

Ways to integrate self-management skills into primary and secondary education

Effective self-management is a crucial skill in every sphere of life. Better self-management skills predict a host of positive outcomes ranging from stronger academic performance¹ to lower unemployment rates² and more financial security in adulthood.³

Self-management is broadly defined as the ability to intentionally and strategically manage one's emotions, behavior, effort, and environment in the pursuit of goals. There are a variety of different terms that are used, both in education and colloquially, to refer to self-management or its component skills, including grit, self-control, self-regulated learning, self-discipline, and willpower.

Most academic activities require some amount of self-management. Below are some examples to give you inspiration for how students can develop and practice self-management skills in the classroom.

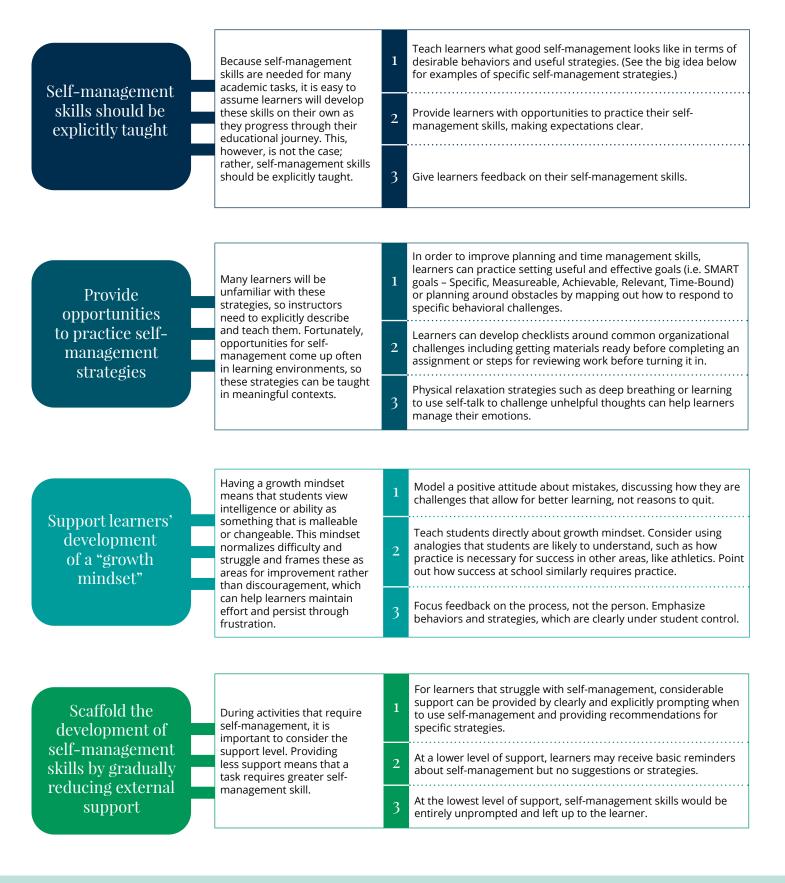
Learning activity	Skills involved
Completion of a long- term, multiple-step classroom project.	 Projects that learners complete over several weeks or months require self-management skills, as learners need to organize and coordinate their time, effort, and resources. Self-management skills can be explicitly elicited in the following ways: Goal-setting activities allow learners to practice planning by identifying long-term goals for the project as well as specific, short-term achievements that need to be met. Learners can also be prompted to self-assess their progress against their goals to determine whether they are on track to successfully complete the project and/or what changes they need to make in order to be successful. After completing the task, learners can explore their experience persisting through frustration or difficulties during the project. If students felt successful in this area, they can reflect on the strategies they used; if they felt that persisting was a struggle, learners can brainstorm strategies that would be helpful to try during future projects.
Encouraging focus and timely completion of assignments.	 Many learners struggle with maintaining focus on their school assignments. An effective way to support learners in this area is to help them anticipate when and where procrastination is likely to be a problem, and then make changes to the physical environment or social situation that makes procrastination more difficult. Learners could explore what things they find distracting when trying to complete schoolwork and then actively plan to remove those distractions. Examples include: Removing your phone from your study space. Installing apps to block distracting and non-work-related websites during study time. Identifying when studying with peers is distracting, and making plans to study alone during those times.
Have learners self-assess their knowledge before a quiz or other examination.	One aspect of self-management involves accurately monitoring one's knowledge or progress during a learning activity. Learners can practice this skill by self-assessing their own knowledge before quizzes or tests. Since many learners do not do this naturally, it is important to explicitly prompt the use of this strategy. They can then receive feedback on this skill by comparing their self-assessment to their actual performance.

¹ Poropat, A. E. (2009). A meta-analysis of the five-factor model of personality and academic performance. Psychological Bulletin, 135(2), 322–338.

² Daly, M., Delaney, L., Egan, M., & Baumeister, R. F. (2015). Childhood self-control and unemployment throughout the life span: Evidence from two British cohort studies. Psychological Science, 26(6), 709–723.

³ Moffitt, T. E., Arseneault, L., Belsky, D., Dickson, N., Hancox, R. J., Harrington, H. L., & Caspi, A. (2011). A gradient of childhood self control predicts health, wealth, and public safety. Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, 108(7), 2693–2698.

These are the big ideas behind the learning activities overleaf. Use these to adapt the examples for your students, or as guidance to devise your own learning tasks.



Are you already incorporating self-management skills in your teaching? Tell us how. **efficacy@pearson.com**