## **Learning to Learn**

## The following guiding questions can help you think metacognitively as you plan, monitor, and evaluate your approach to learning and your ability to retain and learn new concepts. Whether you are studying, completing an assignment, attending class, participating in tutorial discussions or listening to a guest speaker, you can use the questions below as prompts to think metacognitively.

## Learning Outcome

Practice thinking metacognitively as you complete learning activities and tasks during the planning, monitoring and evaluation stages of self-regulated learning.

## Succeeding in a university course

## Planning: At the start of a new course

* What do I know already about the topics covered in this course?
* Why is it important to learn the material in this course?
* How does success in this course relate to my goals (e.g. this year, next year, for my career)?
* How am I going to actively monitor my learning in this course?
* What do I most want to learn in this course?
* What do I want to be able to do by the end of this course?

## Monitoring: Throughout the course

* In what ways is the teaching in this course supportive of my learning? How could I maximize this?
* In what ways is the teaching in this course not supportive of my learning? How could I compensate for or change this? Where can I get support?
* How interested am I in this course? How confident am I in my learning? What could I do to increase my interest and confidence?

## Evaluating: At the end of the course

* What have I learned about how I learn in this course that I could use in my future courses? And in other areas (e.g., work placements, career)?
* What will I still remember a year from now that I learned in this course? What will I remember 5 years from now?
* What advice would I give a friend about how to learn the most in this course?

## Learning in-class

#### Planning: Before a class session, how will you prepare to learn?

* What are the goals of the class session going to be?
* What do I already know about this topic?
* How could I best prepare for the class session?
* What questions do I already have about this topic that I want to find out more about?
* Where should I sit and what should I be doing (or not doing) to best support my learning during class?

#### Monitoring: During a class session, will you think about how and what you're learning?

* What insights am I having as I experience this class session?
* What is hard to grasp or confusing as I experience this class session?
* What questions are arising for me during the class session? Am I noting them?
* Do I find this class interesting? Why or why not? How could I make this material personally relevant?
* Can I distinguish important information from details? If not, how will I figure this out?

#### Evaluating: After class, how will you track your learning and get clarity?

* What was today’s class session about?
* What did I find most interesting about class today?
* What did I hear today that is in conflict with my prior understanding?
* How did the ideas of today’s class session relate to previous class sessions?
* What do I need to actively go and do now to get my questions answered and my confusions clarified?

## Completing a task/assignment/activity

## Planning: Before completing a task/assignment

* What is the instructor’s goal in having me do this task?
* What are all the things I need to do to successfully accomplish this task?
* What resources do I need to complete the task? How will I make sure I have them?
* How much time do I need to complete the task?
* If I have done something like this before, how could I do a better job this time?

## Monitoring: While completing a task/assignment

* What strategies am I using that are working well or not working well to help me learn?
* What other resources could I be using to complete this task? What actions should I take to get these?
* What is most challenging for me about this task? Most confusing?
* What could I do differently mid-assignment to address these challenges and confusions?

## Evaluating: After completing a task/assignment

* To what extent did I successfully accomplish the goals of the task?
* To what extent did I use resources available to me?
* If I were the instructor, what would I identify as strengths of my work and flaws in my work?
* When I do an assignment or task like this again, what do I want to remember to do differently?
* What worked well for me that I should use next time?

## Preparing for a test

#### Planning: Before studying

* What strategies will I use to study (e.g., study groups, problem sets, evaluating text figures, challenging myself with practice quizzes, and/or going to office hours and review sessions)?
* How much time do I plan on studying? Over what period of time and for how long do I need to study each session?
* Which aspects of the course material should I spent more or less time on, based on my current understanding?

#### Monitoring: While studying

* To what extent am I being systematic in my studying of all the material for this exam?
* To what extent am I taking advantage of all the learning supports available to me?
* Am I struggling with my motivation to study? If so, do I remember why I am taking this course?
* Which of my confusions have I clarified? How was I able to get them clarified?
* Which confusions remain and how am I going to get them clarified?

#### Evaluating: After quiz/exam

* What about my exam preparation worked well that should remember to do next time?
* What did not work so well that I should not do next time or that I should change?
* What questions did I not answer correctly? Why? How did my answer compare with the suggested correct answer?
* What confusions do I have that I still need to clarify?

**Sources**

* Adapted by PATHS, York University from: Promoting Student Metacognition. Kimberly D. Tanner CBE—Life Sciences Education 2012 11:2, 113-120. <https://www.lifescied.org/action/showCitFormats?doi=10.1187%2Fcbe.12-03-0033>
* Sources: Common Self-Regulation Strategies. Renzulli center for creativity, gifted education, and talent development, University of Connecticut. [https://nrcgt.uconn.edu/underachievement\_study/self-regulation/sr\_section7/#](https://nrcgt.uconn.edu/underachievement_study/self-regulation/sr_section7/)