

## **Practical Tips for Students to be more Autonomous Learners**

Use the following tips to be a more self-regulated, autonomous, life long learner:

### **Avoid the illusion of comprehension.**

-Do not confuse familiarity with knowing. Multiple-choice tests often contain familiar answer choices but such choices may not be the answer to the question. Using flash cards and rereading material (in subjects where rote memorization is not the same thing as comprehension) can create this illusion. Listening to a skilled lecturer can sometimes create a false sense of security in students who think they know something because they understood it when the 'expert' said it. This does not mean they can use that knowledge.

### **Monitor your own understanding.**

-Ask yourself questions about what you have read with the book closed. Can you outline a chapter after reading it without looking at the book? Check your work against the actual material (text and notes) rather than "how it feels."

### **Promote processing of material to be learned beyond a surface, memorized, level to a level where information can be applied.**

-Use elaboration, rephrasing/paraphrasing, relating new info to previously learned info to do this. Add meaning. Use cues in text to pick up meaning (summary statements, last sentences, bold print, etc.).

### **Maintain focus in a learning situation.**

-Persist at learning with an overall goal in mind. Outline the path to learning with subgoals and reward achievement of those goals as you go. What are the recipe steps in achieving a learning goal? Plan for the what-ifs regarding missing ingredients, interruptions, etc.

### **Focus on intrinsic rewards of learning rather than extrinsic rewards such as grades.**

-Learn for the joy of learning. Take on the challenge to master knowledge rather than being guided by external forces that actually undermine your accomplishments.

### **Interpret mistakes in learning as opportunities for growth rather than failures.**

-Test yourself and improve your learning with feedback from your self-test. Along with this, attribute success to effort (rather than luck or task difficulty).

### **Be a flexible, fluid, learner.**

-Choose learning strategies that fit the learning task. Prioritize tasks and goals.

Adapted from Svinicki, M. D. (2004). *Learning and motivation in the postsecondary classroom*. Bolton, MA: Anker Publishing Co.