


SELF-DIRECTED LEARNERS

What and Why

**Information for the CCPS Innovation
Team on Academic Excellence:**

**Self-Directed Learning and 21st Century
Skills**

April 4, 2007



“The foundational element in effective work systems is self-correcting, self-managing, self-accountable, self-governing behavior.”

- Carol Sanford

Why is SDL the Core of the Vision: What did the Board hear that led it to focus here?

– People will change careers, not just jobs, 5 – 7 times in their lifetimes

– More and more work will be project-driven in content and duration

- Virtually self-employed
- Need to manage time, resources, quality critical

– Knowledge will change rapidly, requiring real-time skills and knowledge upgrades


– **Competition will be global, not local or regional**

– Supervision of work will change


- Bosses will expect workers to know whether work is of sufficient quality and redo it until it is

– Ability to communicate and collaborate with others not like yourself will become more and more important to businesses and to individual workers

– Answers/solutions will be created, not found



“Perhaps for the first time in history, humankind has the capacity to create far more information than anyone can absorb; to foster far greater interdependency than anyone can manage; and to accelerate change far faster than anyone’s ability to keep pace.” Peter Senge



What defines self-directed learning?

Three dispositions and skill sets:

- **Self-Managing** — approaching tasks with clarity of outcomes, a strategic plan, and necessary data, drawing from past experiences, anticipating success indicators, creating alternatives for accomplishment
- **Self-Monitoring** — having self-knowledge of what works and what doesn't, having in-the-moment recognition of whether efforts are working, making effective decisions about altering the plan to achieve the desired outcome
- **Self-Modifying** — deriving meaning from experience and applying that learning to future activities

It's about using Feedback Spirals to grow/ learn!



SELF MANAGING

- Determine a direction for their own growth
- Develop a plan for completing work
- Approach tasks with clarity of purpose and outcomes
- Use their strengths and learning preferences to help them reach their goals (not a deficit model!)
- Identify and use appropriate resources
- Determine criteria for success
- Explore alternative solutions
- Organize time and set an appropriate pace for learning and work

SELF MONITORING

- Assess their strengths and interests
- Identify gaps in their learning
- Decide upon benchmarks to identify their growth.
- Use criteria for success to assess their work – monitoring clarity and accuracy
- Be able to take another's point of view






SELF MODIFYING

- Reflect upon their work and determine ways they were successful and ways they can improve.
- Compare their anticipated with their actual results and rework to improve the quality of the effort.
- Communicate with clarity and precision.

Self-Directed Learning meets 21st Century Skills

- Where did you see connections?
 - Effective communication
 - *Communicating with clarity and precision – Self-Modifying*
 - Global connections
 - *Ability to take another's point of view – Self-Monitoring*
 - Digital-Age Literacy
 - Inventive Thinking
 - *Explore alternative solutions – Self-Managing*
 - Technology
 - *Identify and use appropriate resources – Self-managing*



Building a Culture Where High Quality Counts

- “We need to know what the assignment is. We have to be clear about what is expected.”
 - *Standards*
- “We need to see examples.”
 - *Models*
- “We need a chance to practice.”
 - *Practice*
- “We need someone to tell us if it’s good or not.”
 - *Feedback*
- “We need a chance to do it over again.”
 - *Revision*

CLASSROOM NEEDS

- Students are taught that effort matters
(“Persistence is a unique form of intelligence.” – Bena Kallick)
- Students are coached in their explorations of themselves and their subject learning.





CLASSROOM NEEDS

- Students are explicitly taught thinking skills, problem solving skills, and decision-making skills.
- Students are provided the necessary resources and support to enable them to take responsibility for their own learning.



CLASSROOM NEEDS

- Students are helped to develop a sense of self-efficacy – they:
 - are viewed, and view themselves, as contributing members of the classroom and school community
 - have opportunities to create self-knowledge
 - are empowered, within their classes, to take responsibility for their own learning.
 - Their interests and learning preferences are taken into account in classroom instruction.



CLASSROOM NEEDS

- Learning has real-life applications, where students
 - have opportunities for virtual learning (e.g. in areas such as life sciences, mathematics and science, human relations, genetic engineering, statistical analysis.)
 - apply and integrate their knowledge and skills through project work.
 - have the opportunity to be exposed to, and explore, options for the future.
 - see the relevance in what they are learning.



CLASSROOM NEEDS

- Assessment is used as an instructional tool and as a way for students and teachers to monitor student learning. Teachers:
 - Work with students to define the criteria for success for whatever they are being held accountable.
 - Teach students to, and require that they, assess their own work against those criteria for success
 - Assess through authentic assessments, portfolios, and exhibitions.
 - Expect, and provide time for, students to reflect upon their learning.

Some Examples

- Students develop assessment rubrics and use them to score their own and others' work
 - Receive feedback on the work and the scoring of work
- Student is told number missed (on a math exercise, for example) and is directed to find the incorrect answers and correct them, alone or with a neighbor
 - Grade is on the second effort
- Late work receives an incomplete with time specified for the student to complete the work



Exercise

- What do we do now that encourages the development of self-directed learners?
 - For some?
 - For all?
- What strategies could make these practices commonplace?
- What do we do now that discourages the development of self-directed learners?
 - For some?
 - For all?
- What strategies could eliminate these practices?

“Spoon-feeding in the long run teaches us nothing but the shape of the spoon” – E.M. Forester

Thank you!

SOURCES

- Assessment Strategies for Self-Directed Learning
 - Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kallick
- Assessing and Reporting on Habits of Mind
 - Arthur L. Costa and Bena Kallick, ed.
- Ed Barlow, *Creating the Future, Inc.*