

# Thinking about successful learning

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There is no single correct way to learn or do your academic work but there are some things that many successful learners share:

They are flexible

They are open to new ways of doing things; they try out a range of strategies and approaches.

and

They reflect

They pay attention to how they work and learn, to see what works best for them in different contexts.

Becoming aware of how you learn

◆ **Talk with other people:** discuss how you approach tasks and learning; try to explain to each other not only **what** you do but **how effective** it seems to be and **why**.

- This can help to make you aware of the processes you go through when you're studying
- It can help you evaluate your own approaches and strategies
- It can suggest different approaches and strategies that you can try out

◆ **Reflect and record:** take 15 – 30 minutes every so often for some practical thinking about the way you work. Write down your reflections so that you can look for patterns that emerge.

◆ When you have been **successful or productive**

- How did you feel about the work itself? Why?
- How did you go about this task / learning?
- What strategies did you use?

◆ When you have successfully **overcome a difficulty**

- What was it? In what way did you find it difficult?
- How did you approach it to begin with?
- What did you do that enabled you to overcome the difficulty?
- How can your successful approach be useful in the future?

◆ When you are **stuck, unproductive or unsuccessful**

- What are you trying to do?
- How are you trying to do it?
- Why are you having difficulty?
- How could you try to approach it in a different way?

For a more in-depth look at learning to learn, try this [Open University unit](#)

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