

Self-Regulated Learning

What is Self-Regulation?

Self regulation is the control we have over our thoughts, feelings and actions. Self regulated *learning* includes:

- setting goals for learning
- concentrating on instructions
- using effective strategies to organise ideas
- using resources effectively
- monitoring performance
- managing time effectively
- holding positive beliefs about your capabilities *(Duckworth et al, 2009)*

The concept of self regulation includes the ability to concentrate, become involved in group activities, restrain disruptive and impulsive behaviour and work autonomously.

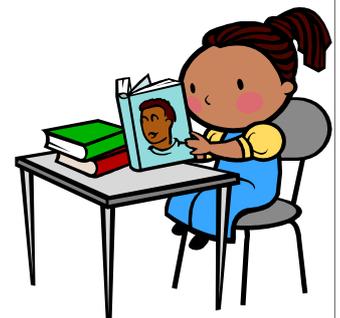
Why is Self-Regulation Important?

Self regulation skills have important benefits for learning and attainment across the curriculum. These skills can be developed and improved with appropriate teaching and support.

What do Self-Regulated Learners Look Like?

Pupils with good self regulation skills demonstrate the ability to:

- understand their own abilities and needs
- set reasonable goals for themselves
- make plans to achieve their goals
- organise behaviour, thinking and positive self-talk
- inhibit impulses
- initiate strategies at the right time
- monitor own performance and evaluate it in relation to goals
- think and act strategically and solve problems in an organised manner
- learn from consequences
- transfer skills from one context to another
- shift flexibly from one activity, thought or strategy to another





What helps Self-Regulation develop?

- Maturation in brain, especially frontal lobes
- Stability, organisation and predictability at home
- Emotional attachment to key adult(s)
- Adequate opportunities for children to exercise control over events
- “authoritative/responsive” parenting style
- Environment that models, values and rewards self regulation, autonomy and personal responsibility
- Effective language development
- Positive adult-child interactions
- Development of coherent and positive sense of self

(adapted from Ylvisaker & Feeney, 2008)

Early Years

Attention, inhibition and working memory are the foundations of positive classroom behaviour. Interest, active participation in class and a good attention span are positively associated with attainment.

Childhood

Self regulated learning skills can be improved with direct teaching of strategies for problem solving. Teachers can encourage pupils to develop, modify and reflect on their own methods of learning and to make sense of the strategies employed by their peers to help promote higher levels of understanding, attainment and self belief.

Adolescence

During this stage until the mid 20s, significant brain development takes place, allowing teenagers to consider a number of different factors when making decisions, increasing capacity for strategic thinking. The capacity for new learning is huge and teaching self regulated learning techniques can assist with reaching potential.

Strategies to Improve Self-Regulation

1. Provide the right environment

Across the curriculum, focus on the process of learning and ensure that students:

- have opportunities to pursue goals they find meaningful
- have choices over activities
- are facilitated to demonstrate initiative
- can engage in challenging and collaborative learning experiences
- can make their own decisions

In this context, even low achieving students exhibit relatively high levels of self efficacy, believe they can learn and do not shy away from challenging tasks.

2. Model the behaviours you want to see

Model self control and self regulation in your own words and actions within a classroom situation.

3. Teach strategies students can use independently

E.g. mind maps, work plans, learning contracts.

4. Provide structure and predictability

Children with self regulation problems are more likely to demonstrate uncontrolled behaviours if they are given too much freedom and flexibility.

Strategies to improve Self-Regulation

5. Scripts

Using scripts is a way of giving students the words to describe the problem they are facing and how to resolve it. Adults use the scripts repeatedly, children get used to them and internalise them into “self-talk”, using them to spontaneously help develop their strategic thinking over time. Scripts should be positive and used mainly under positive circumstances. The general format is:

- **Identify/label the issue:**
This seems to be a problem This is kind of scary/a big deal I think this might be hard for you
- **State the reason:**
It's a problem because ... It's scary/a big deal because ... It's hard because ...
- **Offer a strategy:**
We (or you) can do ...; that should help
- **Offer general reassurance:**
Great; there's always something that works, isn't there?

For more specific scripts for different situations see Project Learnet online reference below.

6. Teach students to review learning



For further information:

Duckworth, K., Akerman, R., MacGregor, A., Salter, E., & Vorhaus, J. (2009). *Self regulated learning: a literature review*. London: Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning.

http://www.projectlearnet.org/tutorials/sr_ef_routines.html

Ylvisaker, M., & Feeney, T. (2008). Helping children without making them helpless: Facilitating development of executive self regulation in children and adolescents. In V. Anderson, R. Jacobs, & P. J. Anderson (Eds.), *Executive functions and the frontal lobes* (pp. 409-438). New York: Psychology Press.

Zimmerman, B. (2000). Attaining self-regulation: A social cognitive perspective. In M. Boekaerts, P. R. Pintrich, & M. Zeidner, *Handbook of self-regulation* (pp 13- 35). San Diego: Academic Press.

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