Work Habits and Self-Regulated Learning: Helping Students to Find a "Will" from a "Way"

This chapter focuses on motivation as a consequence of learning to self-regulate, arguing that a facility for learning is a motivator in itself. By engaging in academic pursuits productively, an individual can enjoy being a student and develop confidence about schoolwork. Further, students with good work habits are recognised and given status as full participants in their school community.

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This chapter focuses on motivation as a consequence of learning to self-regulate, arguing that a facility for learning is, in itself, a motivator. Individuals who engage in academic pursuits productively can enjoy being a student and develop confidence about schoolwork. Moreover, students with good work habits are recognised and are considered full

participants in their school community. Students tend to carry this sort of recognition throughout their school years.

- Consciously using self-regulation as a tool for undertaking learning tasks increases control and results in other favourable consequences.
- Ongoing use of self-regulation in academic settings increases the likelihood that these processes will be tapped 'automatically' as conditions dictate.
- When routinely applying self-regulation to control action on school-related tasks, students begin to develop academic work habits.
- Students can improve in school if they learn to process information more effectively when they confront academic work and develop a strategic approach to learning as second nature.
- Internalising what it means to 'learn how to learn' might be used to promote effective academic work habits.
- According to Bandura (1977), strong beliefs in personal capabilities influence motivated behaviour, which includes effort and engagement in school.
- Students who can develop into confident and consistent self-regulated learners should be able to tackle almost any task using that adaptive mindset, even if their personal capabilities are average relative to their peer group.
- Multiple strands of research show that low achievers can learn the strategies of self-regulation and apply them under the demands of school tasks.
- Although motivational processes set the stage for goal pursuits, completing a performance often requires persistent striving and navigation of obstacles that define volition.

What is self-regulated learning?

- An intentional effort to deepen and manipulate the associative network in a particular area and to monitor

and improve that deepening process.
- An associative network refers to semantic material as content, such as in connected text or lessons and mathematics problems.
- The self-regulated learner has a 'way' of accomplishing a range of academic tasks of which they are well aware.

What is volition?

- Volition reflects an intention to implement or carry out action.
- Volition includes the post-decisional self-regulation activities of setting and prioritising an action plan and activities concerned with implementation (such as bypassing barriers, checking work, managing resources, and budgeting time).
- If work habits and work styles (such as those reflected in self-discipline) are volition based, then it makes sense for students to hone their volitional competency.
- One way for students to strengthen volitional competency is through repeated experience with monitoring volitional states.

A framework for thinking about work habits

- Good working habits comprise the strategies and tactics for completing academic tasks that become honed through experience.
- Good work habits are cultivated tendencies that contribute to readiness and success in school.
- Students with good work habits receive positive feedback throughout the age ranges.
- Teachers provide 'hard workers' with a variety of opportunities to develop and display leadership.
- It is also recommended that self-disciplined students should qualify for other honours available in the school.

- Teachers confer power and status on students, establishing an upward performance trajectory that extends beyond any particular classroom.
- Improved time management allows opportunities for personal pursuits during free time.
- Students who adopt either the teacher or student role in group assignments provide models of work habits to be perceived and emulated by other members of the group.
- Students who find utility in the positive consequences of good group habits (and set goals accordingly) should increase their likelihood of school success in the long term.
- Work habits develop over the two scales of time and experience.
- Accumulated experiences organise and stabilise, reshaping a student's repertoire of propensities (some of which are work habits).
- Beyond the classroom, academic work habits develop through homework, peer helping, and in other socio-cultural experiences that share properties with school (events that collectively educate and individual's attention).

What are good work habits?

Planning

- Goal setting, outcome expected, scheduling

Organisational skills

- Outline, diagram, review, summarise, mark important points

Managing homework

- Arranging the environment, managing time, monitoring and controlling motivation

Study techniques

- Paraphrase, teachback, underline, copy notes, form images

Experimenting with learning

- Observation, analyse data, interpret, evidence, reinvent practices

Using feedback

- Compare current/baseline performance, use errors as cues, take pride in success

Seeking help

- Asking for assistance when confused, conferencing with teacher

Volunteering

- To read or solve problems, for leadership roles, for community service

Class participation

- Asking questions, answering when called upon, focusing on lessons

How to plan to work?

- Prepare to learn
- Set contingency plans
- Make a schedule
- Consider ways to proceed
- Apply related knowledge
- Set manageable goals

What are good study techniques?

- Rehearse
- Repeat

- Copy, underline
- Group, order
- Outline, diagram
- Teachback
- Form image, create mnemonic
- Ask, answer questions
- Paraphrase, summarise, review, exemplify, analogise
- Compare, criticise, predict, infer
- Consider other perspectives

Two 'bags of tricks' for doing well in school

In the case of making ideas orderly, the tricks include the following:

- Goal setting
- Marking important points
- Summarising
- Reviewing

In the case of sharing your ideas, the tricks include the following:

- Asking questions
- Talking to learn
- Answering when called on
- Volunteering

The idea is that teacher responds favourably when students offer help in class without being asked. For example

- Offering to help the teacher with a class project
- Asking to be a group leader
- Raising one's hand to answer questions
- Volunteering to read aloud or offering to work on a problem publicly

In the curriculum, teachers are asked to work together with students and their parents to design targeted home-based

learning skills exercises.

Both quantitative and qualitative evidence from a series of studies supported the value of introducing children to class participation and memory support skills.

Students who completed all the exercises in the programme achieved significantly higher reading and vocabulary scores.

The treatment effect exceeded 0.75 standard deviations of adjusted class means.

Collaborating with teachers to study work habits

- When we define a term such as self-regulated learning and provide attendant examples from the research literature, we ask teachers to illustrate the same concept using instances from their own teaching experience.
- We provide assistance to teachers who wish to use our curriculum or adapt it for their purposes.
- We communicate with teachers about how to personalise the curriculum and the quest-related strategies it offers for students to polish their work.
- The experiences teachers devise for their particular students have a common goal: to teach self-regulation strategies and encourage students to apply them naturally when planning for their own challenging quests or events.
- The teachers understand that work habits can develop into a productive work style, meaning a way of doing things that contributes to success across the curriculum.
- We address helping students to find the motivation (or will) to perform in school.
- Teachers indicate that a student's sense of efficacy can be fragile. Moreover, even confident learners can falter when faced with a disappointing performance.

- We share new theories with teachers about the concept of aptitude, which is no longer perceived as innate and unchanging.
- Aptitude is now understood to be a 'fit' between demands and preparation.
- The cultivation of aptitude for schooling can be perceived as the cultivation of attention to contextual cues.
- The processes of motivation and volition rise and fall away in a context of increasing demands and decreasing support.
- Although it is the putative role of the teacher to promote student learning in educational situations, students mediate all the instruction they receive.
- Mediation (including self-regulation) is powerful; it builds self-confidence, leading to other attainments.

Getting students to develop good work habits

- Student assignments should require self-regulation.
- In the classroom, the limits on work time in the presence of other students mean that individual learners should ignore intrusions, prioritise work goals, and manage under pressure.
- To require volitional control, assignments should be just beyond the students' current capabilities and are likely to be perceived by them as difficult.
- The teacher can reveal student work habits by asking them questions such as how they do their work at home, how they study, and how they cope with distractions.
- Teachers can use this knowledge of students as an indication of who needs help in which aspects of self-regulation and where they should focus their efforts during the year.

Example curriculum to exercise and develop budding work habits

- Students maintain records of time spent preparing for tests or quizzes outside school, numbers of assignments tackled for extra credit, and any ways they sought assistance when completing homework assignments and projects (such as self-management charts).
- Students share with each other and the teacher information on the following: how they manage their work, descriptions of their work space at home, habitual work tactics, any strategies used for action control, and work styles.
- Students write about the ways they plan and prepare for tests and what they do to stay on task both in and outside the class (such as making lists, colour-coding notes, drawing up tables, or self-monitoring).
- Using good examples from materials they provide, stronger students are asked to share their strategies as peer helpers.
- Students are asked to reflect on their work habits as course activities progress.
- Teachers can present students with problems to solve and other scenarios that prompt evidence of more- and less-productive ways of tackling tasks and investing effort.
- Teachers can take notes on work habits they observe to be developing in individual students throughout the year, which can be shared with students and parents to increase productivity.
- It can be profitable if parents take notes about any salient points.
- In an experiment following an assignment, a partner asks the student to envision a game plan for completing the task, with the aim of the student thinking through when and where they could work. This request was sufficient to induce an action plan for completing the task in the majority of student participants.