

Activity Overview

Title: Me and My Self: The Battle of Self-Regulation

Target Virtue: Temperance through Self-regulation

Target Courses or Activities / Criteria: This exercise would be suitable for a variety of class structures such as lectures, seminars, and remote-learning. It would also be effective for courses that involve regular examinations, especially long-term projects.

Summary: Students are given 15 minutes to independently work on a challenging trial project about creating two mock powerpoint presentation slides.

Key virtue outcomes: Keith and Frese observed improved emotional control and self-regulation among participants after the trial project.

Citation: Keith, N., & Frese, M. (2005). Self-Regulation in Error Management Training: Emotion Control and Metacognition as Mediators of Performance Effects. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 90(4), 677–691. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.4.677>

This activity was collated by [Harry Georges](#) and edited by [Jesse Blaire](#).



Me and My Self: The Battle of Emotion-Regulation

In this activity, professors will allot 15-minutes for students to work on reproducing a single PowerPoint slide. During the working period, the professor will reiterate error-management statements. Students in the midst of their project will also be encouraged to reflect among themselves strategic questions to help them complete the project.

Before You Start: Consider having your students complete the Defining Temperance quiz and reflection before completing this activity. It may also be helpful to provide students with [this infographic](#) about what virtues are and why they matter.

Materials: Computer and Microsoft Office Powerpoint; a complex PowerPoint slide or visual project to recreate

Implementation Suggestions: This could be implemented as an activity during week 1 of a college course. This activity could also be used in class sessions preceding an exam. **Note:** If PowerPoint is not a challenging program for your students, pick another program (a photo editor tool, a statistical software tool) or medium (clay, paint) students are less familiar with and ask them to recreate something. The key is that students get exposed to the error message (below) while wrestling through a challenging task for practice.



Procedure:

1. Students will read the following statements immediately before participating in the activity to make them aware of the benefits of error-management training:

"Errors are a natural part of the learning process!", "There is always a way to leave the error situation!", "Errors inform you about what you still can learn!", and "The more errors you make, the more you learn!".

2. Next, display a photo of a complex Powerpoint slide for students to view. Students should be prompted to reproduce the slide within an allotted 15 minutes without any instructions.
3. During the 15-minute period, the professor will reiterate and display the following error-management statements:

"Errors are a natural part of the learning process!", "There is always a way to leave the error situation!", "Errors inform you about what you still can learn!", and "The more errors you make, the more you learn!".

4. Lastly, students will be encouraged to self-reflect on their progress in the midst of the working period using strategic questions such as:

"What is my problem?", "What am I trying to achieve?", or "What do I know about the program [medium] so far that can be useful now?".

Extensions:

At [CultivateCharacter.com](https://www.cultivatecharacter.com) our approach to virtue cultivation is grounded in the belief that when students encounter virtue content through multiple modalities, it is more likely to stick. Below are potential extensions of the empirically-grounded virtue activities described above to help stretch your assignments and enhance the likelihood that your classroom cultivates character.

Possible Extensions:

Environmental – Try a similar task with a variety of different programs or materials or different stakes (e.g., public presentations of the slides). Have students consider how the difficulty of the task or the potential for evaluation impacted their responses to mistakes.

Cognitive –Have students reflect on how the exercise helps with emotional regulation during assessments. Encourage them to notice patterns when they get stumped and consider how they overcame challenges during the task.

Behavioral – Have students brainstorm regulation self-regulation strategies they used during the task. What helped them when they got frustrated or panicked? Encourage students to apply the self-regulation strategies used during the task to personal projects or everyday problem-solving situations outside the classroom.

Affective/Somatic –After the activity, prompt students to reflect on their emotional state and physical responses throughout the project to increase self-awareness.

Motivations –Explain how this activity supports better real-world performance. Ask students to identify potential future benefits of practicing making mistakes for future goals they have for themselves.

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