

Self-regulation describes the process by which students pro-actively take control of their own learning.

## Why

Successful self-regulated learners organise their learning and achievement, take actions to progress their learning, monitor how they are going and adapt accordingly. Through this process, they achieve their goals. Successful self-regulation is closely related to high academic achievement (Zimmerman, 2002). While many students come to university keen to achieve, they need a learning environment that supports and enables them to enact this process, to take control and to 'get going'.



## How

To enable students to take control of their learning and level of success, there are several ways that you can provide an empowering learning environment.

### Be well-organised

A well-organised learning environment provides students with what they need to also be well-organised. Such an environment makes it easy for students to find out what to do and how to do it, and points them in the most efficient direction. Here are some key things you can do:

#### 1. Create a well-organised Blackboard site

Organise your Blackboard site logically. Make sure that it is easy for students to find information, and clearly direct students to what you have provided. Keep information related to a particular topic or idea located together. For example, make sure all the assessment information can be found in one area. Avoid having assessment details spread across different emails, documents and site areas. Refer to the Unit Site Design Quality Checklist to help review your site.

#### 2. Be prepared for the session

Have all your materials and instructions ready before the start of session. Tell students what they need to do and how to go about this in a short, clear and succinct way via a Blackboard Announcement. Having everything ready and available allows students to get going without having to wait for further instruction and without concerns about receiving further emails and notices about changes as the session progresses.

#### 3. Let students know about channels of communication

Let students know when you will be answering emails and responding to questions on the discussion board. This will allow them to plan their studies accordingly and will reduce the pressure on you to be 'on call' 24 hours a day. Include your preferred method of communication and your response time in the unit Blackboard site.

## Enable self-study

#### 1. Set up an introductory meeting

Start the session with an initial meeting or Blackboard Collaborate session designed to answer questions and set students on the right path. Distance students would benefit from this as a way of getting together to meet, discuss and answer questions about the unit and the assignments. This would also be a good opportunity to meet other students, tutors, lecturers and on-campus students.

## 2. Provide resources

Provide resources that support independent study. Some suggestions include:

- Recorded lectures
- Electronic readings
- Links to relevant web sites
- Study guide materials and activities
- Self-paced learning materials such as automated quizzes and multiple choice questions.

Select your resources carefully. Take care not to overwhelm students with too many resources. Choose the right set of resources for the right time and organise them into your learning space in a logical and accessible way.

## 3. Establish study groups

Set up study or peer groups that connect students to each other. This is particularly important for distance students so that they too can connect with other students to discuss ideas, readings, lectures, assignments, and other matters related to learning and studying. A Blackboard session could be set up to run for an entire session.

## Build in opportunities for self-monitoring and adaptation

An important part of self-regulating is understanding how one is progressing and making appropriate adjustments and changes. You can incorporate opportunities for students to monitor how they are going in a variety of ways.

### 1. Monitoring time management

Incorporate 'check points' that allow students to see how they are managing their study and assignment schedule. Give them strategic pointers by asking:

- Have they set goals and planned their study schedule?
- Are they 'on task' and keeping up with their readings and activities?
- How far have they progressed in their assignment completion?

### 2. Monitoring learning

Incorporate mechanisms for students to self-check their learning, progress, and achievement through the session. Provide:

- Model answers
- Exemplars of well written student assignments completed on a similar but different task
- Worked examples showing how to successfully complete problems, equations, analyses etc.
- Opportunities for feedback from peers
- Automated feedback such as online quizzes
- Checklists and rubrics (showing marking criteria and standards) for assessments against which students can compare their work
- Questions that students can ask themselves to direct their thoughts and decisions
- Opportunities for follow-up discussion and clarification.

## In summary

How you organise the learning environment and what you do make a difference to students being able to self-regulate. Being organised and providing the means for students to study independently and to check their progress, enables them to take control of their own learning and achievement.

## Find out more

- Alderman, M. K. (2013). *Motivation for achievement : Possibilities for teaching and learning* (3rd ed.). Hoboken: Taylor and Francis.
- Hattie, J. (2012). *Visible learning for teachers: Maximizing impact on learning*. London: Routledge.
- Vardi, I. (2012). *Effective feedback for student learning in higher education*. Milperra, NSW: Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia.
- Zimmerman, B. J. (2002). Becoming a self-regulated learner: An overview. *Theory Into Practice*, 41(2), 64-70. doi: 10.1207/s15430421tip4102\_2