

# Goal Setting & Case Study of the “Monster” Student’s Change in Professor Soetanto’s Class: From Performance to Mastery

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## 1 . Introduction

People are not born smart. Intelligence and skills are cultivated by training and effort. University is a higher institution where there are many chances for students to acquire academic knowledge and the enhancement of human personality skills. However, in the observed reality, Japanese universities have seemingly become “leisure lands,” where many students only concern of getting enough credits for the purpose of graduation. They put extremely low priority on driving growth in knowledge and learning experience. Many indications have illustrated that students entered university without clear goals for accomplishment. Thus, most students are not motivated to study hard. They dismissed their precious time for study. Instead they substituted study time with doing part time jobs or attending extracurricular activities. (Soetanto 2013a)

According to the fact-finding survey on university students conducted by Benesse in 2016, university students tend to choose those classes where grades are easier to acquire even though the contents are not attractive. This category increased from 54.8% in 2012 to 61.4% in 2016. On the other hand, university lecturers are busy with their research, they tend to give less support to students comparing to high school teachers. Evidences have shown university students who want to get more advice and support from lecturers in fact have increased from 30% in 2012 to 38.2% in 2016. When a new term starts, many students rush to buy the guidebook of “Mile Stone” on campus, which gives detailed introduction of what classes are easier to get grades.

## 2 . Brief Introduction about IOC (Interactive Operational Control)

Kawan Soetanto, a professor at School of International Liberal Studies, Waseda University, has developed an educational method known as “IOC” (Interactive Operational Control).

This method is used for targeting students who have lost their aims or motivation in studies. IOC has drawn much attention because it helps students to realize their full potential, which in turn help to restore their confidence and increasing their intrinsic motivation in studies. (Soetanto 2013b).

IOC consists of many practical methods, such as “goal setting” for improving self-efficacy, “21-days rule” for forming a new habit, “5-line comment sheet” for better understanding of every students, etc. These methods have been developed and refined through professor Soetanto’s 30 years teaching experience in difference countries. They are widely recognized as the “Soetanto Methods” (STM) and “Soetanto Effect” (STE). Studies also find STM helps students develop their conceptual skills, technical skills and human personality skills. (K. Soetanto & M. Higuchi, 2012).

As a TA (Teaching Assistant) to professor Soetanto at Waseda University for two semesters in 2011, the author found out many students changed their mindset of goal setting from focusing on grades (extrinsic motivation) to lifelong learning and interest to confront challenges (intrinsic motivation) by taking his lectures.

## 3 . Goal setting eventually links to boosting up intrinsic motivation

Goals, no matter big or small, can be the stepping-stones to a meaningful life. As students, goals not only motivate them to have a sense of purpose but also guide them to the direction they want to go and get them interested and engaged. When goals are accomplished, it induces students’ motivation and leads great satisfaction.

### 3. 1 Previous studies about goal setting

#### 3. 1 . 1 Goal setting Theory of Motivation by Locke

In 1960’s, Edwin Locke put forward the goal setting theory of motivation. This theory states that the goal setting eventually

linked to task performance. The key points that Locke and Latham made were that motivational goals needed to have the following dimensions, viz, clarity, challenge, commitment, feedback and complexity. They say that specific and challenging goals along with appropriate feedback leads to higher and better task performance. (Edwin Locke and Gary Latham, 2006)

### 3. 1. 2 Performance goals and mastery goals by Carol Dweck

According to Dweck (1986) argued ability affects decisions related to learning. Fixed mindset students thought that their ability would carry them along. This means if they did poorly, they lost confidence. Consequently, they tried to hide mistakes and conceal deficiencies. Thus, they tend to create performance goals. One the other hand, growth mindset students were more concerned about learning the material. This implies if they did poorly, they worked harder. They tend to create mastery goals.

### 3. 1. 3 Extrinsic motivation vs Intrinsic motivation by Csikszentmihalyi

Extrinsic motivation occurs when a person is motivated to perform a behavior or engage in an activity to earn a reward or avoid punishment. In this case, one engages in a behavior not because that person enjoys it or because finds it satisfactory, but in order to get something in return or avoid something unpleasant.

Intrinsic motivation involves engaging in a behavior because it is personally rewarding, essentially, performing an activity for its own sake rather than the desire for some external reward. Learners who are intrinsically motivated may engage in an activity because it gives them pleasure, helps them develop a skill they think is important, or seems to be the ethically and morally right thing to do. (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990, 1996).

### 3. 2 Tasks (Small Goals) assigned to students in MIE class

MIE (Motivation in Education) course is designed and conducted by Professor Soetanto. It consists of 15 classes of 180 minutes. One feature of MIE is that it requires high involvement from every student. Through challenging these tasks step by step, motivation of students has increased. Many students developed intrinsic motivation for lifelong learning and challenging.

Tasks (small goals) of MIE class (2011) are as follow. They are for every individual, not for the group.

- ① Submit a report why one takes this subject of 350 words right before the class or at the beginning of the first class.
- ② Give a 3-minute self-introduction, standing in front of all students.
- ③ Submit a paper on "What a good teacher means?"
- ④ Give a 10-minute presentation on "My Goal".

- ⑤ Translate some chapters of "Touching Education" (K. Soetanto, Kodansha, 2010) or other reading materials from Japanese to English.
- ⑥ Give a 10-minute presentation about the reading material and tell true story without looking at any notes.
- ⑦ Submit a final paper of 2,400 words.

### 3. 3 Break the big goal into smaller and specific goals

The willingness (commitment) to work towards attainment of goal is main source of study motivation. It is thought that specific goals give direction to students about what needs to be done and how much efforts are required to be put in.

Professor Soetanto breaks the big goal (fostering students' intrinsic motivation for studying) into smaller and challenging goals. Having several smaller goals makes each of them a bit easier and gives students a feeling of success along the way, which also makes it more likely that students will stay on track towards the bigger goal.

## 4. Case study shows power of accomplishing small goals

### 4. 1 Case study of the "monster" student

The following is a case study about Hiromatsu's fantastic change by taking Professor Soetanto's classes. It showed his mindset changed from performance (focusing on good grades) to mastery (lifelong learning and challenging). It demonstrated through goal setting and accomplishment. As such, he has fostered intrinsic motivation to strive into the future.

Hiromatsu took Dr. Soetanto's MIE class from September 2008 to March 2009 while he was studying at SILS, Waseda University, where all lectures are taught in English.

Hiromatsu's English was not as good as classmates who returned Japan from overseas. He could not fully understand the lecturers, hardly raise questions or participate in the discussion. He felt frustrated. He kept an extraordinary hair style: one side long hair, the other side no hair. He used bad words to attack teachers, thus he was labeled "monster student".

As classes proceeded to the middle of the semester, Professor Soetanto asked students to give a 10-minutes presentation about the reading materials and tell one's true story without looking at any notes. At Hiromatsu's turn, he experienced much difficulty in expressing himself in English. He felt the presentation was a "disaster."

Professor Soetanto said English was just a kind of skill. The most important thing was the contents, not language skills. He allowed Hiromatsu to express his ideas in Japanese.

Hiromatsu began to talk many things related to the reading materials in Japanese. In the next class, Professor Soetanto praised him for his effort, and showed his reading materials to other classmates, on which were marked here and

there. Professor Soetanto knew Hiromatsu put much effort in preparing by reading his comment sheets.

Hiromatsu realized his English skills were not enough. He began to study English harder. Later, he applied to study in USA as an exchange student for one year and spoke fluent English when he returned Japan. He wanted to be a diplomat in the future. He was invited as the guest speaker at WGIC (Waseda Global Innovation Conference) in 2012. He said he wanted to be a mini Soetanto, and spread Soetanto Methods (STM) in Japan.

#### 4.2 Power of accomplishing small goals

One can see the power of accomplishing small goals from this case. Giving presentation before classmates requires much effort of preparation and practice. Students develop their skills and abilities through learning the materials deep and thorough.

By accomplishing one task after another, students begin to feel passionate towards the goals designated to them. Individual shows commitment to achieve the goals. They gain much confidence and become active learners. They change their fixed mindset (focusing on grades, the extrinsic motivation) to growth mindset (interested in lifelong learning and challenging, the intrinsic motivation). The intrinsic motivation is also needed at workplace.

It demonstrates that care and support from the teacher is also important for students’ change and growth. Hiromatsu felt the warmth and kindness from professor Soetanto when giving presentation. He also felt the togetherness of the class. The article about the changes of “monster student” in Nikkei Business Online (2010) was well commented.

This case study shows when students are exposed to circumstances where lectures require effort and challenge to accomplish goals; students are pushed beyond the “comfort zone.” They build confidence based on successful achievement of small goals. With their own desire, students begin to think seriously what they really want to achieve in their life.

Goal setting helps students separate what's important from what's irrelevant. They engage more in their academic studies and show increased interest in self-improvement. They tend to compare their current level of achievement to their own prior self-determined expected level of accomplishment. The approach has motivated students in undertaking more challenging tasks. As a result, they have demonstrated higher levels of engagement and achievement.

#### 4.3 Other important features to consider

One important feature or lesson of MIE class is Professor Soetanto’s method provides appropriate feedback, which directs students’ behavior and contributes to higher performance.

Another feature of MIE class is the comment sheets. Professor Soetanto’s approach asks every student to write down 5-line comment sheet at the end of each class. The

comment sheet serves as an attendance slip. Since it is written in very short time, and it does not relate to grades, students tell frank opinions about the class. With this method, Professor Soetanto is able to establish an interactive channel with students. Students receive feedback regularly related to their effort and growth. Feedback is a means of gaining attention. It helps students to work with more involvement and leads to greater task satisfaction.

Professor Soetanto shows his care and understanding to every student. He has strong will to help every student to grow. He says to students he won’t give up on anyone. He believes that every student has a potential. He tries to understand the individual student by reading comment sheets and reports. Sometimes he asks students to come to his office after class. He always tries to guide students to realize their full potential, viz., “Be a learner, be a challenger.” Professor Soetanto is the role model for students. Small goals link to students’ mindset change and increased motivation, which lead to greater success in the future.

### 5. Conclusion

This paper has reviewed what small goals Professor Soetanto has assigned to students at MIE (Motivation in Education) class. This kind of exercise has motivated students to work hard in accomplishing small goals one after another. Consequently, this approach has helped students to change their mindset from performance (focusing on good grades) to mastery (lifelong learning and challenging). This paper also examined how a “monster” student has changed at MIE classes and proved that goal setting and accomplishment, such as giving presentation without looking at any notes, eventually linked to students’ intrinsic motivation.

### Appendix

Here are some comment sheets of MIE class from students, spring semester, 2011. They described students in MIE class not only learned knowledge and skills about motivation subject, but they have also gained a sense of growth, confidence, motivation by accomplishing small goals one after another.

Student A.H: “This is not only an education motivation class, but a class about self-growth, giving and about life.”

Student A.L: “MIE really makes me realize how influencing people could be and even a very little thing could help to change other people's life. I don't know how much I can do in the future, but I will always keep in mind and try my best to do whatever I can in the future!”

Student B.T: “I would like to thank professor for supporting me, guiding me, leading me, teaching me, and everything and many things during this university life.”

Student Y. H: “MIE was a great lecture that I had. Thank

you for giving me a great chance to change my motivation. I think I have changed.”

Student N.J: “There are many things we learned. I could not write them all in my essay. But I hope all things will be more and more meaningful as life processes. I have a lot more to learn. I want to grow as a person, more and more, expand, expand, expand in order to give to others.”

Student R. M: “MIE class had various great speakers that had very touching stories. It is true that they were influenced by professor Soetanto and this is very interesting. His classes have the same effect on almost everyone.”

Student S. P: “This semester had been very special for me. I realized the fact that no matter where I am as long as I have an open mind, I would be able to be happy and forgiving.”

Student S.E: “I noticed that not all people could understand the others’ pain. I felt that Mr. Soetanto is a person who could feel other people’s pain.”

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#### Abstract

This paper reviews what tasks (small goals) Professor Soetanto assigned to students at MIE (Motivation in Education) class, so as to find out the mechanism which helps students to change their mindset from performance (focusing on grades) to mastery (lifelong learning and challenging). It also examines the “monster” student’s change in Professor Soetanto’s MIE classes and then derives analytical findings through goal setting and accomplishing, students foster intrinsic motivation to strive into future.

#### Keywords

Soetanto Method (STM), goal setting, intrinsic motivation, performance, mastery