# Self -Regulated Learning (SRL)

Nina's Note for adult students in online learning environments

Online learning is significantly different from classroom learning, mainly because you must proactively go after the information you need to learn. In the classroom you can sometimes listen passively, yet some information will stick. However, online learning can be very rewarding, as it combines formal and informal (or visible and invisible) learning, and it certainly can have more choices, freedom and flexibility – but with increased freedom come increased ownership and responsibility.

Learning interactions include our individual goals and choices, in addition to the syllabus, and successful adult learners aim to master their own learning process (Zimmerman, 2008). Online learning can be very personalized. Using SRL it can become a rewarding experience of personal and professional growth.
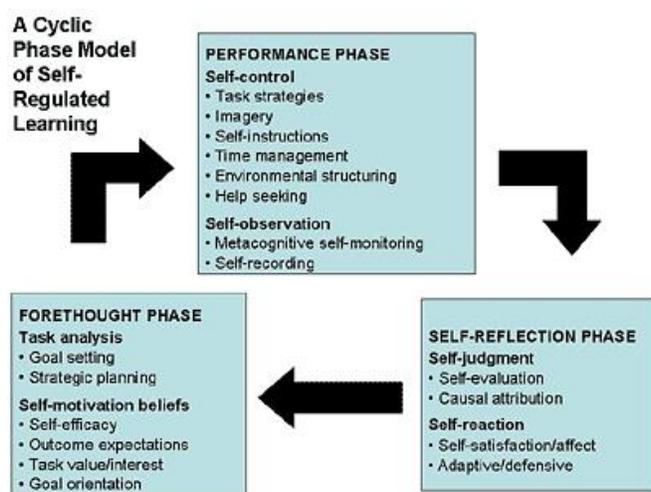
Starting with the planning (Forethought Phase) means looking into your degree plans/syllabi as entities, but also exploring available resources, your classes, assignments, and assessments, so that you *know* what lies ahead and can plan forward. Requesting more information is sometimes necessary. Thinking about your own *completion goals* is important, but *process goals* include the short-term achievements that often keep us going. Remember to think how the courses and tasks relate to your own work (*outcome and value expectations*), and what are your *self-efficacy beliefs* about getting through your readings and tasks. Is it doable?

Then, while being in the trenches of your studies (Performance Phase) it is really important to *monitor* how well you are following your own plan to make necessary adjustments. This phase is where the time management is essential! Can you finish your readings and tasks in the way you planned? If not, then *reassessing your goals* and looping back into the Forethought Phase is a good idea. Creating a *new plan* that is more manageable helps you to move forward. There is no need to punish yourself, or get into the feelings of failure, because that doesn't help you at all! Instead, recent research recognizes the benefits of forgiving your own procrastination. So, create a new goal and a plan to achieve it. A learning plan doesn't have to be overly formal, because your personal preferences matter here!

Self-reflection Phase is where SRL **either triumphs or flops**. This is the time to enjoy achievements, and think about the used learning strategies. It IS important to have realistic self-judgment, and assess & evaluate your own performance. However, all too often I talk with students who are *mentally punishing themselves* about not meeting the timeline, or producing tasks that are not good enough. ***Please stop doing that.*** It greatly harms your learning process (Dweck & Master, 2008, p. 44)!

Remember, learning process is a cycle, and soon we will start again, and get better results next time. Learning process is **not** linear and straightforward, but tangled and messy. What needs to happen here is the transfer of learning – how can you benefit professionally and personally from your learning experience? This is also the time to think about the next Forethought Phase – is there something you want to do differently in the next task or course? And so we begin again. How wonderful! ☺

Dweck, C. S., & Master, A. (2008). Self-theories motivate self-regulated learning. In D.H. Schunk and B.J. Zimmerman (Eds.) *Motivation and self-regulated learning: Theory, research, and applications*, (pp. 31-51). New York: Routledge

Zimmerman, B. J. (2008). Investigating self-regulation and motivation: Historical background, methodological developments, and future prospects. *American Educational Research Journal*, *45*(1), 166-183. (http://archive.sciencewatch.com/dr/erf/2011/11decerf/11decerfZimm/)