**Externalizing vs Internalizing Approach to Academic Problems**

1. The exam was too long so it wasn’t fair.
2. The professor worded the exam questions really confusingly so I got some wrong.
3. The professor tried to trick us on the questions.
4. I couldn’t work out what to study – the professor didn’t tell us what to focus on.
5. Lectures are too fast and have too much information in them so I can’t take notes.
6. They didn’t send a reminder so I missed the quiz.
7. I e-mailed the professor the evening the assignment was due to ask a question but they didn’t get back to me in time so I wasn’t able to finish the assignment.
8. The TAs didn't hold a review session before the final and therefore I didn't know what to focus on!
9. I had to study the night before the exam so I couldn't focus.
10. I have to work too much to get the assignments done, so I'm falling behind.

Point out to students that there are all “externalizing” excuses. Places the blame on the professor or others and means that there is nothing you can do to solve the problem. Makes it very difficult to solve the problem

Better responses would be “internalizing” – gives yourself the agency and allows you to “grow” or “adapt” to the new situation/person:

(Give them the first example then get them to rewrite the other complaints in a way that gives them the power to change the situation.)

1. I ran out of time for this exam. What techniques could I use to make sure I make the most of the time for the next exam?
2. I wasn’t able to easily work out what the question was asking. What could I do differently?
3. It was hard for me to work out the correct answer. How am I going to make sure I can do this better next time?
4. I’m getting overwhelmed by the details and not able to work out key points. How can I work out what is more important and focus more attention on that?
5. I’m struggling to take good lecture notes. What could I do ahead of time/during lecture/after lecture to make sure I’m capturing the most important information?
6. I missed the quiz – how can I better keep track of my assignments so I don’t accidentally miss more?
7. I left it too late to be able to ask questions and so missed points on an assignment. When would I need to start the assignment so that I have time to ask any questions I have?