

Study Skills in Action

Being Confident

How does someone “get” confidence? Confidence is linked to another attribute called self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the belief that one has the ability to accomplish a specific task. It is possible for a student to have high self-efficacy when it comes to writing a personal essay, but to have low self-efficacy when it comes to learning math.

A good way to foster self-efficacy is by building a support system. A support system should include faculty and staff who can encourage and guide you, and other students who can help you study and stay focused.



Collegial friends, who share the same desire to do well, can be the best type of support.

Smart Study Strategy

Build a Support System

- 1 ▶ **Surround yourself with positive collegial friends.** Find another student in class with whom to study. Make sure this person is not anxious about math because you do not want another student’s anxiety to increase your own. Arrange to meet on campus and compare notes, homework, and so on at least two times per week. Collegial friends can encourage each other.
- 2 ▶ **Find a place on campus to study where other students are also studying.** Libraries, learning centers, and tutoring centers are great places to study. While studying in such places, you will be able to ask for assistance when you have questions. You do not want to study alone if you typically get down on yourself with lots of negative self-talk.
- 3 ▶ **Establish a relationship with a learning assistant.** Get to know someone who can help you find assistance for any type of academic issue. Learning assistants, tutors, and instructors are excellent resources.
- 4 ▶ **Seek out assistance before you are overwhelmed.** Visit your instructor when you need help. Instructors are more than willing to help their students, particularly during office hours. Go with a friend if you are nervous about visiting your instructor.
- 5 ▶ **Be your own support.** Listen to what you tell yourself when frustrated with studying math. Replace any negative self-talk dialog with more positive statements. Here are some examples of positive statements:
 - “I may not have done well in the past, but I’m learning how to study math, and will get better.”
 - “It does not matter what others believe—I know that I can get through this course.”
 - “Wow, I messed up on a quiz. I need to talk to someone and figure out what I need to do differently.”