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# College readiness: Thinking like a developmentalist

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An overview prepared for the NYC  
Department of Education

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## Using a developmental approach:

Using a developmental approach is often as much about *how* you approach your work as about *what* you do. A developmental approach can and should influence how you interact with students during instructional time, extracurricular activities, at special events, as well as during activities focused on college and career. The following strategies can be used to support students' college-going identities, motivational beliefs, and self-regulatory skills.

### Identity

1. Integrate discussions of identity into classroom assignments
2. Watch for practices and policies that undermine the development of self-efficacy
3. Invite students to discuss how they perceive their own ability

### Motivation

1. Uses language that emphasizes effort rather than innate talent
2. Emphasize learning rather than proving ability or getting accolades
3. Help students understand the difference between intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for doing things, and strike a balance
4. Provide students with a range of reasons for going to college and generate discussions that widen the list of reasons

### Self-regulation

1. Provide a balance of support and opportunities for autonomy
2. Guide students to break long-term goals into sub-goals
3. Help students use mental contrasting (e.g., using "if- then" statements to identify and plan for potential obstacles)
4. Build reflection into assignments and instructional practices

## IDENTITY

Key Concepts:

Self-concept; self-efficacy;  
multiple dimensions of identity;  
possible selves

## MOTIVATION

Key Concepts:

Belief systems (fixed and growth mindsets); goal types (extrinsic, intrinsic, and internalized regulation)

## SELF-REGULATION

Key Concepts:

Agency; delay of gratification;  
mental contrasting; meta-cognition

The ideas and strategies presented here have been excerpted from *Ready, Willing, and Able: A Developmental Approach to College Access and Success* (Harvard Education Press, 2012).