

# SESSION 2

# INDEPENDENT STUDY PLANNER

## STEP 2

### AMOUNT OF TIME; CRITICAL THINKING

**TIME** 30 – 50 minutes (may split into two sessions)

#### OBJECTIVES

- Students learn how to document their project time
- Students build work and study skills by consciously planning time, then committing to processes for tracking time and monitoring progress
- Students understand expectations of weekly check-ins and reflections
- Students understand the process of reflection, learning, revision, and continued learning, and see the application of critical thinking skills

#### PLANNER/HANDOUTS

- Complete Planner OR Handout, Independent Study Planner Step 2
- Handout: Time Log
- Handout: Reflections
- Handout: Mid-point Assessment (optional)
- Handout: Higher Level 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills in Action

### STEP BY STEP

#### 1. OPENER

**Ask and explain:** What do you think employers say are essential job skills? [Allow time for answers.]

Most employers will say: Showing up on time, coming to work every day, and putting in a full day's work. It's a person's work ethic; their commitment to doing the job and doing it well.

**Explain:** With Independent Study, students are responsible for planning and doing the work themselves, for showing that they are putting in the time needed, and that they're not wasting time. In workplace, college readiness, and 21<sup>st</sup> century skills language, it's called "Manage goals and time," including setting short, medium, and long term goals, and utilizing time and managing workload efficiently.



**Ask and explain:** Employers will also say, “critical thinking.” The phrase is used a lot in education. Critical thinking is really a set of skills that shows you can solve problems from small to large, think creatively, reason things out, gather and weigh information and evidence, hear and understand different opinions and points of view, and use different kinds of information and evidence to draw conclusions.

**Ask:** Do you have examples from your life or work where you applied critical thinking skills? It could be an example of figuring out how to handle a problem, or fixing something that wasn’t working. [Allow time for examples.]

**Explain:** With Independent Study, you actively draw on critical thinking. You’ll put time into thinking about how the project is going, what’s working and not, what you want to know more about, and whether changes should be made.

## 2. PLANNING TIME FOR THE WORK

**Ask students to look back** at the ideas they have for projects and activities, and what they might learn. (Step 1 of Planner).

**Have students** make notes on Planner Step 2: Amount of Time (Handout or in Planner), showing how much time they’ll be putting in, hours per week, and weeks per year.

**Hand out** the Time Log.

**Explain:** Students will use the Time Log to track their time. If they are using experience in a job or other afterschool activity off-site as the base for their project, they may be required to get signatures from supervisors to confirm the time logged.

## 3. PLANNING TIME FOR CRITICAL THINKING: REVIEWS, REFLECTIONS, STUDY GROUPS

**Explain:** Critical thinking about a project requires time and focus. There are several opportunities for this. [Note: The Independent Study project may require all or some of these; adjust the requirements and frequency to best fit the program and the students.]

- 1) Students meet weekly with their Independent Study Coach to review what is working, what isn’t, time planning, and to talk specifically about the learning. Students keep notes on the Time Log. The log with these notes becomes part of the Portfolio to show students put in the time and the thinking.
- 2) Students will meet mid-way through the project for a formal Mid-point Assessment with the IS Coach. [Note: you may provide this as a handout at this time.]
- 3) Students complete Weekly Reflection. (Distribut Reflection handout) Reflections are like keeping a journal, with notes about what students did, what they may be learning, what’s working, what’s not. Reflections are useful for guiding meetings with the IS Coach, and go into the Portfolio of Work. Looking back over Reflections, from the beginning of the project to the end, students should be able to see critical thinking, planning, and learning. They may also show skill-building in writing and time management.



Note: Depending on the program and requirements for credit, there may be different requirements for the number of reflections, how often they should be done, and any minimum standards for length or content. Be sure requirements are clear to students. You may use the Reflections handout, use journals, or other approaches.

- 4) Study groups of students working on similar projects, or with check-ins scheduled on the same days may form peer study groups. [Note whether this is an option for students, or a requirement.]

As a study group, students may:

- Review progress and issues with each other, keep notes, and put the notes in the Portfolio of Work
- Help each other with deadlines and requirements
- Brainstorm and share ideas
- Prepare as a group for a presentation of Independent Study work, findings, or learnings; brainstorm formats and approaches, discuss possibilities of videos, PowerPoint® presentations, games or game shows, workshops, or other ways to show and communicate what they got out of the project
- Give feedback to each other on written pieces as 'critical friends'
- Attend each others' presentations

### **TRIVIA DAY** **EXAMPLE OF STUDY** **GROUP ACTIVITY**

Lead a game show Trivia Day as a final presentation, with questions based on what you're learning in Independent Study. For example: You're working at Pep Boys. What new info have you learned about auto mechanics or retail work? Turn the info into game show questions for your classmates. Questions can be structured like Trivial Pursuit, Jeopardy, or some other idea.

Come up with some great prizes for Trivia Day winners!

## **4. SKILLS REVIEW**

Give students **5 to 10 minutes** to review the handouts and fill in the Planner or handout

Ask for a few volunteers to explain what they wrote, and why.

Ask if there are any questions, concerns, or ideas.

Distribute the handout, Higher Level 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills in Action.

Tell students to look through the handout, and note that you'll be referring back to this handout several times.



**Ask** students to work in pairs or threes for about 10 minutes to read the first two sections, Critical Thinking and Initiative, Self-Direction, and Leadership. Ask them to check which skills are part of the Independent Study project.

**Ask:** Which did people check? Explain where you see that skill in practice.

Do you see these skills in other areas of your schoolwork, life, home, etc.?

Which two seem most important to you? Why?

## 5. CLOSING AND NEXT STEPS

**Explain:** Next session will get into the detail of the learning agenda—what you expect to learn. This is the time you'll be applying critical thinking, self-direction, and taking charge of your learning.

**Ask** for questions, comments, feedback.



# INDEPENDENT STUDY PLANNER

**STEP  
2**

## AMOUNT OF TIME

### TIME FOR PROJECT OR WORK

Schedule \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Daily \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Weekly \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Number of weeks \_\_\_\_\_

### TIME FOR CRITICAL THINKING

#### Check-ins

Schedule \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of time \_\_\_\_\_

#### Reflections

How often \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of time \_\_\_\_\_

Study group ☐ Yes ☐ No

Schedule \_\_\_\_\_

Amount of time \_\_\_\_\_



# TIME LOG

Include dates of meetings with your Independent Study Coach, study groups, or other associated activities.

## WEEKLY LOG

WEEK OF: \_\_\_\_\_

### NOTES OR SIGN-OFFS

#### MONDAY

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

#### TUESDAY

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

#### WEDNESDAY

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

#### THURSDAY

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

#### FRIDAY

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

#### SATURDAY

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

#### SUNDAY

Activity: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Spent: \_\_\_\_\_

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# REFLECTIONS

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

(May include notes or reflections from cohort meetings)

Take a few minutes to think about your experience. Write down some of your observations and thoughts. It might help to use one of these starters for your reflection.

**THIS EXPERIENCE IS...** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**I AM INTERESTED IN...** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**I LEARN BEST WHEN...** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**THE MOST DIFFICULT PART OF THIS FOR ME IS...** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



# MIDPOINT ASSESSMENT

**CONDUCTED BETWEEN STUDENT AND INDEPENDENT STUDY COACH  
REVIEWED BY CONTENT AREA TEACHER, IF APPLICABLE**

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- Review the Planner (or Planning handouts) and the Contract
- Discuss objectives, work plans, and where the student is with respect to fulfilling the terms and the learning agenda
- Discuss the unexpected learning that has taken place
- Discuss study groups or other supports
- Consider and discuss changes

## TO BE COMPLETED BY STUDENT

1. Should you revise or add to your objectives? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Look at your plan for demonstrating learning. Does it still work? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Look at your timetable and Independent Study requirements. Are you on track? What else is needed?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What challenges are you finding? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

5. What kind of help do you need to address the challenges? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**INDEPENDENT STUDY COACH RECOMMENDATIONS** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**STUDENT REFLECTIONS, REQUESTS, OR RECOMMENDATIONS** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





# HIGHER LEVEL 21ST CENTURY SKILLS IN ACTION

## CRITICAL THINKING

1. Reason effectively. Use different kinds of thinking, drawing on different kinds of evidence. Find similarities, patterns, differences, compare, make observations, draw develop concepts, ideas, and conclusions.
2. Collect and consider range of views. Gather, listen to, evaluate, and integrate into analysis of diverse points of view.
3. Question effectively. Develop and ask significant questions that clarify information, deepen understanding, and lead to greater knowledge or better solutions.
4. Analyze. Consider, test, and weigh, and evaluate evidence and information, including facts, contexts, arguments, and opinions. Determine how pieces interact with and affect each other.
5. Reflect on experience. Draw on evidence from lived practice and experience to inform thinking, new learning, and processes.
6. Make reasoned judgments and decisions. Assess information, form opinions, draw conclusions, and make decisions.
7. Solve problems. Identify and recognize problems; apply reason and strategic thinking to address and solve problems.

## INITIATIVE, SELF-DIRECTION, AND LEADERSHIP

1. Develop goals and outcomes. Set goals with short, medium, and long-term time frames, and identify criteria for success, targets, results, outcomes, and/or products associated with different time horizons.
2. Work independently. Define, prioritize, monitor progress, and complete tasks without direct oversight.
3. Manage time. Balance short, medium, and long term goals, analyze time requirements to reach results, and manage workload to reach maximum results efficiently.
4. Develop knowledge and skills through self-directed learning. Actively and independently expand and deepen learning and experience to gain greater knowledge and understanding, to master skills, and to advance personally and professionally.



5. Guide, lead, and inspire others. Identify and use strengths of others to accomplish shared goals, demonstrate by example the highest standards of work and achievement, and use interpersonal and problem-solving skills to influence, inspire, and guide others to achieve outcomes.
6. Demonstrate accountability as a leader. Adhere to the highest ethical standards, use influence and power for the benefit of achieving the best possible results, and act responsibly in the interest of the larger community.

## **PRODUCTIVITY, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND RESPONSIBILITY**

1. Manage projects to achieve goals. Prioritize, manage time, and align efforts to achieve goals, whether single or multiple projects.
2. Fulfill responsibilities. Follow through with agreed-upon work and schedules, adhere to highest standards of ethics and professionalism, fulfill responsibilities to teams, and demonstrate reliability and punctuality.
3. Commit to achieving goals and results. Assume appropriate responsibility and accountability for reaching goals, outcomes, and results, whether in individual or team projects.
4. Conduct oneself professionally. Work respectfully, positively, collaboratively, and cooperatively, and present oneself with the appropriate etiquette for the culture and situation.

## **COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION**

1. Express thoughts and ideas clearly in diverse contexts. Use written, spoken, non-verbal, media, and technology-mediated methods appropriately, skillfully, and effectively in a variety of settings with diverse (including linguistically) populations.
2. Listen effectively. Listen carefully, respectfully, and analytically to understand information, viewpoints, values, emotions, and intentions.
3. Communicate purposefully. Understand the purpose of communication (to inform, instruct, motivate, inspire, persuade, etc.), and use appropriate content and methods.
4. Interact effectively. Know when it is appropriate and useful to listen and when to speak, monitor and assess processes and results of communication, and use technology-mediated interaction skillfully.
5. Work with diverse teams. Work productively and respectfully with people of different cultures, with different beliefs and viewpoints, and from different backgrounds.
6. Collaborate effectively. Assume shared responsibility for outcomes, listen and contribute respectfully and effectively, demonstrate flexibility and ability to compromise, and leverage different contributions to create, innovate, and lead to high quality results.

