

Self-regulated learning: Capabilities for learning and life

LONG READS

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Self-regulation is a critical factor for success in learning and life. With the emerging prevalence of online learning in higher education, students who have developed capabilities such as skills to set goals, apply strategies and monitor their progress are well prepared for future learning.

To succeed, students require functional learning practices and study habits that are developed within supportive learning environments. Through experience and practice, all students can respond intentionally to manage their thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

Capabilities for life and learning are facilitated by learning and practising life skills, such as self-awareness, that can be taught irrespective of personality traits or disposition for learning. Being an effective self-regulated learner starts with being self-aware about learning new skills and how to take these skills and apply them in different life contexts.

Identifying the fundamentals of self-regulated learning assists teachers in facilitating learning for life and enables students to recognise effective ways of developing and practising skills in preparation for life. To assist teachers and students, I designed the *Capabilities for Life & Learning Model* – a tool that informs teachers' lesson design and enhances students' self-awareness about learning.

The four approaches represented in the model

1. Connect learning to *real world skills*, students' *prior learning*, *topics of interest* and through the communication of *learning goals*.
2. Facilitate learning by the establishment of *expectations*, delivery of *instructions*, suitability of challenging *scaffolds* and assurance from *questions*.
3. Diversify learning through the adaptation of the *learning processes* and the *products* that demonstrate the learning, *negotiations*, provision of *resource access* and *acknowledgement* to celebrate achievements.
4. Socialise learning in environments that support *positive communication* and *shared responsibility* within *caring communities*.



Caption: The Capabilities for Life & Learning Model.

What evidence supports the model?

The theoretical approaches of the *Capabilities for Life & Learning Model* are informed through an extensive review of the **self-regulated learning literature**

(https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/public/files/Metacognition_and_self-regulation_review.pdf), (Muijs & Bokhove, 2020).

The literature show that teachers are powerful influencers who can support and empower students in the classroom to trigger an interest in their learning, develop a sense of agency and feel an expectation of success (White, 2017). Establishing a collaborative environment for safe learning supports students as they build connections and grow these capabilities.

The Australian Curriculum General Capability: Personal and Social Capabilities (<https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/personal-and-social-capability/>)

(ACARA, 2021) promotes that when students learn to understand themselves and others they manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively. Personal and social capabilities are foundational for students to feel positive about themselves and the world around them.

The concept of self-regulated learning is based on four fundamentals that are premised on enabling students to play an active role in their own learning. Understanding the fundamentals for self-regulated learning makes it simpler to describe why it is necessary for learners to have a rationale for their learning, accept responsibility to take charge and feel that they have the capability to meet with success (Peel, 2019).

To facilitate the practical implementation of the fundamentals in lessons, **effective core practices** (<http://www.iier.org.au/iier30/peel.pdf>) used by teachers working with young adolescent students in the primary-secondary school transition years have been identified from research conducted in school classrooms (Peel, 2020).

Using the model to empower teachers and students

The *Capabilities for Learning & Life Model* is a functional tool for teachers' reflective practice that can be used in pre- and post-lesson design. For students, the model has been transformed into a decision-making tool that supports self-awareness. By reflecting on the questions developed from the model, students can know and manage themselves as independent and social learners.

The multifaceted purposes of the Decision-making Tools for Self-regulated Learning (SRL) are demonstrated in the following table:

Teachers: Reflect on teaching strengths	Students: Think about learning progress
✓ Provide a stimulus for professional conversations about practices.	✓ Provide a stimulus for conversations about learning.
✓ Inform the design of teaching.	✓ Enhance awareness of learning.
✓ Identify practices as evidence of effective teaching for recognition.	✓ Identify capabilities as evidence of learning development.

Decision-making and self-regulated learning

In reality, teacher decision-making is influenced by the complex interplay between social and personal processes within the classroom context. A key aspect of implementing the decision-making tool is for teachers to recognise how they are already promoting opportunities for the students in their class to be empowered as learners.

As such, implementation of the tools is a process rather than a one-off event, as it can be used to confirm already embedded practices and to identify areas for future professional growth. At the University of Southern Queensland, pre-service teachers in their second year of a Bachelor of Education degree have implemented the tool to reflect and gain feedback on their teaching of lessons and as an observational tool to raise their awareness of effective everyday practices.

For Teachers: A Decision-Making Tool for SRL

SRL Fundamentals	Core Practices	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SRL Teaching Approaches: Questions for Reflection
Rationale for learning: ✓ What is the purpose of the learning? ✓ What do we want to achieve?	Connect the learning:		
	<i>Real world skills</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	What real-world transferable skills are the students learning?
	<i>Prior learning</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	How does the students' prior knowledge link and offer purpose for what they are learning?
	<i>Topics of interest</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	What is of interest to the students about the topic and how is it made more interesting?
Responsibility for learning: ✓ What strategies can we apply to activate learning? ✓ How will we monitor our learning progress?	Facilitate the learning:		
	<i>Expectations</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Do the students know the expectations and the procedures to follow?
	<i>Instructions</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	How are the strategies to perform the task been taught to the students and have they been provided with time for practice?
	<i>Scaffolds</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	What assistance is provided to the students to scaffold their learning of the content and skills?
Capability for & from learning: ✓ How will we ensure that we meet with success? ✓ How can we judge our learning outcomes?	Diversify the learning:		
	<i>Product & process</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	How are the product expectations and learning processes adjusted for the individuals?
	<i>Negotiations</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Is the task suited to the whole class, group work or individual seat work? What input have the students had in these arrangements or other decisions about their learning?
	<i>Resource access</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	What resource are available for the students to select that support and monitor their learning?
Social Environment for Learning: ✓ How do we interact together and use what is available to internalise a desire and commitment for learning?	Acknowledgement		
	<i>Acknowledgement</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	How have the students' learning successes been celebrated? What part of the learning do the students find enjoyable?
	Socialise the learning:		
	<i>Caring communities</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	When are the students asked to collaborate with others to share their learning? How have the social skills for interacting with others been included in the task?
<i>Shared responsibilities</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	When are the students asked to take control and be responsible for their learning? How have the teachers demonstrated their shared learning responsibilities with the students?	
<i>Communication</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	What do the students' parents and caregivers know about what is being taught and about the outcomes of the learning?	

For Students: A Decision-Making Tool for SRL

Capabilities for Learning & Life	Keys to knowing and managing	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Questions for Reflection
Interest Understand the rationale for the learning: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Why are you learning this? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> What do you want to get out of this?	Connect the learning:		
	Real world skills	<input type="checkbox"/>	What real-world skills are you learning that can be transferred beyond school learning?
	Prior learning	<input type="checkbox"/>	How can you use your prior knowledge to help understand the new learning?
	Topics of interest	<input type="checkbox"/>	What is of interest to you about the topic and how can you make it more relevant for you?
	Learning goals	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you aware of the outcome goals that say what you need to know and do?
Sense of Agency Take responsibility for the learning: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> What strategies do you apply to begin? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> What's the next step?	Facilitate the learning:		
	Expectations	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you aware of the expectations and the procedures you are required to follow?
	Instructions	<input type="checkbox"/>	What strategies can you use, and do you need time to practice these?
	Scaffolds	<input type="checkbox"/>	How can you do what needs to be done in a step-by-step sequence?
	Questions	<input type="checkbox"/>	What questions can you ask to help with getting started and to keep you on track?
Expectation of Success Build capabilities for the learning: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> How do you make sure you are on point? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> When will you feel good about the outcome?	Diversify the learning:		
	Product & process	<input type="checkbox"/>	How have you set yourself up for success by deciding what you have to produce and how you're going to do it?
	Negotiations	<input type="checkbox"/>	When do you have the chance to choose your own learning adventure?
	Resource access	<input type="checkbox"/>	What resource do you need to be made available to help you along the way?
	Acknowledgement	<input type="checkbox"/>	How and when have you planned to celebrate your successes? What are the best and most fun bits of what you are doing?
Collaboration Interact with others for learning: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Who do you work well with and when? <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> How can you get into it and feel involved?	Socialise the learning:		
	Caring communities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are you aware of the feelings of your classmates and how you treat them?
	Shared responsibilities	<input type="checkbox"/>	Will you work with your classmates, a friend, the teacher or on your own?
	Communication	<input type="checkbox"/>	When do you share with others what you are learning about at school and in everyday life?

Students who are aware of their strengths and weaknesses and know how to motivate themselves to engage strategically in learning are more likely to take active control. It is accepted that self-regulated learning capabilities develop through maturation. However, there is considerable variation between students that can be associated with provision of opportunities and to how one reacts to feedback and perceived failures. The decision-making tool for students enables them to recognise the capabilities that they are developing and what is key to knowing and learning so they can recognise the supports and remove barriers to learning.

For example, when students are introduced to a unit of work, they are provided generally with the learning intentions and the assessment task. They then proceed to engage in a sequence of learning tasks that assist them develop the knowledge and skills to demonstrate competency. The missing link is the provision of a tool that they can use to guide their learning and articulate where they require adjustments and additional support. In other words, the implementation of the tool

incorporated into the teaching process supports students to become self-aware of themselves as a learner in the classroom environment and enables the development of personal and social capabilities.

My colleague and I used this tool in our classroom behaviour management courses at the University of Southern Queensland with preservice teachers in the Bachelor of Education primary and Bachelor of Education secondary courses. The students have been positive in their feedback about the model and its application as a reflection tool.

Part of their assessment for the course is to use the model to reflect on a lesson they have taught and identify how they have provided opportunities in their planning and teaching for students to self-regulated their learning. It is intended that this awareness will inform their future lesson design, instruction and management, and the model and checklist tool is taken with them to their professional experience in schools to be applied to structure lesson observations.

In conclusion

Education is the preparation for life, now and into the future. To be equipped for meaningful participation in society, students need to be self-aware about themselves as learners. This is not developed by accident.

Capabilities for learning and life flourish in structured classroom environments that are strategically designed for students to take ownership and recognise the purpose of their learning.

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In what ways do you encourage students in your classroom to take responsibility for their behaviour and learning? Is there a particular approach that you've found to be successful for your learners?

Think about your own classroom practice. Do students understand the goals and purpose for their learning? Do you set aside time for student reflection?

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