



**Strategies
and Tools for**

Self-Regulation in the Classroom

**Boost Student Focus
and Meet Learning Goals**

RICHARD M. CASH, Ed.D.

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Boost Student Focus and Meet Learning Goals

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Dedication

To my husband, Craig Feltmann, thank you for putting up with me during the process of writing this book. Your support and encouragement show in this work.

To my dear sister, Susan Swinick, thank you for your undying love and friendship and for “keeping me in line.”

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Introduction

In an ever-evolving world, the ability to learn effectively and independently is indispensable. Our educational systems, while rich in information, often overlook a critical aspect of learning: self-regulation. *Self-regulation* refers to a set of skills that empower students to take charge of their learning, set goals, manage their emotions, and reflect on their progress.

Self-regulation is a cornerstone of effective learning in today's complex educational landscape. As we navigate the post-pandemic era, embrace technological advancements, and address the rising tide of anxiety, stress, and trauma, we can't lose sight of the critical need to foster self-regulation skills. The concerted efforts of educators, institutions, and families to equip students with the ability to manage their feelings, behaviors, and thinking will empower them to overcome challenges, achieve their goals, and thrive.

Self-regulation for learning (SRL) influences various aspects of a learner's life, from academic performance to personal development. Self-regulated learners tend to be more motivated, resilient, and adaptable, making them better equipped to handle challenges as they arise. They also possess the ability to sift through data, prioritize tasks, and stay focused, helping them navigate the information overload of today's connected and fast-paced world while staying on track to achieve their objectives.

Strategies and Tools for Self-Regulation in the Classroom aims to provide you with tools and techniques you can use to enhance learners' capacities to self-regulate, boosting their success in the classroom and beyond.

The ABCs of Self-Regulation

SRL is the process by which learners control their **A**ffect, **B**ehavior, and **C**ognition to achieve learning goals. These are the ABCs of learning, and you'll find them referenced often throughout the strategies in this book.

Affect refers to the emotional aspects of self-regulation, including feelings, moods, and attitudes that influence learning. Positive affect, such as enthusiasm and interest, can enhance motivation and engagement, while negative affect, such as anxiety or frustration, can hinder learning processes.

Behavioral regulation within the classroom involves the actions and habits that learners engage in to achieve the learning objectives. It includes managing time, organizing resources, and maintaining a conducive learning environment.

Cognitive regulation encompasses the mental processes involved in learning, such as attention, memory, and problem-solving. Developing these cognitive skills is essential for effective self-regulation.

These three dimensions of SRL are tightly interwoven and, in self-regulated learners, work in tandem.

The Four Phases of Learning

Learning is a dynamic and multifaceted process that can be broken down into four key phases:

1. Building confidence for learning
2. Setting and managing learning goals
3. Monitoring and adjusting learning techniques
4. Reviewing and reflecting on learning

Understanding and implementing these phases can significantly enhance students' learning experiences and outcomes, which is why the strategies in these pages are structured around these four learning phases.

Students develop greater self-efficacy and positive self-beliefs when they can successfully engage through the learning process. This four-phase cyclical process also enhances students' self-regulation for learning, since each phase requires different skills and techniques.

Why This Book

When I wrote *Self-Regulation in the Classroom: Helping Students Learn How to Learn* in 2016, it was a pioneering book on the theory of SRL. It delves deeply into the theoretical underpinnings and practical applications of SRL, offering educators a comprehensive resource to enhance their teaching strategies. From the feedback I received, it became clear that educators found the theoretical insights valuable, but they sought a more straightforward approach for practical implementation. They wanted clear strategies and tools to help students develop self-regulation skills in the classroom, in real time.

Strategies and Tools for Self-Regulation in the Classroom delivers just that. While the book can be used independently, I advise that you review *Self-Regulation in the Classroom* for a sound understanding of the background and fundamentals of self-regulation for learning. This builds a solid foundation from which you can adapt the strategies in this book to your specific classroom environment and student needs.

This book is designed for educators working in grades 3–12, as well as anyone interested in enhancing students' learning processes. Whether you have a student struggling to keep up with coursework, are seeking to better support all your students, or are looking to acquire new skills yourself, this book offers practical strategies you can tailor to your goals. It can also be a handy guide for advisory or homeroom periods, where you may have small amounts of time (between fifteen and forty-five minutes) you can use to guide students toward greater self-regulation for learning. You may also use the strategies in your classroom during instruction to help prepare students for post-secondary education and careers.

How to Use This Book

Drawing from research in educational psychology, neuroscience, and cognitive science, *Strategies and Tools for Self-Regulation in the Classroom* presents evidence-based strategies, tools, and techniques that are both effective and easy to implement. The book is made up of four parts that are structured around the four phases of learning, guiding you through fundamental concepts of self-regulation for each phase.

Each concept includes various strategies and tools you can incorporate into your practice and teach to students to help them build specific self-regulation skills and habits. And each section ends with an activity to help students practice the skills they're learning. Finally, the appendix offers several forms and graphic organizers students can use again and again throughout the learning process and the school year.

Here's what you'll find in each part.

PART I: FOSTERING CONFIDENCE FOR LEARNING

The initial phase of learning involves building and nurturing learner confidence. Confidence is a critical component of learning, as it motivates individuals to engage with materials and information and persist through challenges. Here's what's included in part I:

- › **Attitude Counts.** Developing a positive outlook helps learners approach challenges with resilience and optimism, increasing their motivation and persistence.
- › **Being On Time.** Timeliness goes beyond arriving to appointments or class at the scheduled hour. It includes prioritizing tasks and meeting deadlines, and it can reduce students' stress overall, leading to a more balanced and productive learning experience.

- › **Learning Preferences.** Recognizing their individual learning preferences enables students to adopt strategies that suit them best, enhancing their comprehension and retention of information.
- › **Get Organized.** Organizational skills help learners keep track of materials, assignments, and deadlines, fostering a more efficient and structured approach to their studies.
- › **Health and Well-Being.** Maintaining physical and mental well-being through proper nutrition, exercise, and rest ensures that students have the energy and focus needed for effective learning.

PART II: SETTING AND MANAGING LEARNING GOALS

Once confidence is established, the next phase of learning involves setting clear and achievable goals. Goals provide direction and purpose, guiding learners' efforts and focus. Here's what's covered in part II:

- › **Setting Learning Goals.** Knowing how to set and work toward well-defined goals helps learners focus on what they want to achieve.
- › **Time Management.** Establishing clear parameters for study sessions and tasks helps students manage their time efficiently and avoid procrastination. This practice also helps maintain a balanced schedule, ensuring that students are allocating sufficient time for learning, rest, and other activities.
- › **Overcoming Obstacles.** Anticipating and preparing for potential challenges in the learning journey helps students develop resilience and problem-solving skills. By identifying possible obstacles in advance, learners can devise strategies to overcome them, reducing stress and maintaining steady progress toward their goals. This proactive approach fosters a growth mindset and builds students' confidence in their abilities to overcome difficulties.

PART III: MONITORING AND ADJUSTING LEARNING TECHNIQUES

The third phase of learning involves actively monitoring progress and making necessary adjustments to ensure that learning goals are met. Because it is the most robust phase of learning, part III has the most tools and strategies of the four parts in this book. It includes the following:

- › **Listening.** Being a good listener is crucial, as it allows a learner to fully understand and engage with the material being presented. Listening involves not just hearing information but truly comprehending it, which can lead to better retention and more meaningful discussions.
- › **Note-Taking.** Taking effective notes is an essential part of the learning process. It helps students organize and consolidate information, making it easier to review and study later. Effective notes capture the key points and concepts, aiding memory and understanding.
- › **Inquiry.** Asking effective questions is a powerful tool for clarifying doubts, deepening knowledge, and fostering critical thinking. Good questions encourage interaction and engagement, and they stimulate further exploration of subject matter.
- › **Study Methods That Work.** Employing a variety of study techniques can address students' various learning preferences and keep the study process dynamic and interesting. It also enhances comprehension and retention.
- › **Home Study, Not Homework.** It is vital that students continuously assess their understanding and progress to ensure that they're meeting their learning goals. This allows for timely adjustments to strategies and techniques, leading to more effective and efficient learning.

- › **Technology.** Technology can greatly enhance the learning process by providing access to a wide range of resources, tools, and information. Effective use of technology also enables collaboration and communication with peers and teachers, further enriching the learning experience.

PART IV: REVIEWING AND REFLECTING ON LEARNING

The final phase consolidates learning and prepares learners for future endeavors. Part IV covers these topics:

- › **Self-Assessment.** Regularly revisiting and summarizing learned material reinforces learners' retention and understanding.
- › **Reflection.** Reflecting on the learning journey helps students identify what worked well, what could be improved, and how the strategies they used can be applied to future learning experiences.
- › **Reward, Relax, Recharge.** Celebrating milestones and accomplishments, as well as relaxing and recharging for what comes next, helps students maintain motivation for learning and acknowledge their efforts.

SELF-REGULATION FOR ALL AGES

When determining which strategies and activities in this book to teach and use with your students, it is crucial to consider their age and developmental stage to ensure that the activities and ideas are engaging, appropriate, and effective. Younger and older students have different interests, abilities, and learning preferences, requiring tailored approaches to their educational experiences and to developing their SRL skills. For younger students, activities should focus on building fundamental SRL skills such as sharing, cooperation, communication, and mindfulness. Role-playing, storytelling, and group games can effectively teach these skills. For older students, self-regulation activities can be more sophisticated, including team-building exercises, leadership training, and peer mediation. These activities address the complex social dynamics, stressors, and emotional challenges adolescents face. Techniques such as journaling, meditation, and counseling sessions can be beneficial.

For all students, it is essential to focus on balancing the ABCs (Affect, Behavior, and Cognition) of SRL. This kind of self-reflection, whether undertaken by younger or older students, can have a powerful impact on their personal and academic development.

Conclusion

Strategies and Tools for Self-Regulation in the Classroom is your companion for guiding students to become more effective, independent, and resilient learners. By helping students master the art of self-regulation, you can help them unlock their full potential and achieve your teaching goals with confidence and ease.

I invite you to embark on this work equipped with the knowledge and tools to assist your students in taking control of their learning and thriving in an ever-changing world. Together, let's explore the possibilities and grow engaged, empowered, self-regulated learners.

PART I:

Fostering Confidence for Learning

Engagement and confidence are two fundamental psychological constructs that often intersect and influence each other. This intricate relationship can significantly impact students' performance, well-being, and overall success.

At its core, engagement is the ability to focus and resist distractions—a challenge in a world filled with distraction. Technology and media, emotional responses and physical needs, interaction and isolation—they all constantly compete for students' attention. And they all affect students' abilities to stay involved, committed, and enthusiastic about activities or tasks in the classroom.

Confidence is feeling sure of oneself and one's abilities and secure in what one can accomplish. It is not about arrogance or about feeling or being better than others. Confident learners are more likely to ask questions, seek help, acknowledge mistakes, take charge of their learning, set realistic goals, and put forth effort. In other words, confident learners are more likely to engage in learning.

Confidence is characteristic of self-regulated learners. And it is not limited to the affective dimension of SRL. Confident learners know the value of hard work and of putting effort into building their skills. They also must keep in check their internal dialogue and sense of self-belief to build self-efficacy, or trust in themselves to analyze their performance and make necessary adjustments.

The strategies in this section can assist you in developing confident, engaged, and self-regulated learners who are ready to take ownership of their learning.

Attitude Counts

Psychologically, the term *attitude* refers to “a set of emotions, beliefs, and behaviors toward a particular object, person, thing, or event. Attitude can also be described as the way we evaluate something or someone” (Cherry 2024). The three dimensions of self-regulation each have a substantial impact on a student’s attitude toward learning. The cognitive dimension includes how students think about themselves—their self-beliefs—and their awareness of their abilities—their self-efficacy (cognition). Students’ self-beliefs and self-efficacy are strongly related to the attitudes they have about a topic, subject, or learning environment (affect). And students’ attitudes have significant impacts on what they do (behavior) and the general feelings they bear toward themselves and others.

Students’ attitudes also direct their attention toward learning or away from learning. And their attitudes can be impacted by the level of confidence students feel in the classroom and in themselves as learners. You’ve likely seen this in action, and research backs it up: A positive attitude can have a significant influence on a child’s academic learning and success (Chen et al. 2018). Therefore, it is important that students learn how to identify their attitudes and ways to shift them, when needed, to maintain confidence through learning challenges.

Strategies for Teachers

As a teacher, you are essential to the development of student attitudes and classroom culture! The strategies that follow help you build a classroom environment that promotes student confidence, intellectual risk-taking, and a positive attitude toward learning.

ENSURE THAT STUDENTS FEEL SAFE AND COMFORTABLE

One of the most effective ways to build and support positive student attitude and confidence toward learning is to ensure that students feel safe and comfortable in the learning space. This includes feeling safe from bullying, name-calling, and sarcasm; safe to take intellectual risks and be wrong without retribution; safe to work alone or with others; and safe to be themselves.

Here are a few ways to increase student comfort and safety. Also see pages 35–38 in *Self-Regulation in the Classroom: Helping Students Learn How to Learn* for more ideas.

- › **Smile at your students and encourage them to smile at you!** Show a humorous clip from a movie, tell a funny story or joke, show a single-frame cartoon based on what’s going on in class, and share good news.
- › **Greet students as they enter the room.** When a student is late, rather than use punitive language (“Why are you late?”), welcome them in (“I’m so glad you’re here.”).
- › **Routinely celebrate students’ successes**, no matter how small.
- › **Use humor, *not* sarcasm.** Since sarcasm is often used to belittle or put someone down, students may find sarcastic remarks hurtful, either to themselves or to others.
- › **Allow students to choose where they sit**, within reason.
- › **If you have space, provide different types of seats** (barstools, beanbags, pillows, carpet space, desks, tables).
- › **Avoid harsh lighting** (natural light is best), loud sounds/noises, and strong smells/odors (this includes perfumes and colognes, scented lotions, and essential oils).

CREATE A PREDICTABLE ENVIRONMENT

You are a big part of the classroom environment, so be sure you are consistent in your mood. Try to stay even-keeled when you are having a bad day or are dealing with stress. Talk to your students about how you manage your stress in positive ways and how you maintain a positive attitude. Make sure to show students how you can laugh at yourself when you make a mistake. Other ways to create a predictable classroom environment include the following:

- › posting timelines, schedules, and due dates
- › posting lesson objectives and the “why” of the learning
- › helping students adjust to changes and disruptions

CREATE POSITIVE NORMS AND EXPECTATIONS

You won’t have an overall positive classroom atmosphere that supports positive attitudes toward learning if you’re always telling students what they can’t or shouldn’t do. Start your classroom norms/expectations with “Do,” keep them short and general rather than specific, and use simple language that is direct and to the point. Here are a few examples:

- › Do support each other.
- › Do be safe and respectful.
- › Do follow directions.

Keep the number of norms/expectations to three to five. Be sure to review them with students routinely, using visuals or graphics to help students seal them into memory, and expect that students be able to recite the classroom norms when asked. You can also post your norms/expectations, along with any supporting graphics, as a visual reminder. Apply your classroom norms consistently, and offer support or guidance as needed to help students follow the norms.

USE AFFIRMATIONS

Affirmations are an easy tool you can use to support an overall positive atmosphere and boost student confidence in your classroom. Here are a few ideas for how to incorporate affirmations into your daily practice:

- › **Create an affirmations wall in your space and fill it with positive phrases.** Students can look at the wall and pick a positive phrase they’ll say to themselves throughout the class period, day, or week.
- › **Write affirmations on sticky notes and stick them around the external frame of your classroom door.** Ask students to take one as they enter the room. They can post their chosen affirmations on their desks as a reminder of the kind messages they’d like to tell themselves. Students then create their own affirmations to replace the ones they take from the doorframe. This way you never run out of positive messages.
- › **Have students work in teams to create alphabet books of positive affirmations.** The more creative they get, the better. Here are a few examples. I am/we are:
 - **A:** amazing, awesome, astounding
 - **B:** beautiful, breathtaking, brilliant
 - **C:** caring, creative, cheerful
 - **D:** dynamic, determined, diligent

Also, be sure to mix up your affirmations. So often, we get stuck using a few phrases repeatedly. This repetition can start to ring hollow or feel inauthentic to students. Instead, try to use a variety of affirming messages to lighten the mood in your classroom.

USE ENCOURAGING LANGUAGE

Using encouraging language is another way to help students keep a positive attitude. As with affirmations, try to use a variety of encouraging statements to help students feel individually important. Here are twenty phrases you might incorporate into your interactions with students.

20 Affirming Statements of Encouragement

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. I believe in you! | 12. I recognize your talent. |
| 2. You've got this. | 13. Keep working at it. You will get it. |
| 3. We are all in this together. | 14. You may have failed, but that doesn't mean you are a failure. |
| 4. I'm here to help you, guide you, and ensure your success. | 15. Mistakes are part of the learning process. What will you do differently next time? |
| 5. I'm here to support you. | 16. Never be afraid to ask questions. |
| 6. I'm grateful to have you in my class. | 17. Hang in there. Tomorrow is a new day. |
| 7. I'm lucky you are sharing your thoughts. | 18. Don't give up! You've got this. |
| 8. You are a hard worker, and it is paying off. | 19. Trust yourself and keep going. Worrying about the outcome won't change it. |
| 9. You can always count on me to be in your corner. | 20. Breathe! |
| 10. You are doing great things. | |
| 11. Your effort is what is going to make you successful. | |

INVITE SHOUT-OUTS

Near the end of a period or day, encourage students to recognize a peer or peers who represented positivity or were helpful to others' learning. Share an example or two to get the group started:

- › "I want to recognize Nico for being helpful to me during the lesson."
- › "A shout-out to Mariko for always being a positive influence."
- › "Here's to Bobbi, who has shown me how to work hard."
- › "Thank you, Amalia, Sean, and Araby, for being great teammates."
- › "Cheers to Corey and Monica for their accomplishments this week."

Acknowledging others and being acknowledged in a public way supports students' positive attitudes and individual confidence. Celebrating the help students offer one another and the effort they put forth toward learning also promotes the value of being in a learning community.

BUILD IN BRAIN BREAKS

The brain learns information best when allowed time to process and connect new ideas. To support an overall positive classroom atmosphere, try to adhere to the 10:2/20:2 rule. This rule reflects the amount of information the brain can handle before it needs to download or use that information.

- › **For students who need more support, use the 10:2 model.** For every ten minutes of instruction, allow up to two minutes for discussion, application, movement, or restating what was learned.
- › **For students who are more self-regulated, use the 20:2 model.** For every twenty minutes of instruction, allow up to two minutes for discussion, application, movement, or restating what was learned.

Techniques and Tools for Students

Attitude matters! And students' attitudes have a tremendous influence on many areas of their lives. Share these tools and techniques to help students build confidence and maintain a positive attitude.

ADDRESS NEGATIVE THOUGHTS

One way students can maintain confidence and a positive attitude is to talk back to thoughts that aren't so positive. Teach students to sit quietly and listen to their self-talk before class and periodically throughout a lesson. Is it positive or negative? If a student's self-talk is negative, they can recite an affirmation silently.

Instruct students that when negative self-talk begins, they should pause and try to identify what may be causing the negative talk. Here are a number of factors to consider:

- › the environment, such as room temperature, smells, harsh lighting, or sounds ("It's too noisy in here.")
- › people or social interactions ("Kaeleigh bothers me when we work together.")
- › content ability or interest ("I'm bad at math/math is boring.")
- › past events ("Last time I failed, so I'll probably fail again.")
- › future worries ("If I don't get an A, my parents will be mad.")
- › the teacher ("Ms. Johnson doesn't like me.")
- › distractors, such as smartphones or other external distractions ("I need my phone or else I won't know what's happening with my friends.")
- › lack of reward or influence of expected/perceived punishment ("What do I need to get an A?")
- › comparison to others ("Jibril always gets to be first.")
- › behaviors of others ("My brother is so annoying!")

After students have identified negative thoughts, it's time to challenge and address them. Teach these techniques.

Challenge Negative Thoughts

One of the easiest ways to do this is to ask these three questions:

1. Is the thought true?
2. Is the thought helpful?
3. Is the thought real?

Often, the answer to these questions is no, but negative thoughts can be connected to real worries a student has. When negative thoughts are connected to worries, remind students that though their worries may be very real, worrying cannot change the eventual outcome.

The Power of Yet

This is an easy tool to teach, and even easier for students to use. All students have to do is add the word *yet* to the end of their negative thoughts. The Power of Yet can help students understand that many of the obstacles in their lives are temporary. And approaching hurdles with a positive attitude shows that they are willing to try.

- › I can't do this . . . yet.
- › I don't like this . . . yet.
- › I'm not good at this . . . yet.

USE AFFIRMATIONS

Teach students how to build their own positive and affirming self-talk. Share the list of positive affirmations on page 119 and ask students to choose three to five affirmations that they'll say to themselves every day. They can also create their own affirmations to add to the list. Discuss times when they will use their affirmations. Will they say them every morning? Before bed? Write them on an index card or sticky note that they carry with them? Talk about the importance of returning to affirmations in moments of struggle and self-doubt, when experiencing negative self-talk, or when confidence slips.



MORE ATTITUDE BOOSTERS

Share these attitude-boosting tips with students and incorporate them into your teaching practice.

- › Make sure to laugh every day.
- › Focus on goals.
- › Surround yourself with positive people.
- › Listen to music that makes you happy.
- › Practice yoga or mindfulness.
- › Breathe! Take in a deep breath through the nose, hold it for three seconds, and exhale out through the mouth to release stress, anxiety, fear—and negative thoughts. Repeat as many times as needed.

CREATIVE DRAMATICS

Creative dramas are wonderful activities to do at the beginning of a school year or quarter, or whenever you have a new group of students come together. These collaborative and playful games help students become comfortable with one another, learn to respect personal space, and learn peers' names—all of which have a positive impact on their attitudes and confidence in the classroom. All students should participate in creative dramas to the best of their abilities. Students with physical limitations move as they can—no child should be excluded due to any limitation.

If a student is unwilling or unable to participate by following directions, ask them to watch the game from the sidelines. Have the student observe the rest of the group, citing the ways their peers demonstrated the skills being practiced in the activity or contributed to the success of the group.

Creative dramas can be used during advisory periods or in that last bit of time at the end of class. You can also incorporate content connections. Some examples include having students walk as if they're a character from a book (language arts) or in particular shapes (math) during a Space Walk activity; inviting them to create new legislation (social studies) or hybrid organisms (science) during an Ad Game; or switching up the cards or categories in a ROLE game (for example, use ROBE—reaction, outcome, bond, element—categories in science).

SPACE WALK

In this game, students must work together to move around each other in space and to start and stop as one.

Process:

1. Define a "space" that is clear of obstruction and barriers. Show students the boundaries of the space—students must stay within the boundaries while playing the game.
2. Ask students to come to the space and walk without making any sounds. (You might do this with the full group or a small group, depending on the size of your space.) Students are to pay attention to others in the space, avoid bumping into each other, and stay aware of the group.
3. Inform the group that they are to stop as one when you say "STOP." They start walking again when you say "START."
4. Repeat the start and stop as many times as necessary until the group can stop as one.

Other considerations: To switch things up, have students try different types of walking, such as walking in pudding, walking with purpose, walking to the principal's office, or walking to a favorite event. They might also try walking as if they're wearing different types of shoes, such as athletic shoes, high heels, sandals, a shoe with a broken heel, shoes that are too big/small, clown shoes, and so on. You might also consider having a student lead this activity while you watch the group and observe how students interact, how well they follow directions, and how well they can move as one.

SPACE WALK—GIVE AND TAKE

In this game, students communicate nonverbally as they pass or take movement from each other.

Process:

1. Begin this activity with the Space Walk. Have the group stop and assume a comfortable position.
2. **Give:** In Give, only one person may move at a time. The leader moves around the group, weaving in and out of the other group members. The leader stops and gives the movement over to another member. This student is the new leader. There is no need to verbally alert the new leader of the “give”—students should sense that they have been given the opportunity to move. This passing of movement continues until all members have had a chance to move. The activity is done in silence, until students are comfortable and understand the method.
3. **Take:** Now students do the opposite of Give. One person moves until another member “takes” the movement away. Again, no words or signals should be exchanged. Students must build a sense of community to “feel” when someone takes the movement away. If more than one student moves, call “STOP” to pause the members. Have them regroup, refocus, and retry.

Other considerations: Students not moving should watch for members who may not be giving or taking with fairness. Encourage students to use their whole bodies as they move, noting that they can walk tall, crouch, or even crawl.



AD GAME

In this game, you will ask students to SCAMPER a new product. SCAMPER is an acronym that was developed in the business community to help people come up with new ideas and think outside the box. You can use this technique to guide students to think more broadly about a topic, come up with unique products or projects, and make learning more fun. Here’s what SCAMPER stands for: **Substitute, Combine, Adapt/adjust/add, Modify/minimize/maximize, Put to other use, Eliminate, Reverse/revise/rearrange.**

Process:

1. Put students in teams of five to eight.
2. Have each team SCAMPER an existing product or create something entirely new.
3. After students have SCAMPERed, tell them they will act as advertising teams to sell their new products. However, they may not confer with others on their team.
4. Students form a line with their team and randomly step forward to make a statement that describes the worthiness of their team’s product. After the first person, each student begins their statement with “Yes, and . . .” to build on the prior statement.
5. Continue until all team members have had a chance to share a statement. Remember: There are no mistakes—only opportunities.

Other considerations: Begin by SCAMPERing common objects, such as a pencil or pen, to create new products until students are accustomed to the process. Encourage students to SCAMPER to solve problems in their daily lives.



THINK FAST!

In this game, students must pay attention and work together to complete rounds faster than other groups.

Process:

1. Collect an assortment of objects (such as a small empty container, a foot of plastic tubing, a wooden spoon) and place them in a large bag.
2. Arrange students in group of eight to ten. Have each group pull one object out of the bag.
3. Students pass the object around their group, with each person coming up with a new way to use the object or a new idea for what the object could be (other than what it really is). Students may not repeat what someone else has said, nor can they “pass.” The group that can get the object around the circle the fastest “wins” the round.
4. Play as many rounds as desired.

Other considerations: Encourage students to use all their senses while doing this activity. For students who need more time to think, practice this activity without the pressure of speed—slowly building student confidence before attempting the speed challenge.



R.O.L.E.

Process:

1. Using four different colors of index cards, create four categories: **Role**, **Occasion**, **Location**, and **Emotion**. On the cards, write words that correspond to each of the categories. For example:
 - › Role: mechanic, florist, patrol officer
 - › Occasion: birthday, wedding, graduation
 - › Location: at a lake, on a boat, in a park
 - › Emotion: happy, sad, crabby

You can also have teams create their own sets of ROLE cards.

2. Put students in small groups. Each group randomly selects one card from each category.
3. Each group must create a scene or develop a story that includes all four categories. Then each group presents their scene or story to the other groups.
4. At the end of each performance, students in the audience guess which four cards the performing group drew.

Other considerations: On the cards, use content vocabulary or words that may be unfamiliar to students—they can investigate the words and then use them within multiple contexts.



DR. KNOW-IT-ALL

In this activity, a small group of students must work together as “one mind” to be Dr. Know-It-All. This is a great activity for review or to prepare students for an upcoming quiz or exam.

Process:

1. Arrange five to eight chairs at the front of your space. Invite students to fill the seats. Tell them they are to act as the brain of Dr. Know-It-All to answer questions from the class.
2. Have a student ask Dr. Know-It-All a question. Alternatively, you might have students work collaboratively to come up with a question. The students acting as Dr. Know-It-All answer the question. However, each member may say only one word. When all members have spoken their one word, they should have answered the question.
3. If incorrect answers happen, it is up to students to ask follow-up questions to correct the misinformation. Remember: There are no mistakes—only opportunities.
4. Rotate the groups, making sure every student gets a chance to be a part of the mind of Dr. Know-It-All.

Other considerations: It's helpful if you or a student acts as a moderator during this activity. Then, when nonsensical or incorrect answers happen, the moderator can redirect the question for Dr. Know-It-All to try again. The moderator can also record the one-word responses on chart paper or the board to help the group make sense of Dr. Know-It-All's answers.

Being on Time

At most schools, there's a start and end time for the day and for classes. Being on time is a cultural expectation, and most teachers have had a student arrive late, causing the student to miss key information or you to restart your instruction. But being on time isn't just important in the classroom—it's a lifelong skill with benefits that will serve students far beyond their school years.

Punctuality is often regarded as a virtue that reflects a person's commitment, reliability, and respect for others. Whether for a class, a restaurant reservation, or a doctor's appointment, being on time shows consideration for everyone involved—whether that's a teacher, peers, service staff, or a doctor. In a connected world, knowing the time on the other side of the country or the globe is critical to an efficient work schedule.

The ability to be punctual can also significantly influence a person's confidence and overall well-being. Being on time helps reduce anxiety and stress. It also helps in maintaining relationships with friends, family, and colleagues by respecting others' time. It can even help a person save money by avoiding late fees and charges for rush orders.

Being on time can be difficult for students, since it requires planning. It can also be difficult because, until students can get themselves out the door and where they need to go without an adult, their ability to be on time for school is dependent on others. Timeliness can also be interrupted by technical challenges or difficulties translating time differences. However, students can still practice punctuality during the school day—ensuring they arrive on time to different classes, return from lunch on time, and keep track of their responsibilities and activities for the day and week. To be punctual, students need to learn how to plan and how to adjust their plan if something happens along the way.

In the classroom, punctuality is more than a mere habit; it is a fundamental characteristic of self-regulated learners, and it promotes a positive and productive learning environment. Being on time (behavior) enhances student focus (cognition) by ensuring that learners are engaging from the beginning of a task or activity and not missing out on important announcements or introductory information. In this way, punctuality can lead to better academic performance, which in turn will build students' confidence in learning by reducing stress and anxiety (affect). Punctuality demonstrates a person's level of discipline and time management. And it is a skill that students will use every day of their lives.

Strategies for Teachers

Though punctuality is most dependent upon students, teachers can still provide structures in the classroom to encourage student timeliness and show students how they keep themselves on track. Following are a few ideas for creating a positive learning environment that teaches students the power of punctuality. For more strategies on setting and managing time, see the section on time management in part II (page 51).

POST SCHEDULES AND TIMELINES

Share your schedule for the day in a location where students can easily see it. As you move through the day, try to highlight what's to come or when the next period/subject begins.

You can also post your timeline for each class period, including how long you'll spend on each part of the lesson. For example:

- 9:00–9:05 Introduction of the objectives for the lesson (5 minutes)
- 9:15–9:30 Mini-lesson on the skill to be developed (15 minutes)
- 9:30–9:32 Organize into small working groups (2 minutes)

- › 9:32–9:47 Small working group time (15 minutes)
- › 9:47–9:57 Wrap up and set the agenda for the next day (10 minutes)
- › 9:57–10:00 Reflection and reward (3 minutes)

Refer to the timeline as you move through your lessons. When you get off track or something takes longer than planned, talk about how you will adjust to get back on schedule.

STICK TO THE SCHEDULE

There will always be the occasional fire drill or disruptive announcement to contend with when teaching. Those events are beyond your control. However, when you are in control, make sure to adhere to your schedule as closely as possible, as often as you can. If you want students to be on time, you must be on time too. You can also show students how you work your schedule around planned events like pep rallies and field trips—and how you ensure that the class shows up on time for them.

Techniques and Tools for Students

The following techniques and tools can help students stay on time and increase their productivity, happiness, and social connections. For more on helping students set and manage their time, see the section on time management in part II (page 51).

FIGURE OUT WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE

Some students are chronically late. They may be prone to anxiety or highly distractable or they might be perfectionists, procrastinators, or just poor planners. Or they may be late due to forces beyond their control. To avoid tardiness as a habit, focus on timeliness where students have some degree of control. Help them figure out what may be the root cause of their tardiness in these situations, then work from there.

CREATE AND FOLLOW A SCHEDULE

Setting and maintaining a schedule can improve a student's academic performance by helping them adjust how they use their time each day. Following a schedule can also help students reduce stress, increase organization, and take charge of their learning. To help them learn to create and use schedules, try the following ideas.

Set a Schedule

To teach the skill of setting a schedule, first show students how to break their activities and responsibilities into the following categories:

- › Academic time (this includes their class schedule, how much time they need for studying, and how many projects/assignments they have)
- › Extracurricular activities (this includes their activities and work before, during, and after school)
- › Self-care time (this includes when they wind down, go to bed, and wake up; how much time they spend exercising; and mealtimes)
- › Social time (this includes the time they spend socializing with family and friends)
- › Personal time (this includes time for activities, hobbies, responsibilities at home, and errands)

After students have categorized their time, it's time to put everything on their calendars. Students may use electronic calendars or scheduling apps, paper calendars, or a combination of both.

- › **Electronic calendars.** Some students, and especially older students, may prefer to use their personal devices for scheduling. There are many software applications available. You can help them choose one that fits their lifestyle, learning preferences, and budget. They can install it on their device or laptop—and you can show them how to add notifications so the app can help them stay on track. Let students know that while it can be annoying at first to have an app inform them about every move they need to make, in time they may come to appreciate the convenience of being on time and working efficiently. If they try an electronic schedule for a few weeks and it's not working for them, they should try a different one. And there's always the option to use a physical calendar or planner instead.
- › **Physical calendars.** Many people like to have a paper calendar instead of, or in addition to, an electronic one. Using a paper calendar or planner is an important strategy for younger students, who often don't have access to personal electronic devices. Two examples of paper calendars—daily and weekly—are included on pages 120 and 121. Have students practice using different types of physical calendars to find the one that best fits their needs or work habits.

When they're beginning to use schedules, encourage students to try the following tips:

- › **Keep the schedule as simple as possible.** Being too elaborate and posting too many things into the schedule may make it seem daunting and overwhelming.
- › **Break down the schedule into three parts of the day:** before school, during school, and after school.
- › **Once a simplified schedule is mastered, work in the five categories** (listed above) to make the schedule more comprehensive.
- › **In general, try to plan more time than expected in the schedule.** This can help when hurdles or other things come up, and it can reduce stress. And when hurdles don't pop up and a project is completed before it's due, celebrate by inserting some fun or relaxation into the day.

A template for a weekly schedule. At the top, it says "Weekly Schedule" in green. Below that is a line for "Name:" and "Date:". The main part of the template is a grid with columns for the days of the week: Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. To the left of the grid, there are three rows labeled "Before School", "At School", and "After School". The grid cells are empty for planning.

A template for a daily schedule. At the top, it says "Daily Schedule" in green. Below that is a line for "Name:" and "Date:". The main part of the template is a vertical list of time slots from 6-7 a.m. to 9-10 p.m. To the right of the time slots, there are three sections: "Today's Goal", "Priorities", and "To-Do List". The time slots are empty for planning.

Monitor the Schedule

While it's important that students follow their schedules, it's also important that they monitor them and allow for flexibility. Remind students not to let the schedule control them. Rather, it's there to inform, guide, and ensure that they are planful and have routines. Using timers and tracking work time are two ways students can monitor their schedules.

Timers can help students plan their time, pace their work, and transition from one activity to another. The use of timers while learning can also help students focus their attention, predict how much work needs to happen within a set time, and manage stressful situations.

A great way to get students accustomed to using timers is to incorporate them into instruction. Some students may enjoy visual timers (like a kitchen timer), while some may like timers that show minutes and seconds counting down. Use various kinds of timers in your instruction to expose students to different types.

Timers can also be used to take efficient breaks. Breaks during learning are essential to maintaining focus and attention. During challenging activities, students may go off task easily. Setting timers so they know when they can take a break can help them stay focused until break time. Setting timers for the break itself can help students more easily transition back into work time when it ends.

As students move through their schedules, it's a good practice for them to track their time. They can note how much time it takes to complete each task or assignment. Was it more or less time than they'd originally allotted? (It can be especially helpful to use a timer for this kind of tracking.) Knowing how much time certain tasks took can be useful in setting the schedule next time. And knowing how much time they have and how much time they need may help students manage their time and schedule their days more efficiently. They may find that they have extra time to sleep in, hang out with friends, or relax.

Tracking work time can also make it clear to students when they are running behind or will not meet a due date. When they know they're running behind, they can adjust. Offer these ideas:

- › Negotiate with the teacher for more time or a pared-down assignment.
- › Prioritize the aspects of the project (see pages 34–35 for tips on prioritizing tasks) and complete what is essential.
- › Submit quality partial work to show where they are headed for the final product.

Review Old Schedules

Part of creating and following a schedule is reviewing old schedules (from the past week or month) to identify what didn't work and make adjustments for the future. You can assist students in noting in their schedules where and when there was a need for more time or when things got in the way. Part of this involves looking back at when they didn't meet a due date or ran out of time. In reviewing such past mistakes, encourage students to be good to themselves and try not to worry too much about what's already happened. The experience is a learning opportunity. It's also important to note when challenges were met, things got in on time, and accomplishments happened—and then celebrate. Reflecting on their time in learning can help students do better next time!

Sometimes students (and adults) get in over their heads by saying yes too often. When students review their schedules, encourage them to look for times when they may have overscheduled or overcommitted. Help them find the “sweet spot” in their calendars—when their planning was just right. Students should realize they may sometimes need to say no to things that they really want to do or that are last-minute requests if these tasks could interfere with what needs to get done. Make sure students know that “others' poor planning is not my emergency.” Saying no can free them of the stress of being overbooked and can even feel good when the load is lightened.

BE PREPARED

Another piece of punctuality is learning how to be prepared, present, and in the moment. Teach students to focus on what is important, especially in the classroom. They can learn to be ready with their notes, materials, and mindset, since some teachers or speakers may not give them the brain warm-up they need.

Especially in the older grades, it's up to students to be ready to learn and not wait for others to get them ready. You can also remind students to have a book, game, or some other item (whether physical or virtual) on hand to help them pass the time while waiting for others.

PUTTING THE STORY TOGETHER

In today's educational environment, fostering cooperation and critical thinking in students is essential. This activity combines these aspects into an engaging and interactive task. By reconstructing a paragraph from shuffled sentences, students not only practice their comprehension skills but also enhance their ability to work collaboratively under time constraints.

Preparation: Select a paragraph from a textbook or a work of literature. Print each sentence from the paragraph onto a small strip of paper. Place the strips of paper in a small bag—in a random order. Make enough bags for the number of groups you will have.

Process:

1. Organize students into small groups of five to seven.
2. Distribute the bags with the sentence strips.
3. Tell groups they will have ten minutes to put the strips of paper back together into a coherent paragraph. They will not be able to talk to each other during the ten minutes they are working together to re-create the paragraph.
4. At the end of the ten minutes, stop the groups and discuss the activity:
 - What was easy about this task?
 - What was difficult about it?
 - Was time a factor in your process?
 - How did manage your time?
 - What would you do to manage your time better?
 - How could this activity have been made easier?
 - What else did this activity teach you about? (Students may identify teamwork, knowing the context, or organization, for example.)