



Task Title: Motivation and Productivity Strategies

OALCF Cover Sheet – Practitioner Copy

Learner Name: _____

Date Started: _____

Date Completed: _____

Successful Completion: Yes ☐ No ☐

Goal Path: Employment ☐ Apprenticeship ☐

Secondary School ☐ Post Secondary ☐ Independence ☐

Task Description: The learner will review information about motivation and productivity, and explore how they could incorporate strategies into their own learning.

Main Competency/Task Group/Level Indicator:

- Find and Use Information/Read continuous text/A1.2
- Communicate Ideas and Information/Complete and create documents/B3.2a
- Manage Learning/E.1

Materials Required:

- Pen/pencil and paper and/or digital device

Learner Information

Students often benefit from learning about their own motivation, procrastination, and ways to improve productivity. Building and incorporating skills that can help you reach your learning goals is an important part of student success.

Read “Building Motivation and Productivity”.

Building Motivation and Productivity

Learning how to motivate yourself and increase your productivity is difficult. Sometimes, the best approach depends upon the size of the task before you, or if you're feeling unmotivated because of boredom or overwhelm. As with any strategies, you may need to try several approaches before determining what works for you. No single strategy will fit every task or every person. Learning more about strategies you can try to help build your motivation and productivity can lead to better learning outcomes.

Trying to Complete Smaller Tasks

- Think long term. If the task at hand supports your long-term goals, such as passing a class and earning your diploma or degree, you have a good reason to do this work. Keep this in mind! If it does not support your long-term goals, it's worth considering why you're doing this in the first place. What you're doing right now should relate to your long-term objectives.
- Use the five-minute strategy. Make yourself a deal: you'll work on the task for at least five minutes, even if it's only brainstorming and recording your ideas. Set a timer. More often than not, you'll find the momentum you need to continue.
- Make it a habit. If this is a weekly task, plan to do it at a time when you have a reason to finish it quickly. For instance, if you have an hour between classes and want to have more time for other parts of your life, make it part of your weekly schedule. With repetition, it can become a habit to use these small bits of time in productive ways.

Trying to Complete Bigger Tasks

- Break them down! You can't do everything at once, so give yourself some time to make a long-term strategy. Instead of trying to finish a big project the weekend or night before a deadline, write out the steps you need to complete the job, estimate the amount of time it takes to do each one, and take care of them one by one.

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- Don't expect yourself to be perfect. Putting too much pressure on yourself is a frequent cause of procrastination. Allow yourself to experiment, make mistakes, and fix them in subsequent steps. A bad first try is still better than not trying at all.
- Ask for help. Many students feel like they "should" know something already—but everyone is learning! Professors, teachers, resource centres, peers and friends, and learning strategists are just some of the resources out there.

Trying to Complete Tasks When You Feel Overwhelmed

- Take care of yourself. Give your body the nutrition, exercise and sleep it needs. Make connections with friends and talk with people. Remember that you are not alone; reach out to others when you need support.
- Find or create a calm space. Inner calm can be encouraged by the environment you are in. Clutter and other distractions take a toll on you, so spend time clearing your desk or going to a place where you like to study (e.g. library or coffee shop).
- Take a break. Our brains process information without conscious thought and sometimes a break is actually what we need to figure things out. We don't necessarily learn better and retain more information because we study for longer periods of time.
- Say "no" to things that you don't have time for. At times it can be impossible to do everything you'd like to do. Figure out what is most important to you, and accept that some things might have to be done later or not at all.
- Write down everything you need to do. Instead of worrying about what you have to do, make a detailed list of deadlines. Focus on the things that you need to accomplish and take care of them one small step at a time. We often worry because we're trying to keep track of everything in our heads. Make a system or use tools that work for you.
- Set a schedule. A consistent routine makes doing the things you need and want to do a matter of habit. Find time every day to do something

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that you enjoy, even while you're studying and working. When figuring out what your schedule should look like, think about the following factors:

- scheduled activities (e.g. classes, jobs, etc.)
- reasonable expectations for work each day (e.g. two or three hours of studying in addition to classes)
- your ideal learning and working times (e.g. learning when you're most focused and energized)
- task switching (e.g. it can be tough to write after repetitive tasks; creative tasks are often best accomplished first)
- fatigue (e.g. multiple short study sessions can be more effective than a whole day spent studying one topic)

[Adapted from: https://studentlife.utoronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/CLSS_Motivation_AODA.pdf]

Work Sheet

Task 1: Think of a large task you wish to accomplish. This could be related to a course you are taking. It could also be a task at work or related to a hobby. Write down your task.

Answer:

Task 2: Review the strategies listed in “trying to complete smaller tasks” and “trying to complete bigger tasks”. Select three (3) strategies you could apply to the task you have chosen. Complete the chart.

Answer:

Task completion strategy	Specific way I can use this strategy to complete my task

Task 3: Review “trying to complete tasks when you feel overwhelmed”. Select three (3) strategies you could apply to the task you have chosen. Complete the chart.

Answer:

Strategy for managing feelings of overwhelm	Specific way I can use this strategy to complete my task

Task 4: Think of three (3) additional strategies that could be helpful when you feel overwhelmed. These may be strategies you have used in the past. They could be strategies you have heard about and would like to try. Complete the chart.

Answer:

Strategy for managing feelings of overwhelm	This could be helpful to me because...

Answers

Task 1: Think of a large task you wish to accomplish. This could be related to a course you are taking. It could also be a task at work or a related to a hobby. Write down your task.

Answers will vary. Ideally, the learner will have chosen a task with multiple steps to completion and a reasonably long time horizon.

Task 2: Review the strategies listed in “trying to complete smaller tasks” and “trying to complete bigger tasks”. Select three (3) strategies you could apply to the task you have chosen. Complete the chart.

Answers will vary.

Task completion strategy	Specific way I can use this strategy to complete my task

Task 3: Review “trying to complete tasks when you feel overwhelmed”. Select three (3) strategies you could apply to the task you have chosen. Complete the chart.

Answers will vary.

Strategy for managing feelings of overwhelm	Specific way I can use this strategy to complete my task

Task 4: Think of three (3) additional strategies that could be helpful when you feel overwhelmed. These may be strategies you have used in the past. They could be strategies you have heard about and would like to try. Complete the chart.

Answers will vary.

Strategy for managing feelings of overwhelm	This could be helpful to me because...

Performance Descriptors

Levels	Performance Descriptors	Needs Work	Completes task with support from practitioner	Completes task independently
A1.2	follows the main events of descriptive, narrative and informational texts			
	obtains information from detailed reading			
B3.2a	uses layout to determine where to make entries			
	begins to make some inferences to decide what information is needed, where and how to enter the information			
	makes entries using a limited range of vocabulary			
	follows instructions on documents			
E.1	sets short term goals			
	identifies one source of information (e.g. text, document, classmate, co-worker) to complete tasks			

This task: Was successfully completed ☐ Needs to be tried again ☐

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Learner Comments:

Instructor (print):

Learner (print):