Revisiting the goals

As I re-read my "setting goals" document, I realize that receptivity of my audience to my message is key to their acceptance and internalization, whether that be students or colleagues. Understanding the motivations of peers and students is critical to moving them forward. For the highly motivated, a direct message of "this is how you get to point B from your point A, and then you can get to point C." For those who are less motivated, they may need to see more tangible benefits to changing methods. This could be an extrinsic motivator (prizes, points, better ratings/grades, high pay, job security, etc.).

Students of varying socio-economic status have varying incentives for their behaviors. Generally-speaking, students of higher income value connections with others in their community as a way to increase power and maintain status. Students of middle income are more likely to value hard work as a way to gain upward mobility. Lower income individuals value humor and entertainment as building culture and this can breed motivation in the classroom. Though these are gross generalizations, they have been illustrated by Ruby Payne in her book titled, "A Framework for Understanding Poverty".

As I think and read further about what she and others write about influencing others, I have to individualize my strategies to further my leadership abilities for the purpose of increasing student achievement. A few of my colleagues will be very receptive to my methods of challenging traditional teaching methodologies. They will already be doing it. Those conversations readily happen within course teams and departments. They can happen across whole schools in which discussions across levels is fostered.

Others may be motivated to adapt to more student-centered formats if they see that others are adopting alternative methods with success and some reasonable amounts of effort. Colleagues who are resistant to change may not be receptive initially to change, but may be forced to change depending on trends at the school and district level.

These three kinds of colleagues (and the variations in between) will respond differently to my desire to incorporate game-based ideas and flipped methodologies to classrooms. The key to maximize interest would involve easy entry into these techniques. In other words, what is the easy first step to integrate flipped strategies or gamification into a class?

Further reading and reflection will be required as I prepare for the upcoming school year.