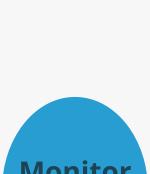# Online Instruction
Promoting Student Self-Direction & Combatting "Helplessness"

Students are often unaware of how they learn or how to effectively learn online. This can manifest itself in "helplessness" where students seemingly won't take responsibility for their own learning no matter the supports we put in place. Learning online requires that learners be able to learn in different environments and for different purposes, and take initiative and responsibility for their own learning. This kind of self-direction is one of the biggest predictors of a student's overall academic success. Following are some strategies that can be used to promote self-direction.
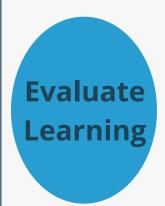
Prepare for Learning	- Include self-directed learning outcomes in the course syllabus and refer back to them often. - Ask students to reflect on their own goals for the class —through a discussion, a short assignment, or a learning contract. - Intentionally learn about learning. For example, ask students to read and discuss Robert Leamnson's article "Learning (Your First Job)" - Ask students to reflect on what they think they know and can apply before the start of a module.
Monitor Learning	- Use "Wrappers". These are short handouts or surveys that students complete along with an assignment or exam that focus on the learning process rather than on the content itself. - Encourage students to explore their own learning through reflection. Try the Molly Smith RDQ method —what Resonates with you, what do you Disagree with, and what Questions do you have? - Help students monitor their learning progress. - One Minute Papers —ask students to take a minute to explore short questions such as "What was the most important thing you learned in this module?" or "What question remains unanswered?" - The Muddiest Point —"What is the biggest area of confusion for you in this assignment/module?" - The Aha Moment— "What caused a moment of revelation for you this assignment/module?"
Evaluate Learning	- Ask students to paraphrase your feedback back to you in their own words. - Ask students to write a letter to the next class/cohort, describing what worked for them in this course and what they would have done differently. - Have students create a list of personal takeaways or write a "future uses" paper.

HAWAI'I PACIFIC UNIVERSITY

Adapted from: https://otl.du.edu/plan-a-course/teaching-resources/creating-self-directed-learners/