SELF-MANAGEMENT
Sample Strategies

Self-Management is the ability to effectively manage your emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations. This includes managing stress, delaying gratification, motivating yourself, and setting and working toward personal and academic goals. Students with strong self-management skills arrive to class prepared, pay attention, follow directions, allow others to speak without interruption, and work independently with focus. For a more detailed description of this competency, [click here](#).[i]

Transforming Education has developed a **toolkit** to help educators learn more about self-management. The toolkit includes a more detailed explanation of self-management, video clips summarizing the supporting research and capturing students' own experiences related to self-management, as well as a variety of strategies that teachers can use to help students develop self-management skills. To download the Self-Management Toolkit, **[click here](#).**[ii]

STRATEGIES FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS' SELF-MANAGEMENT
Below is a list of strategies that can be integrated into various curricula and adapted for different grade levels. These strategies can support the development of self-management by providing clear expectations, offering strategies for self-monitoring and self-calming, and providing opportunities for students to track their own progress towards their goals over time.
Team Agreement. Co-create a whole-class agreement with your students. Students are more likely to follow an agreement reflecting classroom norms when they are personalized to meet their needs. [iii] Consider doing this exercise when kicking off group work among students. Find a template for a project team agreement [here](#).[iv]
Prepare and Track. Help students "prepare" to learn by having them build a checklist and set aside time at the beginning of class for them to assess their readiness to learn: *"Do I have all the tools to learn? Books, pen, notebook, assignments…"* Track the results so that students can see progress over time.
Behavior Checks. Create a simple series of expectations for students that they can track. Have students rate themselves and record their results at the end of each class. Consider the following questions: • *Am I listening to others?* • *Am I waiting for people to finish before I talk?* • *Am I using appropriate language to disagree?* • *Am I using an appropriate tone and not raising my voice?*
I Do My Best. Help students understand when they learn best so that they can seek out and create situations to maximize their learning. Have each student: • Create a list that completes the phrase, *"I focus best when…"* • Identify three things to seek and three things to avoid related to when they learn best. Have them keep a record of how often these situations occur and track their progress over time.

WOOP. Help students prepare to take on a new challenge by using the WOOP Method – a 4-step strategy that includes positive thinking with a dose of reality:[v]
- **Wish:** Students name an important but feasible wish or goal that they want to fulfill.
- **Outcome:** Students imagine, as vividly as possible, what the future will be like once they fulfill this wish or reach the goal.
- **Obstacle:** Students imagine the most critical personal obstacle that stands in the way of fulfilling that wish or reaching the goal.
- **Plan:** Students name an effective behavior to overcome the obstacle and create a specific plan using an if-then statement: *"If X happens, then I will do Y."*

For more information, download Character Lab's WOOP playbook.

Emotional Thermometer. Teach students to monitor their emotions by using this emotional thermometer. Ask students to pay attention to where they are on the thermometer at different times of the day. Take time to discuss what they are noticing.[vi]

"Take a break." Introduce "take a break" as an aid to empower students to stay calm and focused in challenging moments. Learn more about how to use this positive, respectful, and supportive self-control strategy by clicking here.[vii]

Square Breathing. Teach students how to practice breathing for self-regulation when feeling strong emotions by introducing them to square breathing. Read more about this calming strategy here.[viii]

GRADE-SPECIFIC STANDALONE LESSONS & ACTIVITIES
Below is a list of standalone lessons about self-management, categorized by grade levels. However, keep in mind that all the lessons are adaptable for students of different grade levels than those indicated.

Elementary School
- **Help students practice using self-control strategies** in a light and fun way by using bubbles. Find ideas on how to do this by reading this teacher's lesson on "Self-Control Bubbles."[ix]
- **Foster students' understanding of the components of SMART goals** by using tips from a lesson on setting "(almost) SMART goals."[x]

Middle School
- **Help students build confidence with setting and achieving goals** using a simple process by following this 3-Step Goal Setting Model.[xi]
- **Provide students the opportunity to explore emotions** that are personally relevant by doing activities centered around an "Emotion Wheel".[xii]

High School
- **Help students explore the influence of emotions** on thinking and behavior and how managing one's emotions can lead to better outcomes by trying this lesson on "your emotional 'engine'." [xiii]
- **Use literature to help students explore** how to modify their emotional response to an event by following this lesson plan on self-calming strategies.[xiv]

Self-Management: Additional Readings & Resources

Readings	Videos	Websites & Other Learning Tools
• Brain Driver's Education: Operator's Guide – Emotional Regulation Guide for High School Students[xv] • Assessment Rubrics for Managing Self[xvi] • Don't! The Secret of Self-Control[xvii]	• Angela Duckworth discusses self-control strategies for school-age children[xviii] • Interview about the Marshmallow Experiment[xix]	• TransformEd's Toolkit on Self-Management[xx] • Character Lab's website on self-control[xxi] • Massachusetts General Hospital's Curriculum for Teaching Emotional Self-Regulation[xxii] • Instructional Strategies for Self -Management and Classroom Management[xxiii] • University of Michigan Emotion & Self-Control Lab[xxiv]

Find an online board with these self-management strategies and other resources online at:
http://bit.ly/TE_SMstrategies

SOURCES

[i] Transforming Education (2014). Introduction to Self-Management.

[ii] Transforming Education (2014). Self-Management Toolkit.

[iii] Edutopia (2016). Tools for Student Self-Management.

[iv] Buck Institute for Education (2011). Project Team Contract Template.

[v] Character Lab (2017). Woop.

[vi] Responsive Classroom (2013). Teaching Self-Calming Skills.

[vii] Responsive Classroom (2004). What is Responsive Classroom Time-Out?

[viii] Kids Relaxation (2015). The Deep Breath Box: Square Breathing

[ix] Ward, C (n.d.). Lesson Plans.

[x] Connell, G (2016). Setting (Almost) SMART Goals With My Students.

[xi] Colorado Education Initiative. (n.d.) Grades 6-8 Goal Setting.

[xii] Dalai Lama Center for Peace and Education. (2014). The emotion wheel.

[xiii] Massachusetts General Hospital (2010). Lesson Plan: Emotional Regulation.

[xiv] Massachusetts General Hospital (2010). Lesson Plan: Self-Calming Methods.

[xv] Massachusetts General Hospital (2010). Brain Driver's Education: Operator's Guide Using Your Brain to Get Where You Want to Go. A guide for high school students.

[xvi] Habits of Mind Institute (n.d.) Asessment Rubrics for Managing Self.

[xvii] Lehrer, J. (2009). Don't! The secret of self-control. *The New Yorker.*

[xviii] Duckworth, A. (2015). Self-Control Strategies for School-Age Children.

[xix] Mischel, W. (2013). Walter Mischel on His Marshmallow Experiment.

[xx] Transforming Education (2014). Self-Management Toolkit.

[xxi] Character Lab (n.d.). Self-Control.

[xxii] Massachusetts General Hospital (2010). Teaching Emotional Self-Regulation Skills.

[xxiii] The Teacher Toolkit (n.d.). Classroom Management.

[xxiv] University of Michigan (2018). Emotion & Self-Control Lab.