

LOCUS OF CONTROL

Students who consistently achieve poor results on assessment tasks tend to develop an external locus of control. Persons with an internal locus of control view events as controlled largely by their own efforts, whereas persons with an external locus of control interpret the outcome of events as due largely to luck, chance, fate or other situations and events outside their own influence, such as their home circumstances. Here are a few strategies that you might implement to assist such students in your own learning area.

1. Reduce the amount of external reinforcement and focus on reinforcing student performance. Rather than saying, 'Good work' or 'Excellent job', focus on the behaviours, such as, 'You really concentrated and finished this biology assignment. You needed to ask for help but you still got it done. How do you feel about it?'
2. Link students' behaviours to outcomes. 'You spent ten minutes working hard on this assignment and now you've finished it. Doesn't that give you a sense of accomplishment?'
3. Encourage students to take responsibility for their successes. 'You received a 'B' on your biology test. How do you think you got such a good grade?' Encourage students to describe what they did (e.g. How they studied). Discourage students from saying 'I was lucky' or 'it was an easy test'.
4. Encourage students to take responsibility for their failures. For example, in response to the question, 'Why do you think you are in detention?' encourage students to take responsibility for what got them there. 'Yes, I am sure Billy's behaviour was hard to ignore. I am also aware that **you** did some things to get you here. What did you do?'
5. Teach students how to learn information and how to demonstrate their control of their learning task.