

Supporting Self-Regulation in School



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What is Self-Regulated Learning?

Self-regulated learners are ...

(a) Metacognitive

- Aware of their strengths and weaknesses as learners
- Aware of the demands that tasks make on them
- Aware of strategies they can use to solve problems and cope with tasks that are hard for them

(b) Motivated for learning

- Genuinely interested in learning
- Believe ability is incremental and can be increased through effort and appropriate strategy use
- Focused on personal progress, not besting their peers or impressing the teacher
- Willing to try challenging tasks
- Persist when faced with difficult problems
- View errors as opportunities to learn

(c) Strategic

- Have a repertoire of strategies
- Recognize when and where to apply particular strategies

Self-regulated learning occurs in classrooms where ...

(a) Students' autonomy is supported

- Choices
- Control over challenge
- Opportunities to collaborate with peers
- Responsibility for evaluating their work

(b) Teachers provide instrumental support

- Establish routines and consistent participation structures
- Model and teach learning and problem solving strategies
- Guide students' thinking and performing
- Guide students' choices

- Guide their use of learning and problem solving strategies
- Provide informative and corrective feedback
- Offer encouragement
- Engage students in discussions about learning and self-regulated learning

(c) Teachers engage in non-threatening evaluation practices

- Embedded in on-going activities
- Emphasize processes as well as products
- Focus on personal progress
- Encourage students to view errors as opportunities to learn
- Involve students in setting criteria for evaluation and self-evaluation

Design tasks that involve all students and provide opportunities to develop self-regulated learning because they ...

- (a) Have **multiple goals**
- (b) Focus on **large chunks of meaning**
- (c) Often **integrate content** across curricular areas
- (d) Extend over **long periods of time**
- (e) Allow for a wide range of **processes and products**

Adapted from: Perry, N. & Drummond, L. (2003). Becoming self-regulated readers and writers. *The Reading Teacher*, 56, 298-310.

Teaching Toward SRL

1. Give students opportunities to ...

(a) Make **choices** about:

- **What** topics they will study
- **How** they will demonstrate their learning
- **Where** they will work
- **Who** will help them or collaborate with them
- **How** they will manage time

(b) **Control challenge** by:

- Choosing a topic that is familiar (they know something about), or is new and challenging but interesting, worthwhile, important
- Drawing on an area of relative strength to create products (e.g., balance writing requirements with opportunities to draw or build or speak or act)
- Choosing a place to work that is quiet, free of distractions, close to a helper, wide open (when they need to spread out)
- Choosing a partner who can be a helper, is working on a similar topic, has good ideas, is encouraging
- Developing a set of strategies that support learning (e.g., what to do when you can't read a word, can't think of anything to write, feel like giving up)

(c) **Evaluate learning** by:

- Keeping a learning log or reflections journal
- Choosing work samples for portfolios
- Preparing for student-led conferences
- Asking, "What have I learned today? What have I learned that I will use again? What can I do to solve this problem? Who will be a good partner for me? What will be a good topic for me? Where is a good place for me to work? Why do I like/value this ... or think it's important?"
- Rating reading, writing, attending, working, helping ... on a scale of ...
- Generating criteria for evaluating learning

2. Support students development of SRL by ...

- (a) **Talking** about learning, making thinking public
- (b) **Modeling** strategies for SRL
- (c) **Building** conditional knowledge about strategies (when, where, why knowledge)
- (d) Using more **coaching** than telling (e.g., What could you do to solve that problem? What will you do when you finish? How will you know ...?)
- (e) **Helping** students to make wise choices and to evaluate their learning

3. Allow students to support one another by ...

- (a) **Sharing** ideas (e.g., encourage them to browse, borrow, build)
- (b) **Sharing** resources
- (c) **Collaborating** on projects
- (d) Offering **feedback** (in the form of suggestions)

Planning a Complex Task

1. Are you working toward multiple goals?

What knowledge do you want students to gain?

What cognitive and metacognitive processes will be developed?

Are these goals linked in a meaningful way?

For example, one teacher had the following goals for her grade 2/3 students as they completed research about animals.

(a) to learn about penguins, chipmunks, etc.

(b) to learn how to do research

(c) to learn to write expository text

(d) to learn to edit

(e) to use the computer as a tool for writing

You might also **include social and/or motivational goals** in your unit.

For example, working collaboratively, picking partners, or offering constructive criticism were social goals in the research about animals unit described above. Challenging yourself and persisting were motivational goals.

2. Are you focusing on large chunks of meaning?

Doing research on animals involves a large chunk of meaning. So does studying the solar system, designing board games that apply principles learned in a unit on probability and statistics, or engaging in urban planning to apply principles of recycling and reusing resources.

3. Is learning extend over time?

How many blocks/sessions will you spend accomplishing your goals? What is an appropriate amount of time to spend on the activities in each session (e.g., do you need time for discussion, extended writing/researching, collaborating)? For the research unit, the teacher spent an entire year doing research about different animals and using "research" as a context to develop writing skills.

4. *Are students engaging in a variety of processes?*

Students who did research about animals were reading and gathering information, organizing facts, writing reports, illustrating or diagramming information.

They set goals and planned their research, and they generated criteria for assessment and applied it in self-evaluations.

5. *Can students create a variety of products to demonstrate their learning?*

Related to their research, students generated reports, pictures, diagrams, models of their animal's habitat, narrative stories and poems based on facts about their animal, reflections about their learning.

Below is a template for planning tasks that I have used when I work with teachers to plan tasks. It provides for a mapping of how a task meets the criteria/principles we have identified for promoting SRL. I hope it helps.

SRL Planning Sheet

Goals/Objectives:

Task/Activity Description:

| Choices | Control Over Challenge | Self-Evaluation |
|----------------|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| | | |

Support:

a) from peers

b) from teacher

Teacher Evaluation:

Materials:

What is Socially Responsible Self-Regulation?¹

Children's abilities regulate themselves in prosocial ways and to give and receive instrumental support that enhances their own and others' learning.

Students who engage in socially responsible self-regulation (SRSR) are:

Metacognitive in the ways they think about other children's learning:

- **Aware** of other children's strengths and weaknesses as learners.
- **Understand** how to tailor constructive feedback to suit their peers' individual strengths and weaknesses as learners.
- **Aware** of strategies they can use to instrumentally support other children's learning.
- **Recognize** how much support a peer needs for learning.
- **Recognize** when a peer is struggling.

Motivated to support other children's learning:

- **Enjoy** providing expertise/knowledge to assist peers with learning.
- **Interested** in other children's projects/tasks.
- **Committed** to and interested in including others in learning activities.
- **Motivated** by the help/support they receive from other children (e.g., "Other peoples ideas can help make me a better learner.").

Strategic in their learning with others:

- **Contribute** ideas to the classroom learning community (e.g., sharing ideas for completing tasks and solving problems).
- **Show** peers resources that may help them with their tasks.
- **Offer** instrumental help to other children when they are struggling with academic tasks.

¹ Based on: Hutchinson, L. (2013). *Young children's engagement in self-regulation in school*. Doctoral Dissertation, UBC.