

Writing a Strategy for Success

In order to attain a goal, effective problem solvers develop a strategy to assure they will reach the desired goal given certain constraints and resources. It also allows them to identify realistic vs. unrealistic goals.

1. Clear Statement of Goal:

- I wish to obtain the following grade in CHEN2100
- I wish to obtain the following grade on the next exam in CHEN2100
- I wish to obtain a grade which is higher by "X" points on the next exam in CHEN2100
- Other...

2. Identification of Major Issues: ("Things which caused me to lose points are...") Note: there may be several major issues. Each should be addressed separately.

- Failure to understand the problem
- Failure to know how to setup the problem
- Failure to know how to solve the required equations
- Failure to perform math and conversions accurately
- Failure to properly allocate time
- Failure to demonstrate to professor my thinking
- Other...

3. Identification of Source of Failure and Opportunity for Improvement: These are the areas where you will need to plan specific activities to overcome the failures.

- Preparation for class
- Followup of lecture materials
- Reading assignments
- Preparation of homework
- Review of material before exam
- Test taking skills mastery
- Test anxiety issues
- Other...

4. Planning Your Attack: Specific Changes Required to Move Toward Goal. What specifically can you do to acquire the skills, knowledge, speed, focus, techniques, etc. to overcome the failures identified above?

- What change or activity is being specified (what specifically will you do)?
- When (how often) will the activity be performed?
- When will you assess the progress you are making using this activity?
- What reading or additional resources do you need to understand how to affect a change?
- Where will you document (record) your progress and efforts?

5. Implementation of the Strategy:

- Keep a log or journal with your activities, observations and other comments and thoughts.
- Set aside the required time AS YOUR HIGHEST PRIORITY.
- Remind yourself daily of your goals, strategy and plan.

6. Assessment of Your Success:

- At intervals identified in (4) above, assess if you are making satisfactory progress to ASSURE you will meet your goal. Revise your strategy as necessary to take new information and thinking into account.