



Making Meaningful Choices in Your Learning¹

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Having choices in your learning is about taking ownership of your educational journey. Research shows that when you have meaningful choices about how you learn, what you study, and how you demonstrate your knowledge, you become more motivated, engaged, and successful. The key is learning to make choices that support your goals while honoring what works best for you.

When you have meaningful choices in your learning, it helps you:

- Stay more engaged and motivated in your coursework
- Connect your learning to your personal interests and career goals
- Develop stronger decision-making and self-management skills
- Show what you know in ways that highlight your strengths

The key insight: You take ownership of your education by making choices, not by waiting for them. Every intentional decision—what to study, how to demonstrate your learning, and how to approach an assignment—puts you in control.

Take Charge of Your Choices

To use choice well, you need four skills: making strategic decisions, leveraging your strengths, managing your options, and reflecting on outcomes. Start practicing now—these skills will serve you throughout your academic and professional life.

1. Making Strategic Choices

Not all choices are equal. The best choices align with both the learning goals and your personal interests or strengths. When your instructor offers options, think strategically about which choice will help you learn most effectively while keeping you engaged.

Strategies:

- Ask yourself: Which option will help me achieve the learning goal while connecting to something I care about?
- Consider your goals beyond the course—will this choice help you build skills for your career or future learning?
- Balance what interests you with what challenges you to grow

¹ Content developed with AI, based on [the CAST UDL Guidelines™](#), scholarly sources, and web resources. Icons courtesy of [Flaticon.com](#) contributors.

2. Leveraging Your Strengths

Choice allows you to play to your strengths while developing new skills. If you're a strong visual communicator, you might choose to create an infographic. If you excel at writing, an essay might showcase your abilities. The goal is to demonstrate your learning in ways that work for you.

Strategies:

- Identify your strengths—are you better at visual, written, or spoken communication?
- Choose formats that let you demonstrate your knowledge effectively
- Occasionally step outside your comfort zone to build new skills

3. Managing Your Options

Having choices means taking responsibility for your decisions. This includes managing your time, understanding requirements, and being realistic about what you can accomplish. If available options don't fit your needs, it's appropriate to discuss alternatives with your instructor.

Strategies:

- Read all requirements carefully before deciding—make sure you understand what each option entails
- Consider your time and resources—can you realistically complete this choice well?
- If choices feel overwhelming or unclear, ask your instructor for guidance—some students need more support in making effective choices, and that's normal

Beyond seeking guidance, you may find that none of the available choices fit your learning needs. When this happens, consider approaching your instructor about alternatives. Research supports students and instructors working together to design learning experiences. This is appropriate when:

- The available choices don't connect to your interests or career goals
- You would like to try a different format that would better demonstrate your learning
- You have a creative idea that still meets the learning objectives and applies your knowledge meaningfully

4. Reflecting on Your Choices

Every choice you make is an opportunity to learn about yourself as a learner. After completing an assignment, reflect on whether your choice helped you learn effectively. This reflection enables you to make better choices in the future.

Strategies:

- After completing an assignment, ask: Did this choice help me learn? Did it showcase my abilities?
- Notice patterns—are certain types of choices consistently more effective for you?
- Use what you learn to make more informed choices next time

Key Takeaway

Take the driver's seat in your education by making intentional decisions—what you study, how you learn, and how you demonstrate what you know. The best choices align with your goals, use your strengths, and push you to grow. Start with your next assignment: identify one choice you can make and own it.

Resources

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