

Self-Direction Resource Document



Brief Description: Developed in collaboration with EdLeader21 members, this resource document includes a definition for the skill, along with suggested readings, tools and resources that focus on self-direction. It is a conversation starter on Self-Direction.

Tags, Keywords: Self-Direction, Student Outcomes



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Skill Definition: Self-Direction

Following is a list of indicators for self-direction derived from the P21 definition and suggestions by EdLeader21 members.

Manage Goals and Time

- Set goals with tangible and intangible success criteria
- Balance tactical (short-term) and strategic (long-term) goals
- Utilize time and manage workload efficiently
- Multi-task when appropriate, e.g. perform work on more than one project or activity simultaneously

Work Independently

- Monitor, define, prioritize and complete tasks without direct oversight

Be Self-directed Learners

- Go beyond basic mastery of skills and/or curriculum to explore and expand one's own learning and opportunities to gain expertise
- Demonstrate initiative to advance skill levels towards a professional level
- Demonstrate commitment to learning as a lifelong process
- Reflect critically on past experiences in order to inform future progress
- Take chances and/or risks in an effort to expand knowledge or practice skills in new and unfamiliar contexts





Demonstrate a Positive Attitude

- Cooperating with coworkers and supervisors
- Taking direction willingly
- Exhibiting eagerness to learn
- Acting in a pleasant and polite manner



Suggested Reading

Coplin, Bill, *10 Things Employers Want You to Learn in College: The Know-How You Need to Succeed*

This book is centered on a list of skills that all students need to succeed in college, career, and citizenship. Coplin defines the first necessary skills as "Kick Yourself in the Butt," focusing on self-direction.

<http://www.amazon.com/Things-Employers-Want-Learn-College/dp/1580085245>

Bronson, Po and Ashley Merryman, *Nurture Shock (2009)*

The book challenges many assumptions in today's society about raising children. It relies on the latest parenting research to cover topics related to over-praising of children, evaluation of "giftedness" and self-regulation (a concept related closely to self-direction). Chapter 8 is a helpful overview of the "Tools of the Mind" program, an innovative early childhood approach that focuses on promoting self-regulated learning. The research summary on why this program works is an interesting take on self-direction. Book: <http://tinyurl.com/ya2w9ax> Website: <http://www.nurture shock.com/>.

Candy, Philip C., Ph.D, Stephen D. Brookfield, *Self-Direction for Lifelong Learning: A Comprehensive Guide to Theory and Practice (1991)*

This book provides a comprehensive examination of the methods and concepts of teaching students to teach themselves. The book traces the roots of self-direction in learning and explores how it manifests itself in various parts of the education process. Candy carefully defines self-direction, showing how the term has been applied to a number of different phenomena - and how this imprecise labeling has contributed to confusion about the concept and gaps in the literature of the subject. The text also offers





specific insights and strategies for studying, thinking about, and developing self-direction in individual learners. <http://amzn.to/gjPxI7>

Infed article on Self-Direction

This comprehensive article published by the Encyclopedia for Informal Education (Infed) summarizes key pieces of literature and issues surrounding the concept of self-direction in learning. The work of Alan Tough and Malcolm Knowles is covered; the bibliography is a good resource for additional reading as well.

<http://www.infed.org/biblio/b-selfdr.htm>

Kohn, Alfie, *How Not to Get Into College: The Preoccupation with Preparation* (2003)

This piece does a good job of capturing a common concern among many educators of college preparatory students—that an over-emphasis on traditional metrics for success can result in students who are not very self-directed or passionate about learning as a lifelong process. Kohn challenges educators with questions such as: “What happens when college preparation takes over the upper school, squeezing out other purposes?” and “What are we doing to our students in the name of college prep?” This essay can be an effective conversation-starter during strategic planning sessions with leadership teams. <http://www.alfiekohn.org/teaching/collegeprep.htm>

Pink, Daniel, *Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us* (2009)

Pink’s book focuses on many issues that relate to self-direction. As he puts it: “Most of us believe that the best way to motivate ourselves and others is with external rewards like money—the carrot-and-stick approach. That’s a mistake...The secret to high performance and satisfaction—at work, at school, and at home—is the deeply human need to direct our own lives, to learn and create new things, and to do better by ourselves and our world.” <http://www.danpink.com/drive>





Self-Directed Language Learning

Journal articles and other resources related to self-direction and language learning.

www.cal.org/resources/archive/rgos/selfdirected.html

Science Daily (article), “Self-Regulation Game Predicts Kindergarten Achievement” (2009)

“Early childhood development researchers have discovered that a simple, five-minute self-regulation game not only can predict end-of-year achievement in math, literacy and vocabulary, but also was associated with the equivalent of several months of additional learning in kindergarten.” <http://bit.ly/V8Lez>





Additional Tools and Resources

3C Skills Collaborative

The 3C Skills Collaborative's goal is to provide resources aimed at developing high school student's skills that will help them develop skills that will be necessary for success in the 3Cs (college, career, and citizenship). Resources include lesson plans, rubrics, assessment guides, and videos. The fundamental premise of the program is based on self-direction, while the very first skill is titled: "Motivate Yourself."

<http://www.3cskills.org/>

Alverno College

Self assessment and reflection are at the heart of Alverno College's approach to enabling self-direction in its students. Some resources and models that might be useful for districts include:

- The Diagnostic Digital Portfolio (DDP), which is built on Alverno's student assessment-as-learning process. Alverno has developed a customizable version that can be adapted by other institutions. <http://ddp.alverno.edu/>
- Self Assessment (as Practiced by Alverno College Students, with Faculty Direction), by Tom Marcy, Ph.D. – overview of the self-assessment methodologies used by Alverno faculty and students. <http://bit.ly/hCSAI9>
- Alverno College Framework for Self Assessment <http://bit.ly/emdujg>

Art Costa Centre for Thinking / Habits of Mind Resources

Resources and professional development tools that focus on Habits of Mind concepts.

<http://www.artcostacentre.com/>





AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination)

This elementary through postsecondary college readiness system is designed to increase school wide learning and performance.

http://www.avid.org/abo_whatisavid.html

Catalina Foothills School District – Self-Direction Rubric

CFSD has created numerous rubrics including one focused on self-direction.

http://www.cfsd16.org/public/_century/centMain.aspx

Character Counts

Self-Direction is emphasized in this widely-used character education program.

<http://charactercounts.org/>

Collaborize Classroom

This site that allows teachers and students to collaborate on projects. Many of the curriculum and activities ideas support Self-Direction.

www.collaborizeclassroom.com

Guglielmino, Lucy, Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale

The *SDLRS* is a self-report questionnaire with Likert-type items developed by Dr. Lucy M. Guglielmino in 1977. It is designed to measure the complex of attitudes, skills, and characteristics that comprise an individual's current level of readiness to manage his or her own learning. <http://lpasdlrs.com/>

Innovative Educator Resources on Technology and Self-Direction

Blog that lists a number of resources related to self-direction.

<http://bit.ly/juepEU>





Institute for Learning Innovation

The Institute for Learning Innovation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to understanding, facilitating and communicating about free-choice learning.

<http://www.ilinet.org/display/ILI/Home>

International Society for Self-Directed Learning

The International Society for Self-Directed Learning was founded in 2005 and is dedicated to the promotion of self-directed lifelong learning and to the encouragement and dissemination of continued research on self-directed learning both within and outside of institutional contexts: in childhood education, higher education, adult education, training and human resource development, as well as informal and non-formal contexts. The Society produces The International Self-Directed Learning Symposium and The International Journal of Self-Directed Learning.

<http://sdglobal.com/> Journal list (PDFs for download)

<http://www.oltraining.com/SDLwebsite/journals.php>

Lawrence Township Self-Direction Rubrics

Lawrence Township developed rubrics to assess students' self-direction skills. The rubrics measure self-direction by abilities that include students' setting goals, planning, confidence in abilities/self-efficacy, motivation, engagement.

<http://bit.ly/hc4d4R> and <http://bit.ly/dMCvXT>

OEDB, The Self-Directed Student Toolbox: 100 Web Resources for Lifelong Learners

This is an excellent compendium of a wide variety of resources for adult learners, organized by category. <http://bit.ly/eVsnkP>





Research Starters – The Montessori Method

The Montessori Method focuses on developing intrinsic motivation for learning, a critical component in self-directed learning. This basic research brief with an excellent bibliography gives an overview of the method geared toward traditional K-12 educators. http://www.williamsburgmontessori.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/08/The_Montessori_Method.pdf

