

# Tips for Fostering Self-Determination Throughout Schooling

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self-determination: *noun*  
(sèlf ´dî-tûr ´me-nâ ´shen)

1. Determination of one's own fate or course of action without compulsion;
2. Freedom of the people of a given area to determine their own political status; independence.

*self-determined, adj.-- self-determining, adj.*

The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language, Third Edition (1992). Houghton Mifflin Company.

## The Emergence of Self-Determination

- Enhanced capacity as a result of:
  - attainment of developmental milestones;
  - acquisition of component elements.
- Opportunity to assume control as a result of:
  - environments that support control and choice;
  - frequent experiences of choice and control.
- Supports and accommodations.

## Promoting Self-Determination

- Instruction on component elements of determined behavior;
- Self-determination curricula and assessment materials;
- Student-directed planning materials

# Napoleon Bonaparte

“Ability is of little account without opportunity”



## Self-Determination

For Students with  
Intellectual Disabilities *and*

### WHY I WANT EDUCATORS TO KNOW WHAT IT MEANS

*Contrary to what many people assume, students with intellectual disabilities are capable of directing some aspects of their own lives. If we are to create democratic classrooms, Ms. Marks argues, we must promote self-determination for all students.*

**Key Idea #1. All People Want Some Level of Self-Determination in Their Lives.**

**Key Idea #2. Rich and Varied Experiences Are Necessary for Promoting Self-Determination**

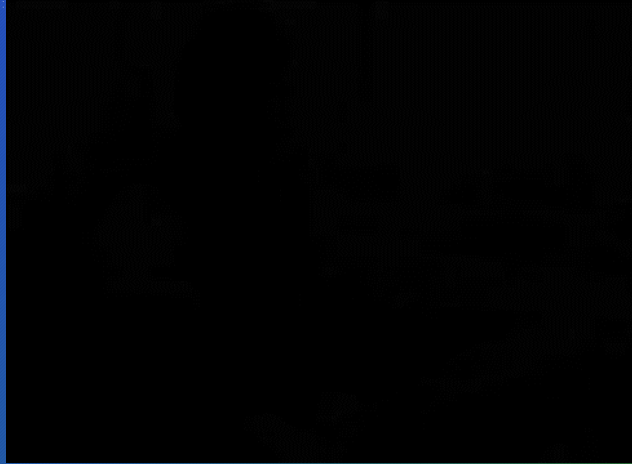
**Key Idea #3. Self-Determination Is a Lifelong Learning Process**

## SELF-DETERMINED BEHAVIOR

### Component Elements of Self-Determined Behavior

- Choice-making
- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- Goal setting and attainment
- Self-advocacy
- Self-observation, evaluation and reinforcement
- Internal locus of control
- Positive attributions of efficacy and outcome expectancy
- Self-awareness
- Self-knowledge

## A Movie Project: "I have my own dreams"



## Choice Making

- Making a choice =
  - Indicating a preference
  - Between two or more options



## Choice Making

- Particularly important for childhood/early elementary. Provides opportunity to teach students they have a voice in their education.
- Including a choice opportunity within behavioral interventions has been shown to improve outcomes.
- People's preferences change. Just because a student liked something at one time doesn't mean he or she will like it at another time.
  - Assess frequently.

## Issues in Choice Making for Students with Disabilities

- Some students with disabilities have fewer opportunities to learn about preferences based on personal experiences than their non-disabled peers.
- Students with disabilities with communication impairments may not be able to express preferences in traditional ways.
  - Problem behavior as an expression of preference.
- Students with ASD who have special interest areas may focus choices exclusively on that as opposed to wider range of options.
  - On the other hand, of course, special interest areas provide an opportunity to integrate choice making into almost any activity.

## Integrating Choices Into Teaching

- incorporating student choice as an early step in the instructional process;
- increasing the number of choices related to a given activity which the student makes;
- increasing the number of domains in which choices are made;
- raising the significance in terms of risk and long-term consequences of the choices which the student makes; and
- clear communication with the student concerning areas of possible choice, and the limits within which choices can be made (Shevin & Klein, 1984, pp. 164).

## Promoting Decision-Making

Most models of decision making incorporate the following steps:

- listing relevant action alternatives;
- identifying possible consequences of those actions
- assessing the probability of each consequence occurring (if the action were undertaken);
- establishing the relative importance (value or utility) of each consequence;
- integrating these values and probabilities to identify the most attractive course of action.

## Making Decisions

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## Promoting Problem-Solving

- A problem is an activity or task for which a solution is not known or readily apparent.
- Three focal points to instruction in problem solving:
  - problem identification;
  - problem explication and analysis;
  - problem resolution.
- Should occur within environments that emphasize;
  - student's capacity to solve problems;
  - promote open inquiry and exploration
  - encourage generalization.



## Issues in Problem Solving for Students with Disabilities

- Many, if not most, of the types of problems that need to be addressed are social in nature and involve one's interactions with others.
- Any difficulty in understanding social and emotional cues will, in turn, impact a student's capacity to identify and analyze the problem.
  - Most research/practice to promote social/emotional understanding has focused exclusively on social skills, without addressing social problem solving.
  - Some exceptions to above:  
Bauminger (2002) used role playing to teach students with ASD social problem solving.
  - Bernard-Opitz, Sriram, and Nakhoda-Sapuan (2001) developed video-based computer program to teach social problem solving.

## Promoting Self-Advocacy Skills

- Skills needed to advocate on one's own behalf;
- Will focus on two common threads;
  - how to advocate;
  - what to advocate;
- Particularly important during secondary education, should be tied directly to educational planning meeting.



Self-Advocacy:  
Know Yourself,  
Know What You  
Need, Know How  
to Get It

## Goal Setting and Attainment

- Goal setting theory is built on the underlying assumption that goals are regulators of human action.
- Effects of goal setting on behavior is a function of goal difficulty and specificity as well as previous experience with the activity or action.

## Goal Setting and Attainment

- Instructional efforts to promote goal setting and attainment should focus on:
  - Goal identification and enunciation
  - Developing objectives to meet goals;
  - Identifying actions necessary to achieve goals;
  - Tracking and following progress on goals.
- Participation in educational planning and decision-making as ideal generalization mechanism.

## Student Involvement and Self-Determination

- Research has shown that students with disabilities are not major players in their IEP/transition planning meetings.
- Research has also shown that students with disabilities can learn the skills to be active participants in their IEP/transition planning meetings.
- Research suggests that student involvement has a reciprocal effect with self-determination. That is, students who are more self-determined are more likely to be involved in their educational planning, but getting students involved in their planning— independent of their level of self-determination— enhances self-determination.

## Promoting Self-Awareness and Self-Understanding

- recognition and identification of physical and psychological needs, and how to meet those needs;
- identify and communicate own interests, beliefs and values;
- understand and accept individual differences;
- handling frustration and stress

- [Jenica Marcus Powerpoint.pptx](#)
- [Its\\_My\\_Choice.pdf](#)

## Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction

## Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction

- A model of teaching based on the principles of self-determination and student directed learning.
- Primary emphasis is to enable students to apply a problem solving, goal oriented strategy to self-direct learning.
- Model has 3 phases:
  - Setting a Learning Goal;
  - Constructing a Learning Plan;
  - Adjusting Behaviors;
- Each Phase has 3 components:
  - Student questions;
  - Teacher objectives;
  - Instructional strategies.

## Instructional Process for SDLMI

- Each phase has a problem to solve
  - Phase 1: What is my goal?
  - Phase 2: What is my plan?
  - Phase 3: What have I learned?
- A problem is a task, activity, or situation for which a solution is not immediately identified, known, or obtainable.
- Solving a problem is the process of identifying a solution that resolves the initial perplexity or difficulty.

# Phase 1: Set a Goal

Student Problem to Solve: What is my goal?		
Student Questions	Teacher Objective	Educational Supports
What do I want to learn?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable Students to identify specific strengths and instructional need.</li> <li>Enable students to communicate preferences, interest, beliefs, and values.</li> <li>Teach students to prioritize needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student self-assessment of interests, abilities, and instructional needs.</li> <li>Choice-making instruction.</li> <li>Problem-solving instruction.</li> <li>Decision-making instruction.</li> <li>Goal-setting and attainment instruction.</li> </ul>
What do I know about it now?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable students to identify their current status in relation to the instructional need.</li> <li>Assist students to gather information about opportunities and barriers in their environment.</li> </ul>	
What must change for me to learn what I don't know?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable students to decide if action will be focused toward capacity building, modifying the environment, or both.</li> <li>Support students to choose a need to address from the prioritized list.</li> </ul>	
What can I do to make this happen?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teach students to state a goal and identify criteria for achieving goal.</li> </ul>	

# Phase 2: Create a Plan

Student Problem to Solve: What is my Plan?		
Student Questions	Teacher Objective	Educational Supports
What can I do to learn what I don't know?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable student to self-evaluate current status and self-identified goal status.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-scheduling.</li> <li>Self-instruction.</li> <li>Choice-making instruction.</li> <li>Teach students to state a</li> </ul>
What could keep me from taking action?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable student to determine plan of action to bridge gap between self-evaluated current status and self-identified goal status.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>goal and identify criteria for achieving goal.</li> <li>Antecedent cue regulation.</li> <li>Goal-setting instruction.</li> </ul>
What can I do to remove these barriers?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with student to identify most appropriate instructional strategies.</li> <li>Teach student needed student-directed learning strategies.</li> <li>Support student to implement student-directed learning strategies.</li> <li>Provide mutually agreed upon teacher-directed instruction.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Goal-attainment strategies.</li> <li>Problem-solving instruction.</li> <li>Decision-making instruction.</li> <li>Self-advocacy instruction.</li> <li>Assertiveness training.</li> <li>Communication skills training.</li> </ul>
When will I take action?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable student to determine schedule for action plan.</li> <li>Enable student to implement action plan.</li> <li>Enable student to self-monitor progress.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-monitoring.</li> </ul>

## Phase 3: Adjust Goal or Plan

Student Problem to Solve: What have I learned?		
Student Questions	Teacher Objective	Educational Supports
What actions have I taken?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable student to self-evaluate progress toward goal achievement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Self-evaluation strategies.</li> <li>Choice-making instruction.</li> <li>Goal-setting instruction.</li> <li>Goal-attainment strategies.</li> <li>Problem-solving instruction.</li> <li>Self-reinforcement strategies.</li> <li>Self-recording strategies.</li> <li>Self-monitoring.</li> </ul>
What barriers have been removed?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collaborate with student to compare progress with desired outcomes.</li> </ul>	
What has changed about what I don't know?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support student to re-evaluate goal if progress is insufficient.</li> <li>Assist student to decide if goal remains the same or changes.</li> <li>Collaborate with student to identify if action plan is adequate or inadequate given revised or retained goal.</li> <li>Assist student to change action plan if necessary.</li> </ul>	
Do I know what I want to know?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enable student to decide if progress is adequate, inadequate, or if goal has been achieved.</li> </ul>	

## What is Student-Directed?

- The key to student-directed is that the student retains control over his or her learning process, even when others (teachers, parents, peers) participate.
- Not the same as doing everything by yourself. That is, students will vary a great deal in the degree to which they can work through the materials independently. Factors which influence this include:
  - Reading or writing skills;
  - Confidence in working alone or in small groups;
  - Practice with self-directed instruction.

## What is the Teacher's Role?

- Facilitator
  - Do what it takes to enable student to succeed;
  - Provide accommodations and support;
- Teacher
  - Share expertise in promoting learning;
  - Source of information about education;
- Advocate
  - Communicate to students that they can succeed;
  - Work collaboratively with student to achieve shared goals.

## Educational Supports

- Enable students to successfully self-direct their learning.
- Enable students to modify and regulate their own behavior.
- Provide a means for educators to enable students to begin to teach themselves.
- Examples: Strategies such as self-monitoring, self-evaluation, decision-making... Teaching students to identify preferences and interests



## Measuring Self-Determination

- The Arc's Self-Determination Scale (Wehmeyer et al)
  - Self-report measure of self-determination for students with cognitive disabilities.
- AIR Self-Determination Assessment (Mithaug et al)
  - Student, teacher, and parent report versions
- ChoiceMaker Self-Determination Assessment (Martin et al)
  - Curriculum referenced measure.
- Wayne State University Self-Determination Assessment Battery (Field et al.)
  - Student, parent, teacher versions, observation checklist
- All available online at OU Zarrow Center web site (<http://education.ou.edu/zarrow/>).

## Resources: Websites

- National Gateway to Self-Determination website
  - <http://www.ngsd.org>
- OU Zarrow Center website
  - <http://education.ou.edu/zarrow/>
- KU Beach Center on Disability website
  - <http://www.beachcenter.org/>

How will you support self-determination?

