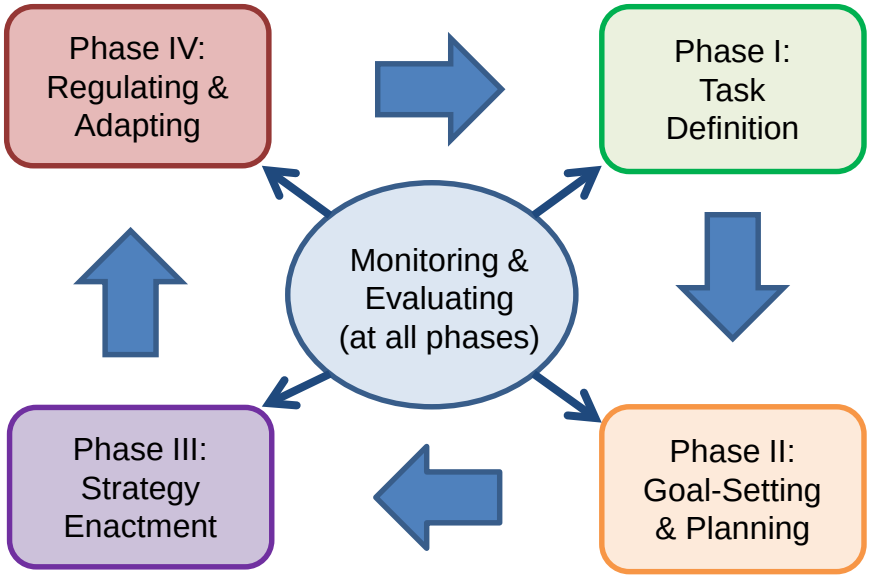
Self-Regulated Learning

- Learning is not something that happens passively – it is an active process.
- Successful students purposefully plan, monitor, and regulate their thinking, behaviour, and motivation (Hadwin, 2008).
- This process is called **self-regulated learning** (SRL). SRL involves a cycle with four phases: Task Definition, Goal-Setting and Planning, Strategy Enactment, Regulation and Adaptation (Winne & Hadwin, 1998).



You can monitor and evaluate your progress at any phase before moving to the following phase. Let's look at each phase more closely…

Phase I: Task Definition

- This is where you develop your idea of what an academic task is all about. Academic tasks are any course-related learning activities, including course readings, lectures, labs, assignments, tests, etc. What do you need to know to complete a task accurately?
- There are three types of task information:
    1. E**xplicit** (out-in-the-open) information – this is usually given by the instructor, and includes things like how many pages to write, the topic, and the deadline. But we can't stop there!
    2. I**mplicit** (between-the-lines) information – the instructor usually doesn't talk about this. This is information like: the purpose of the assignment, how it fits with other tasks in the course, and how you need to work with information.
    3. C**ontextual** information – which has to do with the values and norms of your academic discipline. For example, what style and citation rules do you use for paper writing, or what is the perspective or worldview for your discipline?
- Having a solid idea of all of these aspects of a task can help you figure out what steps you need to take to complete it properly. Then you can move on to goal-setting and planning.

Phase II: Goal-Setting and Planning

- You set your goals based on the information determined in Phase I. You may break the writing assignment down into steps and set a goal for each step. Effective academic goals have four components:
    1. A **time frame** (start and end time – usually two hours max).
    2. A learning **action** (how are you going to work with the information so you understand and remember it better – aka the STRATEGY).
    3. A **standard** (how will you measure, in a concrete way, what you *learned* in your study session?).
    4. The specific **concept**.
- They can be called **TASC** (time frame, action, standard, concept) goals.
- An example of a strong TASC goal is: "On Sunday from 2 - 4 pm (**time frame**), I will create flash cards and use these to quiz myself (**action**) on my German vocabulary for the topic "food" (**concept**). I will have succeeded if, by the end of the study session, I can correctly recall from memory the German word 80% of the time (**standard**), when I see the English word."

Phase III: Strategy Enactment

- This is where you actually *do* the strategy you developed as the "action" part of your TASC goal. When developing a study strategy, you want to make sure the performed actions actually result in you understanding and remembering the information better. Effective strategies help you to perform one or more of these **SMART Learning Operations**:
    - **S**EARCH for and select important information.
    - **M**ONITOR your *learning* (not just what you completed).
    - **A**SSEMBLE and organize information in a meaningful way.
    - **R**EHEARSE and retrieve to-be-remembered information (retrieval is often overlooked, but so important to practice!).
    - **T**RANSLATE information into your own words and create meaningful examples.
- The more SMART learning operations a strategy allows for, the stronger the strategy.

Phase IV: Regulating and Adapting

- Now that you've completed the study session, you can look back and think about how well your strategy allowed you to meet your study goal. If you were successful, great! If not, what might you change so that you can be successful next time? You might find a need to make a change in your Task Understanding, Goal-Setting and Planning, or Strategy Enactment.
- When you get some practice with the Self-Regulated Learning cycle, you will get better at Monitoring and Evaluating each phase as you go along, making your goals and strategies stronger and stronger.

For more Information:

- Winne, P.H., & Hadwin, A.F. (1998). Studying as self-regulated learning. In D.J. Hacker, J. Dunlosky, & A.C. Graesser (Eds.), *Metacognition in educational theory and practice* (pp. 277–304). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.
- Hadwin, A. F. (2008). Self-regulated learning. In T. L. Good (Ed.), *21st century education: A reference handbook*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

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