Enhancing Self-Determination for Students with Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities: Using the Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction in Research and Practice

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Being self-determined means acting or causing things to happen as you set and work toward goals in your life.
Self-Determination is...
...a dispositional characteristic manifested as acting as the causal agent in one’s life.

Self-determined people...
...act in service to freely chosen goals (i.e., causal agents).

People who are causal agents...
...make, or cause, things to happen in their lives. They are “goal chasers.”

(Shogren et al., 2015)
When student self-determination is promoted, they achieve:

- Greater academic achievement
  - Progress in general education curriculum
  - Academic goal attainment
- Increased postsecondary outcomes
  - Postsecondary education
  - Employment
  - Community Participation


IN PRACTICE

Self-determination

Teaching the skills associated with self-determination

Providing supports and accommodations as necessary

Providing opportunities to use and practice these skills

✓ Choice making
✓ Decision making
✓ Problem solving
✓ Goal setting
✓ Planning
✓ Goal attainment
✓ Self-management
✓ Self-advocacy
✓ Self-awareness
✓ Self-knowledge
Skills associated with Self-Determined Action

• Choice making
• Decision making
• Problem solving
• Goal setting and attainment
• Planning
• Self-management
• Self-advocacy
• Self-awareness
• Self-knowledge

Also referred to as:
• Executive functioning skills
• 21st century skills
• College and career readiness skills
• Metacognitive skills
The **Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction** is a teaching model that enables teachers to teach students to:

- Make **choices** and **decisions** about setting a goal
- Develop action **plans** for academic goals
- **Self-monitor** and **self-evaluate** progress toward academic goals
- **Adjust** the goal or plan

**What is my goal?**
**What is my plan?**
**What have I learned?**

**WHAT IS THE SDLMI?**

**Phase 1:** Set a Goal
**Phase 2:** Take Action
**Phase 3:** Adjust Goal or Plan
• Self-determination skills increase academic engagement and progress

• These are skills that teachers are often already targeting indirectly

• Instruction on self-determination skills formalizes the process

**CCSS English skills**

- Providing an objective summary of text with a central theme (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.10.2)
- Determining the meaning of words (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RL.10.4)
- Tying together complex ideas (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.1.A)
- Writing persuasive college application essays (CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.9-10.10)

**Self-Determination Skills**

- Problem-solving skills
- Decision-making skills
- Choice-making skills
- Self-scheduling skills
Goal areas that students can select from (with support)
Goal: Math

**Preparedness**
**Goal example:** I will put my math book in my backpack every night before going to bed.

**Note-taking**
**Goal example:** I will write down everything the teacher writes on the board and 3 things she says during class.

**Math-specific strategies**
**Goal example:** I will circle key ideas in word problems.
Transportation

Goal example:
I will investigate and choose an appropriate method of transportation.

Community Involvement

Goal example:
I will identify 3 potential leisure, recreation, or community activities.
Pre/post measure of student self-determination: Self-Determination Inventory: Student Report (SDI:SR)

• The SDI:SR asks students questions about how they feel about their ability to be self-determined; that is, to make choices, set and go after goals, and make decisions.

• 21 items (takes only 10 minutes to finish)

• Validated for people aged 13 to 22

• Online with accessibility features:
  ✓ In-text word definitions
  ✓ Audio playback
  ✓ Tablet compatibility
  ✓ Average grade reading level: 2.8
VISUAL ANALOG SCALE

Computer-scored, slider scale system (0-99)
IN-TEXT DEFINITIONS

Scroll over, plain language definitions of potentially challenging words.
SDLMI LONGITUDINAL PROJECT

**Context**
Multiple school districts across Maryland, Delaware, and Pennsylvania
General and special education teachers
9th, 10th, and 11th grade students with and without disabilities
Across 3 academic years (2018-19 – 2020-21)

**Intervention**
Evidence-based intervention, the *Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction* (SDLMI), designed to promote student self-determination
Includes **two levels of support** (online support, online support + coaching) to examine the impact on implementation of the SDLMI

**Outcomes**
**Student:** Increased self-determination, academic achievement, and access to general education curriculum → post-school outcomes: postsecondary, employment, and community access
**Teacher:** Enhanced knowledge, skills, and fidelity in using the SDLMI
**TIME**

- **15-minute lessons twice a week** on skills on how to identify a goal, how to solve problems, etc.
- Teacher embeds instruction throughout content instruction as well

**STUDENT GOALS**

- Goals related to core content academic achievement:
  - Building content-specific skills (e.g., writing organization)
  - Being prepared for class (e.g., organizing notes before coming to class)
  - Improving general academic skills (e.g., increasing quantity of notes taken)

**WHEN**

- Embedded during regular content instruction
- The teacher supports students, but students self-direct the process

**WHO**

- Mini-lessons taught by both general and special education teachers
Teacher support:

- Interactive online modules every two weeks
  - Content and strategies
  - Scenario and check for understanding
  - Resources (worksheets, videos)

- Sent via email so teachers can use the resources to support their SDLMI implementation
In addition to receiving online modules, teachers in schools randomly assigned to coaching receive **monthly, in-person coaching** from trained SDLMI coaches.

Coaches observe and then complete the SDLMI Fidelity Measure and provide additional support during a **coaching session** (30 minutes) after the observation.
Year 1 Project Update

6 Schools
17 General & Special Education Teachers
899 Students
16% have Individualized Education Programs

Implementation Supports
15 Online Modules Disseminated
26 Coaching Sessions

Teacher Results
Fidelity of Implementation
- 1st Semester: 9.23
- 2nd Semester: 9.20
- 1st Semester: 7.71
- 2nd Semester: 7.35

Knowledge, Skills, & Use Summer 2018 Training
- Pre
- Mid
- Post

Student Results
SDI:SR
- Goal Attainment Scaling 1st Semester
- Much less
- Somewhat less
- Expected
- Somewhat more
- Much more

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Teacher Results

Fidelity of Implementation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Average Score</th>
<th>1st Semester</th>
<th>2nd Semester</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adherence (0-10)</td>
<td>Quality (0-23)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1st Semester</td>
<td>7.71</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd Semester</td>
<td>7.15</td>
<td>14.78</td>
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Knowledge, Skills, & Use Summer 2018 Training

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Skills</th>
<th>Use</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pre</td>
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<td>Post</td>
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Setting the Stage

- Establish high expectations
- Give opportunities to fail in a safe environment
- Create learning opportunities
- Build a partnership
- Develop and provide supports
Thank you!

For more information, visit: SELF-DETERMINATION.ORG

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