MOTIVATION TO STUDY
Not only external factors, but also internal, emotional aspects have a high influence on studying behavior, as well as cognitive abilities. For this reason, they are significantly contributing to achieving learning targets.

MOTIVATION TO STUDY
Attentiveness, concentration, endurance and capacity are influenced by the motivation to study which results from the following factors:

- Am I interested in the subject?
- Do I have a distinct goal I want to achieve (passing an exam, for instance)?
- Do I consider studying as meaningful and leading to success?
- Which internal doctrines do I have? (cf. next paragraph)
- I decide to study myself and on my own responsibility!

Being interested in a subject and working with a focus are advantageous conditions for successful studying. Rewards also reinforce motivation as everything that touches us emotionally and activates us, leads to success in the long run.

With the following visualization exercise, you can support your goal-finding mission and strengthen your solution competence:

Exercise for reinforcing your motivation
- Sit down at a quiet place, close your eyes and breathe deeply for a few moments.
- Imagine your goal as realistic as possible (passing the exam, accomplishes seminar paper, etc.).
- Try to activate all senses and to make the imagination as vivid as possible.
- Now visualize present obstacles that prevent you from reaching your goals (low interest, little time for studying, inefficient studying techniques, etc.).
- Consider intensely which solutions and alternative options you have. Who or what could be helpful?
- What do I have to change (set up a new schedule, create better working conditions, after studying techniques, join a peer group, etc.).
- The visualization and set up a concrete plan of how you approach your new solution step-by-step.
- Consider intensely which solutions and alternative options you have. Who or what could be helpful?
- What do I have to change (set up a new schedule, create better working conditions, alter studying techniques, join a peer group, etc.).
- Finish the visualization and set up a concrete plan of how you approach your new solution step-by-step.
- If you do not find a solution, try to figure out if there might be more extensive motivational problems (choice of study, overload, personal problems, etc.).

ATTITUDE TOWARDS STUDYING – INTERNAL DOCTRINES
Positive or negative attitudes towards studying result from earlier experiences with studying, experiences pressure and the subsequent resistance to further studying, relevant people’s assessment of studying skills, etc.

Hence, so-called internal doctrines evolve in which attitudes and expectations are expressed. They have a tendency towards coming true in the sense of “self-fulfilling prophecies”. Thoughts like “I’ll fail” or “I’m not clever enough” are obstacles to successful studying. For that reason, it is important to notice, to analyze and to substitute negative, obstructive statements by positive, realistic verbalizations. Who believes in him-/herself and his/her chances for success studies more easily and achieves better performances.

The aims are realistic self-assessment and solid self-confidence. Self-responsibility, which shows as target-oriented, independent and responsible attitude, is also important: “I know what I want. My studies are my affair. I see obstacles as a challenge. I won’t get distracted from reaching my goals.” Missing self-responsibility can result in self-pity, escape from reality and resignation: “I have to, but I don’t want to have to.” “I am so pitiable, I have to study. I don’t feel like it, why do all that?”

Summary:

NEGATIVE attitude towards studying

- pessimistic: “I don’t really think I am capable of doing this.”
- aimless, chaotic: “I don’t know how to do it.”
- unrealistic: “I have to master the learning matter, once I have learned it.”
- insecure: “I don’t know if I will manage the learning matter.”
- nervous, ineffective: “I always get distracted, there is no progress.”
- easy to distract: “Today I simply don’t want to study.”

POSITIVE attitude towards studying

- target-oriented: “I am capable of doing this.”
- realistic: “I repeat it until I master it.”
- self-confident: “I will master the learning matter.”
- calm and focused: “I won’t get distracted.”
- consistent: “I study despite my reluctance.”

NEGATIVE self-verbalizations

- I have to force myself to study.
- I don’t perform, I am not of value.
- I have to learn.

POSITIVE self-verbalizations

- I have a clear goal I want to achieve, and studying takes me there.
- I am of value, not depending on what I do.
- I want to learn.

Some examples:
**LEARNING STRATEGY**

**Masterplan for the whole term**
* Planning of the necessary classes and exams
* Balanced scheduling of seminar papers and speech assignments over the term

**Schedule and division of learning matter for a concrete exam**
* Preparation of the required learning material
* Learning trial for 3–5 days:
  * How many hours do I spend on studying?
  * How many pages can I manage on average in this span of time?
* Concrete planning:
  * How long does the repetition take me?
  * How many repetitions are required.

**STUDYING TECHNIQUE**

A focused and determined approach and effective learning strategies are important factors for successful studying.

The **PQ4R-Method** (Preview – Questions – Read – Recite – Reflect – Review) is a good example for active and structured studying of a chapter from a textbook.

1. **Preview**
   - Getting an overview over a given chapter, general orientation (structure and subtitles)
2. **Questions**
   - Which questions ought to be answered by reading the text?
3. **Read**
   - This means active, understanding reading.
4. **Recite**
   - The learning matter should be reproduced freely.
5. **Review**
   - The learning matter should be reproduced freely. If knowledge gaps occur, the text should be re-read, completed and reproduced without any notes again.

**Rules against forgetting**

There are some general rules, but also individual traits.

- **Similar learning matters mutually interfere with reactivation.**
- **Shortly after studying is when most is forgotten.**
- **Why repetitions should be done more often at that time.**
- **The earlier a repetition is done, the fewer are necessary in total.**
- **The more detailed a learning matter, the more repetitions are required.**
- **Even well-remembered material will be forgotten, but re-activation is easier.**