

WORKSHOP SEVEN KEY INFORMATION

TOPIC 7-B: CHARACTERISTICS OF SELF-DIRECTED LEARNERS

DI and Self-Directed Learners

The following list includes some of the common characteristics of self-directed learners. The characteristics are followed by a question about how DI may be used to support the development of the characteristic.

- 1) Independent and Self-Managing — *How does regular self-assessment that is tied to a collaborative relationship between teacher and student help to build this quality?*
- 2) Self-Disciplined, Responsible, and Self-Monitoring — *How could you incorporate personal reflection or goal-setting into your DI lessons as a means of helping students develop these characteristics?*
- 3) Curious and willing to try new things — *How does interest-based differentiation of all kinds, including Centers and Stations, Tic-Tac-Toe and Choice Boards, help students to look forward to learning and discovery?*
- 4) View problems as challenges — *How might experience in working with a group to solve a Problem-Based Learning scenario help students develop this skill?*
- 5) Motivated and Persistent — *How does differentiated instruction that is carefully matched to a student's ZPD or that provides enough scaffolding so that students can successfully meet a challenging learning task support the development of this skill?*
- 6) Reflective and aware of how best to learn for themselves — *How does regular class-wide and small group debriefing—especially after students have learned new procedures or skills—help students to develop this skill?*
- 7) Use various learning strategies — *How does the practice of differentiating instruction based on learning style preferences and the expectation that all students will learn to work using all eight intelligences support the development of this characteristic?*
- 8) Think critically and creatively — *How does the regular use of ThinkDots or any variation of the Blooming Assessments strategy support the development of creative and critical thinking?*
- 9) Consider different viewpoints — *How does collaborative group work help students develop this quality?*

10) Focused, On-Task, and Industrious — How might regular self-assessment, in which the student monitors his or her own progress against a set of standards or class goals, help students to develop this characteristic?

Note: The online articles you read included additional characteristics, attitudes, and skills.

TOPIC 7-D: MEETING SPECIAL NEEDS: GIFTED STUDENTS

Gifted Students Research References

Tomlinson (2001) suggests that teachers should gradually raise expectations of advanced learners, encouraging them to compete with their own potentialities rather than with their peers.

Tomlinson (2001) suggests that teachers can differentiate instruction for advanced learners in numerous ways (e.g., assigning more complex reading or research matter, challenging them to think at a higher level, and requiring them to use more sophisticated skills).

Research shows that teachers can successfully differentiate instruction in regular classrooms to accommodate the needs of advanced or gifted students (Johnsen et al., 2004). Successful differentiation strategies include independent study, compacting, acceleration, enrichment, and problem-based instruction (Callard-Szulgit, 2005). Tomlinson (2001) cautions that effective differentiated learning must be more than giving normal assignments to most students and “different” ones to the advanced and struggling students. Such practices engender a divisive “pecking order” among students.

Many great men and women were the successful beneficiaries of acceleration (Colangelo, Assouline, & Gross, 2004). For example, Martin Luther King, Jr. graduated from high school at the age of 15. Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor did so at 16.

Hoagie's Gifted Page <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org> [link]

This website is a composite of resources for teachers and parents. It has a wealth of information about and for gifted children.