

# SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING



How to become a successful self-directed learner.

Next Step

## Students are Responsible... for Their Learning

Your son or daughter has enrolled to be successful outside a traditional classroom environment. The student is responsible for self directed learning, in which, the teacher is a facilitator of learning; and the onus is on the student for their pace and retention. When students change their mindset and embrace this method of education it can foster lifelong skills that can serve them well. The work is student driven and will be generated, supported and encouraged by Next Step staff.

## Praise Effort Not Outcome

Carol Dweck is a professor of Psychology and is known for her work on the mindset psychological trait. To learn more about growth mindset and how it can impact your students learning check out these websites:

[25 ways to Develop a Growth Mindset](#)

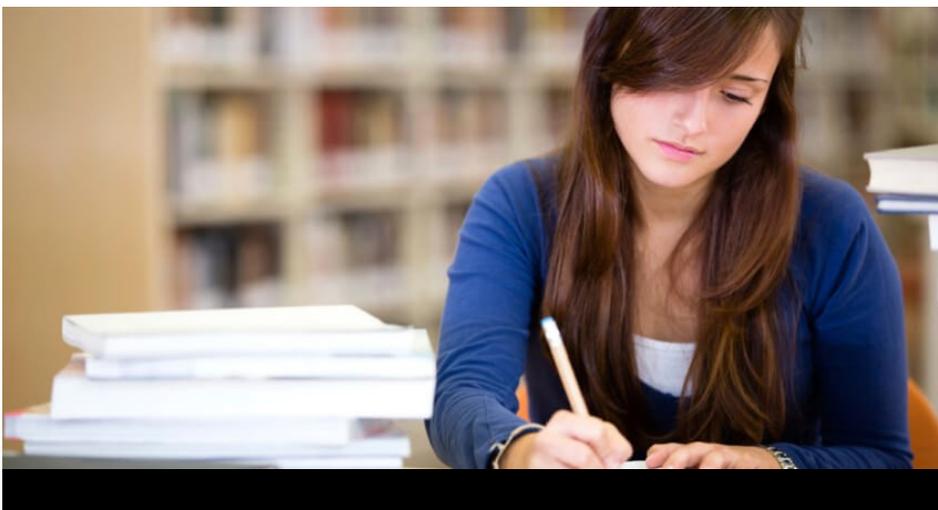
[Growth Mindset vs. Fixed Mindset](#)

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*“This growth mindset is based on the belief that your basic qualities are things you can cultivate through your efforts. Although people may differ in every which way in their initial talents and aptitudes, interests, or temperaments, everyone can change and grow through application and experience.”*

*Carol Dweck*

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## Did You Know

90% of students who were praised for their efforts wanted challenging new tasks they could learn from.

# Support Your Students Learning at Home

In Next Step's alternative environment, learning no longer follows the format of a classroom, you can apply a structure at home. This is our recommendations for students:

## 1. Gather information.

Read your textbook. Watch videos. The more methods you use, the more familiar you will become with the content. You will find a lot of resources on Moodle that have been collected specifically for this purpose. Use them!

## 2. Take notes.

Record new definitions, formulas, and any other information that you think is relevant. Write it in your own words. Follow along with examples, then try similar ones on your own. Develop a system of communication that works for you so when you go back to your notes later, they still make sense and are helpful when you get stuck. A good place for tips, tricks, and calculator shortcuts is on the back of your formula sheet.

## 3. Practice, practice, practice

Repetition is important. You may understand something right away, but in order for it to "stick" the pathways in your brain have to be solidified. Repetition is important. If you were walking through a forest, it would be very difficult to follow a trail that had only been travelled once or twice. A well-worn path with recognizable landmarks will be much easier to navigate! It is the same with your memory. Repetition is important. (See what we did there)!

## 4. Challenge yourself.

Once you understand a concept, look for more difficult problem solving using your new skills. Don't just move on to the next lesson, because you need more than just the basics to be successful. You need to be comfortable enough with your understanding that you can adapt to new situations. For example: practice questions in math are usually in increasing order of difficulty, which means you've got to try the second half of each assignment before you can really conclude that you grasp what you need to know.

*“Learning sometimes occurs because someone insists that you recognize the excellence in yourself.”*

*Rita Pierson*



### 5. Seek help.

Help is available in many forms. Many students struggle with the same concepts and ask the same questions. You will likely find support for frequently asked questions on Moodle. If your question is not there, be organized and deliberate so you can use your time with your teacher most effectively. Make a list or use a symbol like a star or question mark to indicate what you need help with. Identify what you already know, ask something specific. Make sure to review these questions later and practice until you can do them on your own with confidence from start to finish.

### 6. Assess your learning

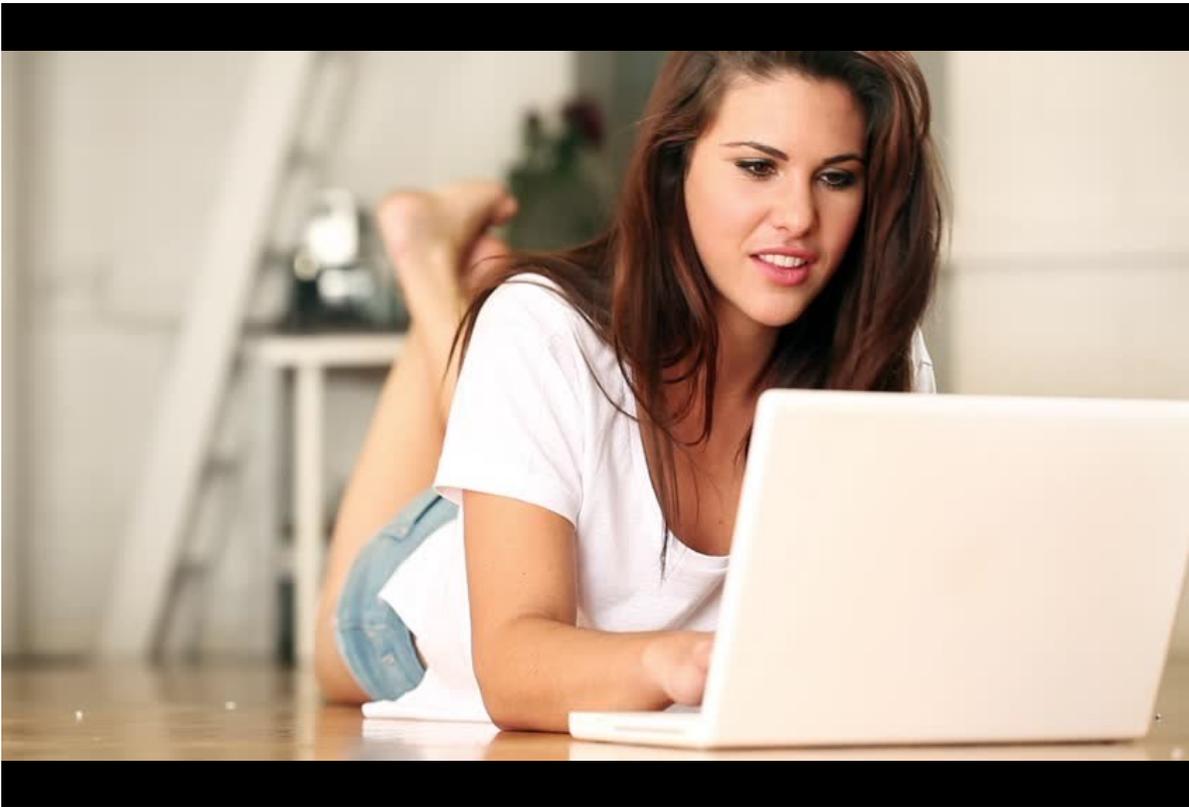
Do the chapter reviews in the textbook. Try practice quizzes online. Use the review assignments provided as a practice test by doing them closed-book to see what you know, then study and reattempt anything that you don't know. Mark your own work and analyze your mistakes or stumbling blocks. Make sure you are able to start every question yourself without additional support before you attempt a summative assessment.

### 7. Seek feedback.

The more information you gather about where you make mistakes, the more likely you are to build awareness and improve. Timely feedback is often more meaningful because the concepts are still fresh and you are more likely to remember your thought process. Try to budget the time immediately after writing an assessment to meet with your teacher and discuss your progress.

# Students Should Invest Their Time

Remember that in a traditional high school course, students would be spending 80 minutes per day in a class, with additional homework and studying in the evening. You should expect your son or daughter to spend the same amount of time per day doing the course by independent study perhaps more if they encounter a topic that is particularly challenging for them. Working at your own pace means there is the flexibility to spend less time on concepts you master easily and more time on concepts you struggle with, but the total time invested should be about the same as a traditional course.



***Success is the SUM of Small efforts  
Repeated Day in and Day out.***

R.Collier