Encourage Self-Regulated Learning

UDL CHECKPOINT 9.1: Promote expectations and beliefs that optimize motivation

— Helping learners recognize and establish a personal involvement in their own education can lead to more proactive learning and greater success in their academic journeys.

What is it?

Historically, education has consisted of learners following instructions that were created by their instructor. However, self-regulated learning (SRL) is an approach to education in which learners, with the guidance of their instructor, personalize their learning approaches to what is effective to their individual selves. In essence, learners are able to identify their mistakes in an assignment, assessment, or activity and develop personalized strategies to overcome those mistakes in the future. SRL encompasses all parts of the learning process, from setting a specific goal (whether short-term or long-term) to achieving that goal. Ultimately, learners can become more well-rounded individuals by establishing effective learning strategies (how content is actually taken in), environmental strategies (where learners study and complete work), and behavioral strategies (managing time effectively).

Why do it?

No two learners are alike, which includes the ways in which they literally learn material and develop skills; however, by approaching education from a homogenized perspective, where all learners are expected to work the same as the next, learners often feel uncomfortable with their learning practices. This discomfort can create barriers as well as disinterest in the material and even failure in the course. SRL helps learners approach material in a more individualized and personal manner, where self-reflection is utilized, and complex assignments and assessments are broken down into more manageable steps. By doing so, learners can improve their sense of confidence, have better time management, and succeed (academically, professionally, and personally).

How can I apply it?

Here are some ways that you can better encourage self-regulated learning.

- **Begin your course with a survey.** At the beginning of the semester, ask students to consider and identify their learning practices so that they can begin to actively bring these preferences into their learning.
- **Encourage self-reflection.** After an assignment or assessment, ask learners to reflect on the activity with a specific focus on their successes and failures during the learning process (both before and during the activity).

- **Scaffold assignments.** Breaking complex assignments and assessments into smaller parts helps learners to set more realistic, short-term goals that can more easily be accomplished.
- **Discuss the learning process with learners.** Discuss possible challenges that learners may face on an assignment or assessment while reviewing specific resources that can be utilized to overcome those challenges (and ultimately improve learner success).

Summary

Each learner brings their own perspective, learning preference, and previous knowledge to each course and activity. Because of this, it is of the utmost importance that learners take ownership of their learning by establishing short- and long-term goals and identifying what academic approaches can best help them achieve those goals.