known. It is something that made you who you are. Every athlete goes through this, and, as a coach, you have to witness this season after season. Watching the team crying at the end of the game and hugging the seniors never gets easier. Sometimes the season ends more quickly than you might like, which also affected me here. I thought I would have at least one more week with the team, but that's sports. I still had a few more activities to conduct, and these would have to occur after the season.

I waited a few days because I knew the girls were hurting and just needed some time to adjust to life without soccer. The first activity I wanted to send out was a final journal prompt (See Appendix - K). I asked two major questions. The first was, "Did your goals increase your self-motivation throughout the season?" I had a good sense of this from the other data I collected, but I never asked if it had increased motivation, only how their motivation level was currently. Leah explained why her goals increased her motivation: "I feel like my goals did increase my motivation because I knew that if I achieved my goals my team would have a better chance on winning the conference. I think that having goals helped me to reach for something and to be determined to conquer my challenge I was trying to achieve." Leah's goals were more than just something for her to accomplish as an individual, but for her team as well. I was pleased to see Leah describe her goals as a challenge. I had not thought about that in the past, but I

think that is exactly what these goals were. We strive to accomplish things everyday and it truly is a challenge to do. Maybe some people, especially athletes, are driven by the competitiveness of goals.

Sadie wrote something similar to Leah saying, “Yes my goals did motivate me because I believed they would help to benefit the team as a whole and not just me individually.” Here is another individual who wanted to accomplish her goals for greater good.

Amanda wrote, “My goals increased my self-motivation a lot during the season because it pushed me to become a better player that could help impact the team in a positive way. I felt that my goals were reasonable but there would always be ways to improve in reaching them which motivated me to keep improving.” Amanda’s goals increased her work ethic throughout the season.

Sierra had a different perspective as she wrote, “Yes, because I was constantly trying to earn more time.” Sierra continued to stay motivated to earn playing time so she focused on the individual aspect of it.

The last example that I thought was interesting was from Beth who wrote, “Yes, I believe my goals did increase my self-motivation. Having something to always focus on whether it be a practice or game helped maintain my motivation even on a bad day. Setting practice goals helped me try and improve every practice which would then translate to games.” So there were a few things I wanted to touch on from her response. First, is that these goals helped her stay

focused throughout the season. The second point she makes is about her practice goals and how they helped her in games as well. It is very interesting to see the different perspectives I received about their goal setting.

Not all of the girls had increased their self-motivation throughout the season. Ava wrote, “No, but they helped maintain my self-motivation throughout the season. I started out this season with a lot of self-motivation so I could get playing time. As the season went on, my goals helped keep my self-motivation high.” Her goals may not have increased her motivation, but they did help to maintain it through the season.

Allison spoke about outside factors motivating her instead of the goals as she wrote, “I do think as the season started winding down though that my goals were becoming a little forgotten as I became more worried with the particular game and moment we were in and where we were as a team.” There are always going to be other motivators and towards the end of the season it was hard not to be motivated as they fought to make the playoffs. I appreciated her honesty.

Last but not least, Nicole did not believe her goals helped her. She wrote, “I think my self-motivation increased throughout the season. However, I do not think it was due to the personal goals I set. I think my motivation came more from my team goal of making it to the championship. Towards the end of the season, my motivation came from trying to stop the season from ending.” Just like Allison, Nicole was focused on the team reaching the playoffs so if any goal

helped her motivation level it was her game goal. Nicole made it clear from the beginning that she was a very motivated individual to begin with, but I am glad that her team goal may have helped her increase her already high motivation level.

The second question asked the participants: “What would you do differently next time?” I wanted them to reflect on their goal-setting journey, as well as help me for future use of this program. A few of the participants answered that they would not do anything differently. I hope they were not just answering the question quickly so they could get it done, but that they had indeed had a positive experience all around. There were a few common themes I found among the participants who did say they would do things differently, though. One was that participants said they would take advantage of individual sessions with the coaching staff. During the season, the coaching staff is allowed to train individuals during the day and we made that clear from the beginning of the season. After I received information from the participants about wanting to train extra on their specific goals, we announced to the team that we could still train individuals during the day. The participants who said they would train extra with the coaches were Leah, Amanda, Olivia, and Chelsea.

A few of the participants, including Sadie, Chelsea, and Taylor wrote that they wanted to start their goals in the summer so they could practice those skills

before the season began. This was indeed great advice. Having more time on a goal helps to make the goal more achievable.

Another common theme I saw in their answers was they wanted to revisit their goals more. Beth wrote, "I'd probably keep my goals hung up in my locker to consistently remember them and always have a reminder." Kerry said she wanted to focus more on her goals when she would get frustrated. The last answer that I found very interesting came from Grace, who stated, "Next time I may try to share my goals with a teammate or staff member to get advice on how to achieve them on time." If my data collection had not been designed to maintain anonymity, I may have been able to help Grace with this problem, but I do like how she mentioned her teammates. I may not have been able to meet with the girls, but they could have always helped each other. I really appreciated hearing all of their answers and I hope if they are faced with a goal setting program again that they will take these into consideration.

Game Wrap Up

It was a few days after the final game, and the loss still stung. I believe our team deserved to be in the playoffs, but that's soccer. Even though the season had ended, I was still curious about who had actually achieved her goals. During the season, I knew of two participants who had, but I wondered if there were more. The next activity I sent out was about goal achievement (See Appendix - L). I sent

this out to the entire team, and after a couple of days, I had received 16 back and I wouldn't receive any more. Not many of the participants had talked about achieving their goals in any of the reflections or other activities.

Of the 16 participants who responded, 21 goals had been achieved. Some of the players achieved both their game and practice goals. Unfortunately, nobody had achieved her team goal this year, since most of the participants wanted to win the conference. Out of the 21 goals, 12 were practice goals and 9 were game goals. The practice goals could be more subjective while the game goals were measurable. Most of the practice goals that were achieved were about skills players wanted to improve on like the one shown below from Shannon.

Goal Achievement Reflection

Please reflect on the goal/s you achieved. Please explain your answers.

Code name

[REDACTED]

Which goal did you achieve?

- Team goal
- Game goal
- Practice goal

What was the goal?

to have a better driven ball

Was your goal hard or too easy to achieve?

the goal for me was hard because this is one of my weaknesses that has been discussed at great length but i do honestly feel i have improved in this department from how it was compared to last season especially.

How did you feel while trying to accomplish the goal?

sometimes it would get tiresome while working toward this goal and repetitive but in the end when i saw to see progress it felt very rewarding and made me want to keep working at it.

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1e5-roBmGHgvRhQM9y5zx6k9eIVk9h6Q7SDxXlqjhr/edit#response=ACYDBNIWPZY9LH4eBzBRWkIa47FvXJzahpl...> 1/2

Figure 7: Example of Goal Achievement Activity

The players talked about the difficulty of achieving these goals. 11 said it was hard to reach their goals, 3 said it was easy, and 2 said it was moderately difficult. Leigh wrote, “For me it was average to achieve because it is easily something I can achieve, but hard because you really have to key yourself in and make sure you are 100% in to it.” I thought this was a different perspective on the difficulty of achieving the goal. It may not have been the goal that was hard, but the focus and energy you put into it could be hard to do and maintain. It seems as though the practice goals were the easier ones to achieve. The next question the activity asked was: “How did you feel while working towards your goal?” Some common answers were: frustrated, motivated, determined, good, tiresome, discouraged, and stressful. I think these words describe the process as a rollercoaster. There are going to be good days and bad days. The players then described how they felt once they achieved their goals. They came up with words like proud, happy, rewarded, accomplished, and successful. These are all positive words. Sometimes you have to go through a storm to see the rainbow. It may seem frustrating because the goal seems out of reach, but once you reach it, all of those feelings were worth it. The last question asked if they would use goal setting again and I received a unanimous “yes” from each of the players. Amanda elaborated on her answer with, “Yes I would because it makes you really focus on what you want to achieve realistically. Everyday it allows you to work hard and stay focused on making yourself a better player, student, etc.” I chose to do a goal setting progress

so these players could apply this to more than just soccer. I think it is easier for players to continue goal setting after they achieve them.

It was great to hear from the players who had achieved their goals, but I still wanted to survey (see Appendix – M) the entire team one last time I was also interested to see if I could compare post-season answers to the initial team survey. These questions would be different, but based off the same themes of the first survey. I had 32 participants return the surveys and they were mostly positive results. Overall, 62.5% of the participants really enjoyed the goal setting program while 37.5% somewhat enjoyed it. It was good to see that they enjoyed it and no one disliked it. 84.4% of participants would practice goal setting again. I was pleased to see this number because, as I stated earlier, I want the players to use goal setting even after the season has ended. One player answered that her goals did not motivate her throughout the season, while 24 answered that the goals did keep them motivated. Survey 2 showed that 14 players said their motivation had increased from the beginning of the season, so 24 is definitely an improvement. Another question asked if they felt more self-motivated after this project. 16 players answered yes, 12 answered somewhat, and 4 answered no. Some of these players may already be very self motivated, but I am glad more than half feel even a little bit more self motivated.

Now I wanted to ask about the frustrations, especially seeing if the goal setting felt like a burden to some. 10 participants answered that sometimes their

goals felt like a burden while 21 participants answered they never felt like a burden. I can understand this feeling especially if players feel frustrated or are not playing well. When you are not playing well, the last thing you want to do is think about a goal you cannot reach. I will definitely rethink this for the future. 65.6% of the players said their team goal and individual goals motivated them the same amount. 18.8% answered that their team goal motivated them more while 15.6% said their individual goals motivated them the most. I would be interested to see which of those players received more playing time compared to others. 7 players believed they had a successful soccer season, 22 felt they had a decent season, and 3 felt like they did not have a successful season. 28 of the players answered that they would be able to set S.M.A.R.T goals for themselves in the future. 4 players answered that they might be able to. I am glad that many of them feel comfortable setting measurable goals so they can accurately write them in the future. This will help them stay focused and keep it specific.

The last question asked: “What did you learn about yourself throughout this goal-setting process?” I really wanted them to reflect on their journey. We learn something new about ourselves all the time and I was curious to see if they had. The answers here were very personal, but there were similarities among the athletes. A couple of players opted not to answer this question, but the majority of participants did. Some answers included multiple themes within them.

The first common trait I found was that the goals give them something to focus on and be aware of. Sadie wrote, "I learned that if I set goals for myself early on, it will help to keep me focused and motivated for a long period of time." Amanda also wrote, "I also learned that despite any challenges this season I was able to still remain focused and keep working hard." Amanda remained focused and had an increased work ethic, which I found to be another major theme. Victoria reflected on her journey and learned, "I learned that it helps me to set goals for myself and remember these goals because it pushes me to work harder to achieve my goals." Michele felt similar to Victoria, "I learned that I can be pushed to achieve goals. It also makes me work harder to achieve those goals." It seemed as though the goal-setting here had increased the work ethic within our athletes.

The next theme that I saw a few times was that goal setting was motivation. Kristina learned, "I need to stay motivated and have set goals to be successful." For Kristina to stay motivated, she needs to set goals to help her be successful. That is a pretty big realization. A few of the players talked about what they learned about themselves if they do not reach their goals. Victoria was one of those people and wrote, "I love succeeding and I hate failing, so I learned that if I work hard to achieve a certain goal, whether I am successful at fulfilling my goal or not, I will be happy as long as I continue to improve." Similarly, Beth wrote, "I learned to set goals and follow through with them, and that even if one goal isn't

achieved you can still learn from it.” These girls are taking a negative and turning them into something positive. That is such a great attitude to have.

Unfortunately, there were a few players who did not have positive experiences. Peyton said, “I overthink when I have goals.” This is tough. Maybe she was not reaching her goals and these just added extra pressure. I am sorry she felt that way and want to use her experience to help others in the future. Alyssa learned, “That it is very hard to stick to a goal and continue to keep up and stick with it throughout the process.” Maybe goal setting wasn’t for her. One response that really touched me was from Laura. “I learned that I can dig a lot deeper within myself than I once thought possible. If I only put my heart and soul behind it, I can achieve almost anything.” Wow, what a realization. If my project allowed her to come to this solution, what else could I ask for? As a teacher or a coach, this is what we want for our students or players.

I thought that last question was one of the best I asked during the project. This whole project was made to help my participants not just to be a source of data for me. I can make all of the inferences I want from their data, but for them to reflect and tell me what they learned is so telling. I am sad this project ended, but I truly learned so much about goal-setting, motivation, and my team.

Methods of Analysis

I collected multiple sources of data during this action research project that were used for analysis. Each source of data had a clear purpose to help me understand the feelings and growth of my participants. Data analysis continued throughout the project and has continued to occur even after the completion of the study. After all the data were collected and analyzed thus far, I was able to see the change of motivation from the beginning of the season to the end of the season within the players. The data analysis also revealed more clearly the participants' thoughts about their role on the team and their motivation level.

Analysis of Theoretical Perspectives

During the course of my study, I documented my data and personal thoughts into my field log on my computer. If I remembered a quote one of my participants said, I added it to the log, including as much detail as I could. All of this information helped me to write analytic memos as I examined my data in light of the views expressed by Dewey (1938), Freire (1970), and Delpit (2012).

Dewey was the first educational philosopher I had the pleasure of getting to know better through his book *Experience and Education*. There were some similarities that aligned with my project but also some ideas that contradicted it. One statement Dewey made in his book really resonated with my project and me. "Thinking is thus a postponement of immediate action, while it effects internal control of impulse through a union of observation and memory, this union being

the heart of reflection”(p.64) Dewey’s theory helped to validate the use of reflection in my project for my participants to plan out their goal achievement.

After reading Dewey, I wondered how the coach fits into this educational viewpoint. Dewey believes that education comes from experiences and interaction with others. The coach like the teacher has the opportunity to create a positive or negative experience for the students. If the coach exudes positivity and the passion for what he or she is teaching, it should translate to the players, but this is not always the case. Players’ experiences will be different due to their background with soccer and their total skill level. In addition to that, the interactions between the coach and player can also affect the experience of the player. If a player is beginning to have a negative experience, the coach can explain the importance of the role the player has now and describe ways in which to move forward positively and productively.

I also had the opportunity to indulge in the dialogical views of Freire, who explained, “Hope is rooted in men’s incompleteness, from which they move out in constant search—a search which can be carried out only in communion with others” (p. 91). Examining the players’ hopes dialogically was a central facet of my study. I was able to use Freire’s dialogical views to help me analyze the written work of my participants. Just like when individuals speak, there may be another feeling behind what is actually said.

“There is no doubt that all humans are *capable* of learning,” Lisa Delpit(2012) exhorts, delving into those areas that make our population diverse, including race, ethnicities, and socioeconomic differences (p. 28). While the members of our team were not diverse in terms of race and ethnicities, they were diverse in terms of them as an athlete. Each athlete is unique with certain skills and qualities that others may not possess. Everyone has their own desires and are motivated differently. This goal-setting program had to fit to the diverse needs of the participants.

Analysis of Figurative Language

As data collection was occurring, I also analyzed figurative language to gain insights into my participants by looking at the literal and figurative meaning of key statements in an attempt to understand the different feelings of the participants. Gee (2014) asks: “What must I assume this person (consciously and unconsciously) believes in order to make deep sense of what he or she is saying?” (p. 113). My figurative language analysis allowed me to do just that. I tried to put myself in the participant’s shoes.

Analysis of Mid-Study Memo

Halfway through the data collection process, I also analyze data through a mid-study memo. In this memo, I restated my research question and then I created sub-questions that had arisen. In this memo, I revisited my observations, surveys, and student work that I had written up in my field log, documenting what I had

learned to this point in my study. Then I re-examined what I had planned for the duration of my data collection.

Analysis of Data Through Coding, Bins, and Theme Statements

As my data collection process progressed, I read through the information carefully and began coding my data with key words I felt were useful to my project (Saldana, 2013). The data were coded using notes along the side of the Google Document with single words or phrases. Words included “positive” or “frustrated” while phrases included “goal-setting” or “individual success”. Some of the data were highlighted with colors of similar themes that were emerging. Coding continued ever after the data collected period was finished to ensure I had not missed any crucial information for my study.

Once I had coded all of the data, I entered the most similar codes into a table. This table included the code (word or phrase), the page numbers these codes were found on, and other codes that may be similar. Once the table was completed, I used the similar codes to create bins. These bins allowed me to determine the similar themes throughout the project. Each bin represented a collection of related codes. Once the bins were completed, I wrote a theme statement for each one (Bogdan & Biklen, 2011). Each theme statement signified a finding from my project in the hopes that future educational leaders can use this to begin their own projects.



Figure 8. Theme bins from coding index.

Findings

I began this project with a question, *what impact does a goal setting and goal attainment program have on a college female soccer player's intrinsic motivation?* I was astonished in previous seasons at the lack of self-motivation from players, and I wanted to see if goal setting could be an answer to our problem. Through goal setting I hoped to see more self-motivation and members of a team that would work hard everyday in the hopes of achieving their goals. I believed that with the help of surveys, journal prompts, and reflections, the participants would have the tools they needed to accomplish the goals they set for themselves. To help organize my results, I created theme statements from qualitative data coding to express the findings of my study.

Self-motivation within players varies depending on the individual's wants and needs; therefore it is important to allow students to write their own goals.

Each individual is created differently and are motivated in many ways. Some of the participants in this study are individually driven, some are more concerned with the success of the team, and some are motivated by their fear of failure. Only the individual can be able to write a goal that is meaningful to them depending on their desires without judgment. In the beginning of the study, we had individual conferences with players after pre-season to discuss areas of improvement they may have that will increase their abilities as a player. In those

meetings, we did not set goals for them. As an educational leader, you can outline your expectations for your students and can guide them, but what they do with those guidelines is up to them. It seemed as though the practice goals written came from the recommendations of the coaching staff, but the game and team goal stemmed from the wants of the players. To have the team members write their own goals allowed ownership and motivation to achieve them because this is what they wanted to do. Smith, Ntoumanis, & Duda (2007) had similar findings when they wrote, “Reflecting the interests and values of the individual, goals pursued because of autonomous motives are proposed to lead to sustained effort over the period that the person strives to meet their goals” (p. 746). Effort was also a crucial factor throughout this project and will be discussed in a future theme statement. Because the participant used autonomous motives, they were more willing to achieve these goals.

I do believe that teachers and coaches can set appropriate goals for their students, but I do not believe that the student will be overly motivated to achieve them. Ava wrote in her game reflection, “Sometimes, coaches can make unrealistic goals for their players, so my goals I created feel easier to reach because I know what I am capable of.” Maybe educational leaders expect so much from their students that the goal they set can feel out of reach or intimidating. I wonder how different the results of this study would be if I had written the goals for my participants. Writing their own goals not only gave them ownership over

them, but taught the players how to write appropriate goals as well. Just like in sports, when you practice a skill multiple times, it becomes natural to you. If you write goals that matter to you, it may become a habit for the individual even outside of soccer.

Reflections of activities make students aware of progress they are making and areas that need to be improved. Self-reflections also allow teachers to understand the true feelings their students are having during this particular time.

Reflection was a major tool in my study to aid my participants in their goal attainment journey. Without reflection, I do not believe my players would have been able to keep a continuous plan in their goal achievement effort. I also think the most telling information came from the game reflections and journal prompts. According to Dewey, “Thinking is thus a postponement of immediate action, while it effects internal control of impulse through a union of observation and memory, this union being the heart of reflection” (p. 64). The participants thought about their performances in games and practices, reviewed their memories of each, and could then plan for action in the future. Therefore, I do not believe that positive actions towards reaching goals can happen without deep reflection.

There were set reflections during the project, but participants were asked to reflect as often as possible. Eric Casaburi (2017) believes it’s important to take

time each day to reflect on your goals, the progress you're making and what factors might be holding you back from achieving them. Before games when I would ask players to think about what they need to do to reach their goals, they were reflecting. They were reflecting on what they had already accomplished, and from that, what their next action would be to take a step to achieving their goals.

Having the participants reflect on their own work instead of having a coach evaluate them allowed for more honest and harsher critiques. The reflections really showed the emotions the participants were having during this time. Dewey (1938) wrote that observation alone is not enough. We have to understand the significance of what we see, hear, and touch. The reflections may appear as something at first, but the teacher has to read the reflection deeper to understand and relate to what the participant may be going through. Because the participants were anonymous, they were able to write more honestly without feeling embarrassed if the coach knew. Throughout the project I often wished the responses weren't anonymous so I could help these players who were feeling frustrations.

If I had the opportunity to speak with other teams, I would explain the importance of reflections for a player and the coach. These reflections can allow for conversations to occur that may not have happened without the chance for a player to write their feelings. Some players especially females, will not verbalize their true feeling due to being frightened to share it with the coach or not wanting

to hear the response from the coach. In order to receive honest reflections, it is important to establish relationships built on honesty and trust. I do believe I received honest answers not only because of anonymity, but because I spent a lot of time creating these relationships with each of my players. Some teams may find keeping the project anonymous and addressing these issues as a team. Even if it is anonymous, I cannot stress the fact of building relationships among teammates and among coaches and their players.

From some of these reflections, I was able to modify my project including adding a question to one of the reflections about avoiding frustrations. These raw emotions the players were feeling were very helpful to me to try and produce what Dewey would call an educative experience.

Awareness of goals increases focus among individuals by putting areas of improvement into perspective.

“The most important attitude that can be formed is that of desire to go on learning” (Dewey, p.48). If people believe they have no weaknesses, they do not feel the need to continue to learn in order to grow. Unfortunately, these individuals will not grow and will not be able to adapt into the world changing around them. For those who consider themselves to be flawed human beings understand that there is always something to learn and they have to have the desire to learn them. How can coaches increase that desire to learn? Just like in the classroom, if a teacher believes something is important, the students will as

well. This translates to coaching as well. If a coach is passionate about something like I am with this goal-setting program, the players should be able to understand that passion through the coach's actions and words. A coach or a teacher is someone students or players look up to. If we have the desire to keep learning through action research projects or anything else, I believe the students or players will feel the same in return.

According to Weinberg (2010), there are many impacts that come from goal setting including being more focused in training sessions. Practice is where I saw the change in focus among the players. In my project, my participants first had to accept that there was always something they could improve on. By setting goals, they acknowledged their flaws as a soccer player and were looking to mature their skill level. The participants wrote down each of their goal so they had an exact goal they could look at when they needed to. Surprisingly, writing the goals down was one of the most important activities we did. From feedback and my own experience, many times coaches verbalize the goals they want to achieve, but never had their team write them down. The players liked having something to look at and revisit. Many of the players wrote that setting these specific goals kept them focused in times of frustration as well. If practices weren't going well, they would think about their goals and focus on working towards them. Kelly wrote in a reflection, "When I've had a rough practice/game or didn't see playing time and may become frustrated, I can look back at the goals

I set to distract my mind and remind myself to keep looking for that improvement.” The goals seemed to help players who weren’t performing at their best to remind them that they had something to work towards.

Having the players write their own practice goals showed that they understood their weaknesses. This is tough act for some individuals to do because we all desire to be “perfect” even though that is a false dream. After writing the goals, the participants knew what they wanted to achieve and improve on. The goals gave them a specific task to focus on during practices or during individual sessions that occurred before practice. Many of the players wrote about how writing their goals down put them into perspective and motivated them to stay focused throughout the season.

Work ethic is a major product of goal setting that is seen at practices and games. Players’ work ethic increases as they try to achieve their specific goals.

Although I was looking for an increase of motivation, I found that the work ethic of my players increased throughout the season. In order to reach these goals, these players needed to work hard just like they do every day in order to achieve something. According to Freire (1970), human beings are not built in silence, but in word, in work, in action-reflection. Human beings cannot grow by just sitting there and waiting for something to happen. They need to work hard,

use others for help, and reflect upon that hard work to see the progress they are making.

From *The Structure of a Team: The Influence of Goal Setting Type on Intrinsic Motivation, Group* (Bullard, 2014), I learned that goal setting is a tool that has been found to be effective for enhancing self-confidence, effort, and motivation of athletes. During the data collection process, I began seeing the words effort, hard work, and work ethic more frequently. Participants were using phrases like “these goals are pushing me to work harder.” I wondered if an increase in work ethic related to an increase in motivation and/or goal setting? Through observations at practice, the team as a whole was working incredibly hard especially after games that they had lost. I also noticed the hard work for players who took advantage of individual sessions during the day before practice. This revealed to me how motivated they were to achieve their individual goals, and mainly, their practice goals.

In relation to my project, I believe that setting goals increased the players’ motivation to achieve them and therefore increased their work ethic in order to achieve those goals. Also, because we used a backwards design approach by setting a team goal first, a game goal second, and a practice goal third, the participants knew that if they worked hard to achieve the smaller goal (practice goal) it would lead to achieving their game goal which would lead to achieving their team goal. So in this case, the player may be motivated by team success, but

there is a natural progression to achieve those team goals. During the first journal prompt (See Appendix - E) I had the participants write down how their individual goals will help reach their team goal. I think they realized that if they worked hard to do their part as an individual, they can help the team try and achieve the overall goal.

Frustration is found within players who achieve their goals and who do not. To avoid frustrations, players can edit their goals as well as write smaller ones to achieve each practice that lead to the ultimate goal.

Frustration is an unavoidable occurrence when practicing goal setting. If the players reach their goal, there is frustration in the process of achieving them. If players do not reach their goal, there is frustration that they did not achieve them. According to Delpit (2012), “When students doubt their own competence, they typically respond with two behaviors: they either hide (hoods over faces, heads on desks) and try to become invisible, or they act out to prevent a scenario unfolding in which they will not be able to perform and will once again be proved “less than”” (p. 14). This was apparent in some of the more negative reflections I received. Briana was one of these individuals when she spoke of her hard work not paying off. In her practice reflection she wrote, “I am not motivated to play hard because I know it doesn’t help my situation as a player. I think I personally get better at practice but that doesn’t help my game goals.” Because Briana was not receiving personal success during games she was not motivated. I always

believed that if you are not getting what you want, you work even harder to achieve it. Each person is different and maybe the frustration was too great on her part to continue to work hard.

Originally, I thought that frustration would only accompany those who did not achieve their goals. It wasn't until the goal achievement activity that I realized many of the players were feeling frustrations, but did not necessarily voice their concerns until the end. In the goal achievement activity, players expressed their feelings during the goal setting process and after they had achieved their goals. Some words I saw that described their feelings during the program included *frustrated*, *discouraged*, and *tiresome*. There were also positive words like *motivated* and *determined*. But the negative words really surprised me since many of them had not voiced this prior to the final survey. I realized that frustrations may be big or small. It also depends on who the person is and what their situation is. Maybe some individuals have never dealt with great frustration in sports until they arrived to college. Overall, this lead me to believe that frustration is unavoidable, but maybe we can control the amount of frustration a player feels.

Midway through the project, I wanted to give the participants an opportunity to change or edit their goals. I believed that if they set more realistic goals for themselves that some of the frustration may go away. Many of the players kept their original goals, some edited their goals, and a few changed them completely. I really thought this was going to help lessen the frustration and I do

believe that it did. I did not see as many negative responses in the next reflection, but there were still a few who were frustrated they were not reaching their game goals. For future reflections, I had the players plan what their next step was in order to achieve their goals. These were acting as smaller goals for them to achieve the bigger ones. If they could achieve the smaller/easier goals, this would give them hope and motivation to keep working towards their bigger goals.

Achievement is more commonly found in the accomplishment of practice goals. Practice goals allow individuals to focus on personal success as they work on improving specific skills. To achieve these goals, individuals must create a plan, invest into them, revisit them daily, and edit them when necessary.

The majority of goals achieved at the end of the project happened to be the practice goals. I agree with Freire (1970) that “Knowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, and hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other” (p. 72). The practice goals could be reinvented in order to be achieved. This reinvention stems from changing or editing goals, but also creating a plan to achieve them. Individuals can create as many plans as they want, but they have to be dedicated with an increased work ethic to do what is necessary to reach their goals. Sometimes, events may not have gone the way the player imagined them to go and had to adapt their goals because of this. I believe the practice goals were

more likely to be achieved because they were focusing on the player's specific skill level and we had more practices than games to accomplish these goals.

Practice goals can also be considered mastery goals, which means the individual is focusing on mastering a task or developing a competency (Dishon-Berkovits, 2014). According to Usher and Kober (2012), researchers have consistently found that students who have a mastery goal mindset exhibit deeper cognitive processes, strategize more effectively, and are more adaptable to the challenges. From the research and my project, I believe that practice goals are incredibly important for an individual to set. The skills they desire to achieve can be transferable to a game like scenario. Just like in the classroom, the students can set goals for the work they complete in class in order for them to use it on a test or in the real world. If the individual understands that their practice goals will lead to a greater goal including their game or team goal, they will be more motivated to achieve it. Leah said this perfectly in her practice reflection, "Yes, my practice goal motivates me because I know that the faster I can achieve my goal the faster and more impactful I can be for my team."

Practice goals were more achievable because this could be done on their own time. The goals were subjective and could be changed or edited if necessary. The players had the opportunity to also get extra practice hours with coaches in individual sessions. Game goals can only be accomplished in the 90 minutes per game 16 times during the season so those are definitely more difficult to

accomplish. If players revisited their goals before practices, planned proper steps to reach these goals, and invested time into achieving the goal they were more likely to accomplish it.

Desire for team success is the major focus of college level athletes especially as the season progresses. The success of the team is a factor of increased self-motivation of these athletes.

The desire for team success ended up being the ultimate motivator by the end of the project. According to Freire (1970), “Hope is rooted in men’s incompleteness, from which they move out in constant search—a search which can be carried out only in communion with others” (p. 91). The team goal cannot be achieved without the help of every member. Members need to focus on their improvement in the hopes that it will help the ultimate team goal.

In the first survey (See Appendix - C), I asked the players what motivated them the most. They could choose individual success, team success, fear of failure, or they could write in their own answer. The majority chose fear of failure, the next was individual success, and the least amount of people said team success. As the season progressed and became more intense, those answers started to change. In their final game reflection, I asked what was motivating them the most at this time of the season. Most of the team wrote that seeing the team succeed was their biggest motivator. As the situations change throughout the season so does the mindset of the player. In the final survey, one of the questions

asked what motivated them more – team goal or individual goals? Some said they motivated them the same, but more players chose the team goal. Although the team did not have a great record during the month of October, the desire to see their team win trumped their individual wants. Even though the team had lost a few games, they still believed in their team and in the hope that they would win.

From this information, I can conclude that team success is the ultimate motivator of female college level athletes. Within team success, it is important to include the smaller goals to help reach it. For future coaches who decide to use this program, I recommend setting a team goal along with individual goals. If only individual goals are set, players may become selfish. I believe it was helpful to have the team goal as the major focus so each person knew that her personal success could help the team succeed.

Implications

At the completion of my project, I wanted to continue using goal setting with the team because of the positive effects it had on their self-motivation. In the spring semester, the coaching staff does not get to see the team as frequently as the fall. Even though we do not get to meet as a team, I was able to create another goal setting program based off the one in the fall. The players arrived back to campus in January so I asked the girls to create goals for the month of February. These goals could be about soccer, school, or even their social life. This project was a little less structured and they were allowed to write as many goals as they wanted to. Along with the goal, the players had to explain how they were going to reach their goal. I wanted to keep implementing using a plan so it becomes a habit for them. At the end of February, I emailed the players and asked what progress they had made toward their goals. I also asked them to write a new goal for March. Some players reached their goals and some players are using them again for their March goal. I plan to continue this throughout the spring and compare the results from the beginning of the school year until the end.

If I decide to use the same action research project next season, I would change a few things about it. First, I would start this project earlier in the season to give the players more time to achieve them. The feedback I received was that they would like more time. Next, because I would not be collecting data to present, I would not make this project anonymous. This would include having

more individual meetings with players about their goals. Some feedback I had received from survey 3 was that the coaching staff could not do much to help the players reach their goal. I would want to know their goals so I can work on the specific skill with them. It would also help to know who the individual is because you would be able to understand the player's role on the team more and try to help them with their frustrations. Another part I would change is to not make my players write a game goal. If they would like to write a game goal they absolutely could, but it will not be mandatory. I will include writing a team goal as a group and then have the players write individual goals for practice. The plan to achieve the goal will still be implemented.

If I am to encounter players like Briana in future projects with goal-setting again that are not anonymous, I would like to encourage the same honest reflections presented in this project. There are a few ways I would do this. From the start, I would reiterate the fact that honest responses, whether positive or negative, would not affect their playing time. Next, I would like to gain a positive relationship with each of the players and understand what they want to accomplish. I believe this would encourage more honest reflection when I build trust with a player. After reviewing their goals and plans, I would like to help them individually reach their goals through open discussion and personal training sessions. From the help of the coach, they may be able to understand why their role on the team is not changing then just having their own perspective. I would

also like to encourage players with negative feelings to consult a teammate. Most of the time, players will take comments from their teammates more harshly than coaches so this may be a good way to help control those negative feelings. Lastly, although the project would not be anonymous in the future, I would create an anonymous message board through Google Documents for players to have the chance to vent about any problems and see if anyone is having the same struggles as them. I think this would allow them to be honest about their feelings while also connecting with others who are feeling the same way. This may help the player to understand they are not alone in this process and will also allow for honest reflection.

For my next set of players to use this goal-setting program, I do have a few goals for them to achieve. First, I would like them to set goals on their own more frequently. From the individual goals they set with the program, I would like to see them set even smaller goals to help reach them. Next, I would like to see the players helping each other to reach their goals. It would be great to see them interact and understand what their teammates want to achieve. I believe this will also create a better team culture. Although I have many goals for this project, I ultimately would love to see this be student run. My final goal is for the team to take ownership over this project and use me as a facilitator to help them reach their goals. Together they can set a team goal and each individual can write their

own goals. I think it is important for members of the team to be accountable for their actions to help the team be successful.

In a physical education classroom, I would do something very similar including the backward design approach. The student would first write the overall goal for the class. From that, they would make a plan on how to achieve this goal. This may include smaller goals for each class or each week. As the teacher, I would be aware of these goals and I would be able to keep students on track if they began to veer off course. I would include formative assessments after each class that could act as small reflections. There would be planned class time for written reflections and surveys. The students would also be given the opportunity to change or edit goals if they wish.

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Appendix B

Dear women's soccer team member,

I am now completing a Master of Education degree at [REDACTED]. My research focuses on your self-motivation and how you can increase that through a goal-setting and goal-attainment program.

During the spring of 2017, I noticed that we often focus on team goals, but never revisit them for individual use. Most of our motivation came from the coaching staff. I believe that implementing a goal-setting program will increase your self-motivation for training and competitions. Overall, I believe that setting individual goals related to team goals will make our team more successful. I appreciate your time for reading this and would like to ask your permission to use the data I collect from this program in my research study.

The data I'd like to use will be gathered from September 10 to November 15. The data I collect will include surveys, journal prompts, writing activities, and personal reflections. Your participation in my study is completely voluntary, and your identity will be kept anonymously through the use of pseudonyms. At any point during this process you will have the option to opt out. If you decide to opt out, you will notify my assistant [REDACTED], so she can tell me the pseudonym of the player who wishes to have their data removed from my project. Informing [REDACTED] of this allows for your identity to always remain anonymous. At the end of my action research, you will also have the choice to submit certain pieces of data if you do not wish to submit all of the data.

If you should have any questions about my project, please do not hesitate to ask me or forward to my professor, [REDACTED], in the education department at [REDACTED] at [REDACTED]. You can also email him at [REDACTED]. Thank you so much for your support.

Sincerely,

Melissa Koster

I have read this form and permit Ms. Koster to use this data, which was collected at our team meeting, in her action research project

Signature of Student

Date

Appendix C

Data 1
Survey 1

Code name: _____

1. Have you practiced goal setting in the past?
 - a. Frequently
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. Never

2. In what context did you practice goal setting? You can choose more than one.
 - a. Personal life
 - b. Education
 - c. Sports
 - d. Work
 - e. Other – Explain _____

3. Are you comfortable setting measurable goals?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. No

4. Has setting goals been helpful for you?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. No

5. After setting a goal, did you plan steps to reach it?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. No

6. Are you familiar with S.M.A.R.T. goals?

- a. Yes
- b. Somewhat
- c. No

7. Did setting a goal increase your self motivation to achieve it?

- a. Yes
- b. Somewhat
- c. No

8. Do you consider yourself a self-motivated individual?

- a. Yes, for everything.
- b. Yes, for things I care about.
- c. No, I need an extra incentive.

9. In soccer, do you feel more motivated during practice or games?

- a. Practice
- b. Games
- c. I am motivated for both equally

10. What are you motivated by the most?

- a. Individual success
- b. Fear of failure
- c. Team success
- d. Other – Explain _____

Appendix D

Data Collection #2

Activity 1

Code name: _____

Directions: You will write a goal for the team that you would like to accomplish by the end of the season. These must be written as S.M.A.R.T goals which stands for: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timely. We will write an example together.

Team goal:

Now, you will write two goals for yourself to help reach the team goal you set. One goal must be for games and one goal must be for practices. Your game goal must be something statistical which can, but does not have to include goals, assists, passing percentage, turnovers, or ball winning. It can be any skill that can be measured. Your practice goal should be something subjective that will help you accomplish your game goal. These must all be written as S.M.A.R.T goals.

Game goal:

Practice goal:

Appendix E

Data #3

Journal Prompt #1

How will the goals you set motivate you to achieve them? Explain.

Will the goals you set help you and your team to be successful? Explain.

Appendix H

Data collection #5

Survey 2

Code name: _____

1. Do you believe you are making progress towards achieving your goals?
 - a. Yes, I have already achieved my goal.
 - b. Yes, I am very close to achieving my goals.
 - c. Yes, I am somewhat close to achieving my goals.
 - d. No, I am not close to achieving my goals.
2. Is the coaching staff helping you to achieve these goals?
 - a. Yes, the coaching staff is always helping me to achieve my goals.
 - b. Yes, the coaching staff sometimes helps me to achieve my goals.
 - c. No, the coaching staff is not helping me to achieve my goals.
3. Do you revisit your goals before every practice and game?
 - a. Yes, I look at them before every practice and game.
 - b. I revisit them for some of the practices and games.
 - c. No, I do not revisit my goals before practices and games.
4. Are you reflecting on your progress towards achieving your goals?
 - a. Yes, I reflect on my progress often.
 - b. Yes, I reflect on my progress after some of my games and practices.
 - c. No, I am not reflecting on my progress.
5. Do you believe your individual goals are leading to team success?
 - a. Yes, I do believe reaching my individual goals will help the success of the team.
 - b. No, I believe reaching my individual goals will on help me and not the team.
6. Do your goals keep you motivated throughout practice?

- a. Yes, my goals keep my motivated throughout practice.
- b. Sometimes my goals keep me motivated throughout practice.
- c. No, my goals are not motivating me throughout practice.

7. Do your goals keep you motivated throughout games?

- a. Yes, my goals keep my motivated throughout games.
- b. Sometimes my goals keep me motivated throughout games.
- c. No, my goals are not motivating me throughout games.

8. What is motivating you the most?

- a. Team goal
- b. Game goal
- c. Practice goal
- d. All of my goals are motivating me the same.

9. Is your practice goal or game goal motivating you more?

- a. Practice goal
- b. Game goal
- c. Both goals are motivating me equally.

10. Do you feel more self-motivated than you did before you set your goals?

- a. Yes, I feel more self-motivated.
- b. Yes, I feel a little more self-motivated.
- c. No, I do not feel more self-motivated than I did before.

11. Can the coaching staff make any changes to the goal-setting program?

a. Yes

b. No

12. Is the plan to reach your goals helping you?

a. Yes

b. No

If no, what can we do to help you?

Appendix I

Activity 2

Code name: _____

Directions: Look back at the goals you set for yourself. If you need to change or edit them, do that here.

Original goal:

New goal:

If you have accomplished any of your goals, please write which goal it is and explain how you know you achieved them.

If you have achieved one of your goals and you wish to write a new one, please do that below.

Appendix K

Journal Prompt #3

Did your goals increase your self-motivation throughout the season? Why or why not?

What would you do differently next time? Explain.

Appendix M

Survey 3

Code name: _____

1. Did you enjoy setting goals for soccer?
 - a. Yes, I enjoyed setting goals for soccer very much.
 - b. Yes, I somewhat enjoyed setting goals for soccer.
 - c. No, I did not enjoy setting goals for soccer.

2. Would you practice goal setting again?
 - a. Yes, I would definitely practice goal setting again.
 - b. Yes, I would somewhat practice goal setting again.
 - c. No, I would not practice goal setting again.

3. Did your goals keep you motivated throughout the season?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. No

4. Did your goals ever feel like a burden?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Sometimes
 - c. No

5. Did team goals or individual goals motivate you more?
 - a. Team goals
 - b. Individual goals
 - c. They both motivated me the same amount

6. Do you feel as though you had a successful soccer season?
 - a. Yes
 - b. Somewhat
 - c. No

7. Overall, do you feel you are a more self-motivated individual from this goal-setting program?

- a. Yes
- b. Somewhat
- c. No

8. Do you feel like you can set specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely goals for yourself after participating in this project?

- a. Yes
- b. Somewhat
- c. No

9. What did you learn about yourself throughout this goal-setting process?
