

# Coach students to self-regulate task planning and interpretation strategies

Strategies to promote problem solving, metacognition, and motivation in a tutoring session



# ○ Why self-regulated learning is a critical aspect of task planning and interpretation

- Self-regulated learning includes:
  - **Cognition** (strategies, problem solving, critical thinking)
  - **Metacognition** (knowledge of cognition, regulation of cognition)
  - **Motivation** (self-efficacy or believing in oneself; interest in pursuing intellectual discovery)

Schraw, G., Crippen, K., Hartley K.(2006). Promoting self-regulation in science education: Metacognition as part of a broader perspective on learning. *Research in Science Education*, 36, 111-139.

- To get "unstuck" in a session and on their own, **students need support with** practicing effective strategies, problem solving skills, and critical thinking skills (**cognitive aspects**); regulating their use of new skill sets and problem-solving schemas (**metacognitive aspects**); and staying motivated and interested in pursuing the answers to their questions (**motivational aspects**).



# WOOP - Plan for success!

**WOOP** Student Example Character LAB  
www.characterlab.org

WOOP helps people do the things they really want to do.

<b>W</b>	<b>WISH</b> What is an important wish that you want to accomplish? Your wish should be challenging but feasible.	My wish: <u>Get an A on my biology quiz</u>
<b>O</b>	<b>OUTCOME</b> What will be the best result from accomplishing your wish? How will you feel? Pause and really imagine the outcome.	Best outcome: <u>I'll feel proud</u>
<b>O</b>	<b>OBSTACLE</b> What is the main obstacle inside you that might prevent you from accomplishing your wish? Pause and really imagine the obstacle.	My obstacle: <u>I procrastinate</u>
<b>P</b>	<b>PLAN</b> What's an effective action to tackle the obstacle? Make a when-then plan.	When: <u>When I finish dinner</u> Then I will: (my action) <u>I'll make 5 flash cards</u>

WOOP is an effective self-regulated learning strategy designed by psychologist Dr. Gabrielle Oettingen. It addresses **cognitive, metacognitive and motivational aspects** of self-regulation and encourages resilience. You can use the strategy to guide your sessions. It also serves as a helpful metacognitive tool for review at the end of a session.

At the start of the session, guide the student to jot down:

1. **what** they hope to solve/what's their goal for the session/what questions they have
2. **how they'll feel** when they're are successful with meeting their goal
3. **what obstacles** are preventing them from being successful with meeting their goal/solving their problem
4. **the steps they'll take**, including - and especially -key resources and strategies they'll use, to be successful

See [woopmylife.org](http://woopmylife.org) for more info

Oettingen, Gabrielle (2014).  
Rethinking Positive Thinking: Inside  
the New Science of Motivation. New  
York, NY: Current.



# ○ W- Begin with goal-setting and questions:

GOAL



- "What problem or challenge would you like to try to resolve, or begin to resolve, in our session today?" Or "Tell me your goal(s) for our session today."
- "What specific questions do you have that I might help you answer?"
  - If student says, "I don't know," encourage them to look back at chapter headings, learning objectives, chapter questions, problem sets, PowerPoint slides and notes. Devise questions by turning headings into questions using the 5Ws (who, what, when, where, why, sometimes how). Encourage them to reflect on what they do know (prior knowledge) which may help them find answers to their questions.

Helping a student set a goal and identify their own guiding questions at the start of a session establishes a structure or foundation for successfully building the rest of the session - and can inspire motivation and goal-directed-persistence.





## oo - Consider the outcome and possible obstacles

- "Now that you have your goal and questions, **how do you want to feel** when you solve your problem or answer your questions? I ask because it can be motivating to keep that feeling in mind as you work." Examples might include: elated, relieved, proud
- "What **obstacles** are you encountering? What's getting in the way of you completing this assignment?" Some common responses you might hear: "I'm unmotivated," or "I don't have any strategies to do this, or "I'm afraid I'll get stuck when I'm on my own" or "I don't know how to ask for help." (Hint: all these obstacles can be overcome!)
- By helping students **practice useful strategies**, you can effectively support them with getting past their task planning obstacles so they may meet the **positive outcomes** they desire. This does not mean you have all the answers!
  - "I'll do my best to help you with some useful strategies today so you can solve your problem and get unstuck when you're on your own later. It would also be beneficial for you to **meet with your professor** and a **SASC learning specialist** soon. Have you already taken any of those steps?" If they say no, you could say, "Okay, no worries - we can talk about that at the end of the session." If yes and the meetings have already occurred, you might ask: "Do you remember any helpful strategies from those meetings?"



# ○ Mindfulness STOP Strategy



**Stop**—Pause what you're doing

**Take a breath**—In for 4 seconds,  
hold for 4 seconds, out for 4 seconds

**Orient yourself**—Identify sounds,  
smells, sights in your current setting

**Proceed**—Proceed, persevere,  
persist. You can do it.

Bonfil, A. (2020, August 25). Mindfulness STOP Skill. Retrieved February 22, 2021, from <https://cogbtherapy.com/mindfulness-meditation-blog/mindfulness-stop-skill#:~:text=Jon Kabat-Zinn, a prominent,STOP skill, or STOP Acronym.>

If the student is filled with self-doubt and worry (an obstacle), empathize and consider sharing the STOP strategy with them. Managing the emotional aspects of learning helps students stay present with their goals and questions.

*"I definitely get your frustration because I've been there before many times! I usually find it helpful to just stop for a sec, take a deep breath, remember my goal and questions, and how I'll feel when I've accomplished my goal. This STOP strategy is helpful. You can totally do this."*



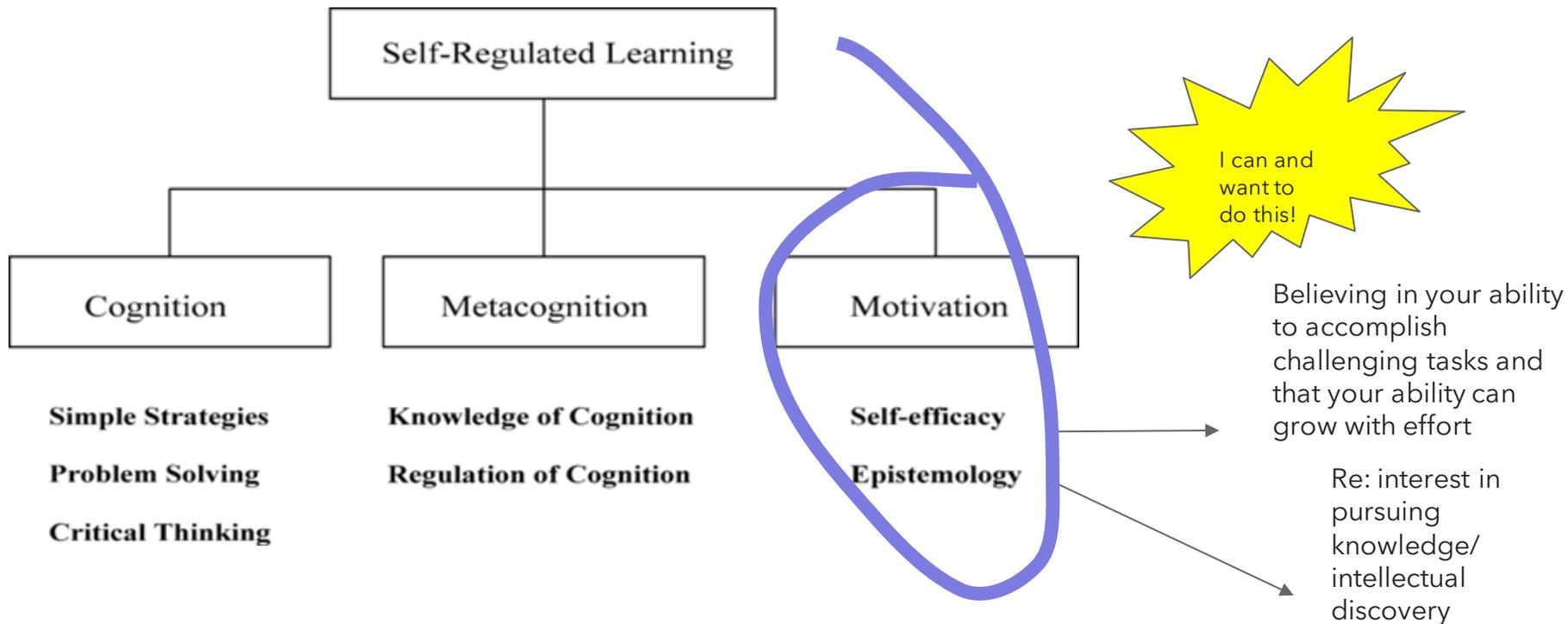
# ○ P - Plan



"I'm hearing that you're going to feel elated when you're finished with this project - and that you're worried you'll get stuck later when you're on your own. I'm going to show you a strategy that may be helpful to you in our session and later when you're working independently."

\*Now is the time to reference and teach a task planning or task interpretation strategy you'll learn about in the related tutor training on August 24th.





Schraw, G., Crippen, K., Hartley K. (2006). Promoting self-regulation in science education: Metacognition as part of a broader perspective on learning. *Research in Science Education*, 36, 111-139.

Note: Even with solid cognitive and metacognitive skills, **students may still lack motivation** to generate questions at the start of a session and/or seek answers to their questions. We've all experienced this at one time or another. Lacking motivation - and, likely, subsequently procrastinating - can feel quite frustrating.

You might hear: **"I don't know"** or **"I can't do this"** or **"I don't want to do this"** more than once in a session. Empathize. "You CAN do this. You must believe it." [See next slide for ideas on how to further encourage motivation.](#)

## *How to further encourage motivation, self-efficacy and ongoing self-regulation skills in tutees*

- Remind the student at the end of the session that they can do this, and **they MUST believe they can do it to be successful**. If while on their own they start to panic, they can return to their questions, the STOP strategy, and the plan/strategies discussed today. They could also post the strategy/strategies discussed in the session and a simple mantra on a bulletin board above their desk and then just get started on the problem for 5-10 minutes. Getting started can be motivating! Worst-case scenario: if they're super stuck, they can generate more questions and get help answering them either sometime that day or tomorrow.
- "Let's review the problem-solving strategies we used today during this session." Lead student to **articulate the aspects of WOOP** fleshed out in the session **and the task interpretation strategy** used to help work toward the student's goal. "How will you use the strategy we discussed today on your own later?"
- Encourage the student to **return to SASC with questions** - and to use WOOP in sessions to articulate their needs and goals. "My goal today is. . . . Here are some questions I have, and I know I'll feel elated when I finish this, just don't have any idea how to get started. Can you help me make a plan to hopefully be more successful?"
- One or more consultations with a **SASC learning specialist** may support them with feeling more successful as a self-regulated learner and with developing habits to overcome obstacles. Many students work with a **counselor**, too. They might also consider taking their questions to their **professor's office hours**.

# Resources

- [Mindfulness STOP strategy](#)
- [woopmylife.org](http://woopmylife.org)
- [Interview – Larry King with Gabriele Oettingen](#)