

SUPPORTING STUDENT LEARNING: THE THREE Ms

As staff in the Division of Student Life, you play a vital role in student learning outside the classroom. This guide focuses on three evidence-based strategies—**Mindset, Metacognition, and Memory**—to help students thrive academically and personally.

Mindset: Encouraging Growth

What It Is

- **Growth Mindset:** Belief that abilities can improve with effort.
- **Fixed Mindset:** Belief that abilities are static and unchangeable.

Why It Matters: Students with a fixed mindset may avoid challenges and give up easily. A growth mindset helps them persist, seek help, and learn from setbacks.

How You Might See It in Students

- A student says, "I'm not good at this... but I'm trying to get better."
- A student asks to try a new task after struggling with it the first time.
- A student reflects on a failed event and says, "We learned a lot—we'll do it differently next time."
- A student volunteers for a challenging role to develop new skills.

How You Can Help

- Ask reflective questions: "What did you learn from this experience?"
 - Use growth-oriented language: "You haven't mastered this...yet."
 - Remind them that their mindset can change.
 - Connect challenges they are experiencing to long-term goals.
 - Celebrate their progress and effort.
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Metacognition: Thinking About Thinking

What It Is

- **Planning:** Setting goals and choosing strategies to meet those goals.
- **Monitoring:** Checking progress while completing tasks.
- **Evaluating:** Reflecting on what worked and what didn't.

Why It Matters: Metacognition helps students become self-aware learners who can adapt and improve their strategies.

How You Might See It in Students

- A student says, "I tried something different this time and it worked better."
 - A student asks, "What's the best way to approach this?"
 - A student reflects on what they could do differently next time
 - A student creates a checklist or timeline for a recurring task.
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- A student tracks how much time they're spending on different responsibilities and adjusts accordingly.

How You Can Help

- **Planning**
 - Encourage weekly planning and goal setting.
 - Promote planner use.
 - Help students set realistic goals.
 - **Monitoring**
 - Ask: "What's confusing you right now?"
 - Encourage them to reflect on tasks.
 - Help them reflect more meaningfully than just the time spent on the task.
 - **Evaluating**
 - Use structured reflections like Iowa GROW®.
 - Provide frequent, bite-sized feedback.
 - Encourage peer feedback and self-assessment.
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Memory: Building Lasting Learning

What It Is

- **Effective Strategies:** Active engagement with the content, self-testing, teaching others.
- **Ineffective Strategies:** Passive review, cramming.

Why It Matters: Students often rely on familiar but ineffective strategies. Helping them adopt better techniques leads to deeper, longer-lasting learning.

How You Might See It in Students

- A student explains a concept to a peer or teaches it during training.
- A student practices a procedure multiple times over several shifts instead of cramming it all in one session.
- A student uses a team debrief to reinforce key takeaways from an event.
- A student uses a reflection journal to revisit and apply concepts from earlier sessions.

How You Can Help

- Explain the limits of passive strategies.
 - Promote active techniques like self-testing and teaching others.
 - Encourage spaced practice over time.
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