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## **Breakout Session**

# **Practical Tools to Encourage Self-Direction Among Students for In-Person and Remote Learning**

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Karin Hess, Educational Research in Action  
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Tony Doucet, Souhegan High School  
Cathy Baylus, Laconia Middle School,  
Donna Harvey-Moseley, Sanborn Regional School District



# Getting to Know The Group

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In the chat please enter your response to the prompt:

What does self-direction mean to you?

How would you know that a student is self-directed?

# Who is BEST?



## Teacher Leads

Cathy Baylus, Laconia  
Angel Burke, Laconia  
Kathy Cotton, Rochester  
Tony Doucet, Souhegan  
Elizabeth Gouzoulas, Rochester  
Kelly Gray, Rochester  
Donna Harvey, Sanborn  
Patricia Haynes, Sanborn  
Brittany Lombardo, Sanborn  
Chris Longo, Moultonboro  
(formerly Laconia)  
Jessica Tremblay, Souhegan  
Nicole Woulfe, Sanborn

## Participating SAUs

SAU 8 – Concord  
SAU 16 – Exeter, Brentwood, Kensington,  
East Kingston, Newfields,  
and Stratham  
SAU 17 – Sanborn\*  
SAU 23 – Woodsville, Haverhill  
SAU 24 – Henniker  
SAU 29- Chesterfield, Harrisville, Keene,  
Marlborough, Marlow, Nelson  
and Westmoreland  
SAU 39 – Souhegan\*  
SAU 43 – Newport  
SAU 30 - Laconia\*  
SAU 54 – Rochester\*

\* WSP Study School Districts

## Consulting Experts

Carisa Carrow  
*Center for Collaborative Education*  
Ann Hadwen  
*Social Studies Content Expert*  
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*KnowledgeWorks*

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# Self-Direction Toolkit



## **An effort to elevate the teaching and assessment of essential skills in our schools**

BEST is working to shift how students learn and demonstrate essentials skills like communication, collaboration, creativity, and self-direction (aka Work Study Practices). We are doing this through a developmentally backed research framework, teacher professional development, new instruction in the classroom, and use of a statewide performance assessment system rooted in competency-based education (PACE). We are also building the evidence base that this works for ALL students.

***Because every student deserves to have the skills to succeed.***



# Self-Direction



In the chat enter your response to the prompt:

- . What does self-direction mean to you?
- . How would you know that a student is self-directed?


# Self-Direction Rubrics: Development

Grades K-12

# How can we *consistently* measure self-direction?



Competencies are Agreed-Upon Expectations for Learning  
(Hess, Colby, & Joseph, 2020)

- ☐ Observable and measurable
  - ☐ Manageable, in terms of numbers and grain size
  - ☐ Articulate increasingly more rigorous and sophisticated learning K-12
  - ☐ Are valid (measure what they say they are measuring)
  - ☐ Provide instructional guidance
- 

# Rethinking What “Self-Direction” Means



Self-Awareness

Initiative &  
Ownership

Goal Setting &  
Planning

Engaging &  
Managing

Monitoring &  
Adapting

# Applying Self-Direction Research

*(Essential Skills and Dispositions Framework, 2015)*

- **Beginner:** new to the task or context, follows models, responds to guidance **[EMERGING]**
- **Advanced Beginner:** uses known steps in familiar tasks and contexts, looks to others for support **[DEVELOPING]**
- **Strategic Learner:** analyzes situations, plans/refines approach, determines relevant strategies **[APPLYING]**
- **Emerging Expert:** analyzes unfamiliar situations, seeks to broaden and connect skills **[EXTENDING]**



# Applying Rubric Quality Research

(Hess, 2018)

- Adjacent performance levels are qualitatively different
- Use descriptive “kid friendly” language (I can...); avoid subjective (negative behavior) language
- All performance levels describe a progression of performance, stated in the positive – what IS happening

# Self-Direction Rubrics: Piloting with Students

Grades 6-8 and 9-12



# Criteria are the same all grade levels.



Performance descriptors in the rubrics differ and age-appropriate, for grade spans K-2, 3-5, 6-8 and 9-12.

# Collaboration Skills Contribute to Development of Self-Direction

Although counterintuitive, collaboration is intricately related to self-directed learning. Learners develop self-directed learning skills as they engage with others.

MEASURING  
STUDENT SUCCESS  
SKILLS:  
A REVIEW OF THE  
LITERATURE ON  
SELF-DIRECTED  
LEARNING

[Brandt, 2020]

# Grades 6-8



Emerging

I can...

Identify my strengths and areas needed for growth, using feedback from others.



Developing

I can...

Analyze how familiar strategies have been used or expanded upon in a new project.



Applying

I can...

Use relevant prior work or experiences to locate and explain examples of when I successfully used new learning strategies.



Extending

I can...

Cite examples from my work to evaluate my progress in overcoming barriers and expanding my strengths.

I can...

Choose a learning opportunity from options provided by others.



I can...

Recognize my own role in learning by proactively asking relevant questions and seeking specific support when needed to complete a task.



I can...

Shape new learning opportunities by engaging with others to generate learning goals that match personal interests or strengths.



I can...

Propel my own learning in more meaningful directions by redefining a task challenge.

I can...

Use strategies suggested by others to develop steps to accomplish a project when the specific learning goal has been provided.



I can...

Use familiar learning strategies and processes to set a learning goal, develop a plan to meet the goal, and seek feedback from others to refine the plan.



I can...

Analyze project-specific expectations and resources needed to formulate a plan with key steps and strategies to complete the project.



I can...

Diagnose project-specific expectations, set personally meaningful learning goals that may exceed requirements, and create a plan to complete them.

I can...

Follow a process provided to select resources based on task requirements or suggested criteria.



I can...

Seek help or try models of others when using new resources or strategies to accomplish a multistep task or project.



I can...

Maintain appropriate focus and pace using agreed-upon benchmarks for completing a multistep task or project.



I can...

Analyze how or why I adapted strategies or refined my pace or approach based on feedback or when I faced roadblocks.

I can...

Make changes to improve my plan or the quality of my work when gaps in my understanding or process are identified by others.



I can...

Use established criteria or benchmarks to evaluate whether I should adapt a strategy, refine my methods, or consider a different approach to improve quality.



I can...

Evaluate my progress, citing examples of successful strategies used and analyzing the effectiveness of changes made to complete a high-quality multistep task or project.







I can...

Analyze my learning in terms of meeting project goals, transforming mistakes into new learning, and enhancing work quality and personal growth.



# Grades 9-12

 Emerging	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Analyze how my interests have sometimes been in conflict with expectations of others and generate ways I might overcome this in the future.</p> <p>↓</p>	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Choose a new learning opportunity from options provided and explain how it reflects personal curiosity or interests.</p> <p>↓</p>	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Set a project-based goal modeled after examples provided and use familiar strategies to develop steps and strategies to accomplish it.</p> <p>↓</p>	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Follow a process provided to select reliable resources based on task requirements or suggested criteria.</p> <p>↓</p>	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Begin a course of action, seeking help when gaps in my progress, understanding, or work quality are identified by me or others.</p> <p>↓</p>
 Developing	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Explain how my strengths or strategies used successfully in the past can be applied in a new learning situation.</p> <p>↓</p>	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Collaborate with others to share control of shaping the direction of a new learning task while pursuing my interests or learning goals.</p> <p>↓</p>	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Analyze project-specific expectations, identifying resources needed, strategies suited to completing the tasks, and steps to complete the project.</p> <p>↓</p>	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Adapt strategies for my approach, with help as needed, when accessing more complex information or resources.</p> <p>↓</p>	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Use established benchmarks or feedback to monitor quality or progress, consider alternative approaches, and revise my plan, as needed.</p> <p>↓</p>
 Applying	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Analyze my ability to adapt or expand my strengths and interests to successfully complete a new task or project.</p> <p>↓</p>	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Take responsibility for my own learning by establishing driving questions to guide my own learning process.</p> <p>↓</p>	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Set a personally meaningful project-based goal, with steps to complete the plan and possible challenges along the way with alternative strategies or resources needed to complete the project.</p> <p>▼</p>	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Anticipate complexities of task completion and schedules, and explain how I adjusted my pace appropriately to meet agreed-upon deadlines.</p> <p>↓</p>	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Evaluate my progress and work quality, citing examples of successful strategies used and analyzing the effectiveness of changes made to complete a multistep task or project.</p> <p>▼</p>
 Extending	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Cite examples from my work to evaluate how I have expanded my strengths and interests by setting learning goals beyond assigned tasks.</p>	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Seek input to help me analyze the content and context of learning tasks in order to reshape, extend, or enhance my own learning.</p>	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Independently seek input on a project-based learning goal and plan that pushes my learning beyond the task, and use feedback to improve the plan.</p>	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Provide examples of how I set and maintained a high standard of work quality and how I plan to improve my process in the future.</p>	<p><b>I can...</b></p> <p>Analyze my learning by citing examples of how I met or exceeded project goals, transformed mistakes into new learning, and enhanced my personal growth.</p>



# Introducing Rubrics to Students



Nicole Woulfe - Sanborn Regional Middle School

Tony Doucet - Souhegan High School



# Using a “Think Aloud” Protocol

- Focus Group Questions: Start at the Applying level.
- Is it clear how you might demonstrate self-direction on a performance task? Are any descriptions unclear or confusing?
- Think of a task you’ve already completed...does the rubric help you identify specific evidence?
- Could the rubric help guide personal reflections? Peer conferencing?
- Do levels “make sense” to help guide progress?

# Student Feedback - 9th Grade

- “I feel like the layout of the applying part of the rubric is really clear. It shows you exactly what you need to be able to do”
- “I think you can use this rubric to help reflect. You can reflect on how you set goals, and meet those goals, and take past experiences and apply them”
- “I like how it shows what you did do, instead of saying ‘you did a really bad job with this’, or ‘this is what you are missing’. I like how it shows you what you have done instead”
- “You can see how each level has an increased expectation”

*Recording of the students feedback can be found on the*

**[BEST Project Website](#)**

# Student Feedback - 6th Grade

- Students found the design of the rubric easier to use
  - ◆ Students mentioned right away how there were fewer words compared to the other self-direction rubric
- Students appreciated the shift to more kid-friendly language
- As I was explaining and providing examples for each level of the rubric, students raised their hands to provide their own examples
  - ◆ They grasped the levels of self-direction independently

*Rubric was presented to students on March 12 and the decision to shift to remote learning was made March 13 so we didn't get further than an overview*

# Self-Direction Tools



# Rubric-Tool CrossWalk

**Tool 2: Self Direction Evidence Tool (Key: "X"=Primary Evidence Source)**

Tool Items	Self-Awareness		Initiative &Ownership		Goal Setting & Planning	
Grade Bands	6-8	9-12	6-8	9-12	6-8	9-12
<b>Step 1: My Action Plan</b>						
1. Briefly describe the task or project you will complete.					X	X
2. What is the <b>learning goal</b> (or the inquiry questions) you have for this task or project?				X	X	X
3. <b>What is your Action Plan?</b>					X	X
a) What are the steps you will take to complete this task or project?						
b) What actions or strategies will you use to accomplish each step?						
c) What resources will you need for each step?						
d) What are the target start and end dates for each step?						

# Tool 1: Self-Direction Pre-Assessment

Grades K-12

# Why Pre-Assess Self-Direction?



Development of self-direction and learning progression  
over time and across contexts

# Feedback & Questions



How might this tool be beneficial for your classroom?

Please share your thoughts and questions in the chat!

# Self-Assess Self-Direction

## *Why Self-Assess?*

- Self-Direction skills develop over time
- Students assess specific skills
- Builds self awareness
- Gauges growth year to year for teachers and students
- Portfolio reference documenting growth



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- Introduce and re-introduce the rubric
- Teacher instructions with built in modification options for teachers to personalize
- Created based on student and teacher feedback along with research and development of essential skills and dispositions



# A Tool for Success!

## Goals for Assessment

- Identify
- Assess
- Reflect

TABLE 1.0 | Self-Assessment of Self-Direction Skills

1. Self Direction	2. I can...	3. My level is...	4. Why that level?
<p>What have I accomplished in past work that makes me feel I can be confident in this area? What do I feel I can work on to be more confident in this area?</p>	<p>How much guidance do I need to feel confident in my work?</p>	<p>Explain why you chose "Emerging," "Developing," "Applying," or "Extending" for your level, referring to each area of self-direction and using the Self-Direction Rubric as a guide. What evidence from past work can you use to support choosing that level?</p>	
<p><b>Self-Awareness</b> <i>Reflecting on past experiences to think about my:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Strengths</li><li>• Challenges</li><li>• Motivations</li><li>• Interests</li></ul>		<p><input type="radio"/> Emerging <input type="radio"/> Developing <input type="radio"/> Applying <input type="radio"/> Extending</p>	
<p><b>Initiative &amp; Ownership</b> <i>Taking responsibility for my own learning by:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Asking questions</li><li>• Selecting learning opportunities that interest and challenge me</li><li>• Getting input from others</li></ul>		<p><input type="radio"/> Emerging <input type="radio"/> Developing <input type="radio"/> Applying <input type="radio"/> Extending</p>	
<p><b>Goal Setting &amp; Planning</b> <i>Creating long-term goals</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Setting "right now" goals</li><li>• Creating a plan and mapping it with steps</li></ul>		<p><input type="radio"/> Emerging <input type="radio"/> Developing <input type="radio"/> Applying <input type="radio"/> Extending</p>	



# In Class Implementation

Benefits and Challenges based on student feedback

## **Benefits**

- Natural learning environment
- Teacher explanation in “real-time”
- Immediate availability for Q&A
- Peer support
- Introduced over time
- BEST Tool created a “bridge” for understanding of rubric

## **Challenges**

- New “mindset”
- Struggle to understand language in the rubric
- Varying academic abilities struggled to be “reflective” of past learning
- Uncomfortable asking questions in whole class discussions

# Remote Learning Use

## *Benefits & Challenges based on Student Feedback*

### Benefits:

- Writable PDF
- Unlimited Time
- Self-Directed Completion with Online Meet Option
- Opportunity for 1:1 follow up
- More personalized/honest

### Challenges:

- Lack of completion (at risk students)
- Inability or unwillingness to ask questions
- Feeling overwhelmed
- Comfort of peers in the room - Q&A/discussion

# Feedback & Questions



How might this tool be beneficial for your classroom?

Please share your thoughts and questions in the chat!

# Tool 2: My Self-Direction Road Map

Grades 6-12

## My Self-Direction Road Map



STEP  
**1**

### Task Goals & Action Plan

Understand the task and learning goals  
Make my action plan



STEP  
**2**

### Self-Direction Goal & Action Plan Review

Select one self-direction goal for this task  
Get input from others and make changes to improve my plan



STEP  
**3**

### Mid-Task Checkpoint

Reflect on my progress  
Get input from others  
Make changes to my plan, if needed



STEP  
**4**

### Post-Task Reflection

Reflect on my work and learning  
Share evidence of progress, learning, and reflections

# Interaction Questions

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Which part of the road map resonates with your current practice? How?

Which part of the road map are you most likely to add to your practice? Why?

Response	Percentage
Doing a good job	45%
Not doing a good job	55%

\_\_\_\_\_



# Remote Learning

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How can these tools be used in a remote environment?

- ▷ Hybrid Model
- ▷ Helped remote students monitor their own learning
- ▷ Increased Agency

# Instructional Scaffolds

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Varies by grade level

- ▷ 6th grade:
  - Lots of modeling
  - Applying the steps
- ▷ 11th & 12th:
  - More independent
  - Process not just the product

# Challenges

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- ▷ Step 4 - Post-Task Reflection Redundancy
- ▷ Naming the process
- ▷ Too much/ too little scaffolding
- ▷ Meeting the demands of the Self-Direction Rubric

# Student Co-Design Revision

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- Stronger learning goals
- Chart for checkpoints helpful
- Post reflection questions redundancy
- Authentic capture of process strategies
- Streamline the tool to meet the needs of learners with different scaffolding needs

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# Discussion Prompt Responses

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Which part of the road map resonates with your current practice? How?

Which part of the road map are you most likely to add to your practice? Why?

# Thank You

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## Questions?

# Resources

- BEST Project Website
  - ◆ Toolkit is being updated
- Knowledgeworks Student at the Center hub
- JFF NH Deeper Learning Diffusion & Scale Research Support Site
- NHLI Social Studies Project Libguide
- ES&D Framework



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