

# SESSION 3

# INDEPENDENT STUDY PLANNER

## STEP 3

### LEARNING AGENDA

**TIME** 35 – 45 minutes

#### OBJECTIVES

- Students apply critical thinking to shape and direct their learning
- Students specify learning objectives for their Independent Study
- Students demonstrate ability to plan their learning by completing the Learning Agenda
- Students explore development of a research component (if required as a component of Independent Study work)

#### PLANNER/HANDOUTS

- Independent Study Higher Level Skills
- Complete Planner OR Handout, Independent Study Planner Step 3
- Thinking It Through

### STEP BY STEP

#### 1. OPENER

**Ask and explain:** Independent Study is about learning by doing, from a project, from work, from activities.

**Ask:** What's the difference between just doing something, and really learning from it? What does it take to 'learn' something? [Allow a few minutes for responses.]

**Refer to the handout,** Higher Level 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills in Action (students may have this from prior session.) Under Critical Thinking, look at 5—Reflect on Experience. Being able to deliberately and consciously learn from experience is a skill.

**Explain:** Today's session is about setting your learning agenda, identifying specifically what the learning goals and objectives are. For example, you might have a job with the goal of making some money after school. But your learning goals might be developing workplace skills, learning money management, or learning about business management.



## 2. IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**Tell students** to look back at the notes they made on the work, project, or experience they'll use for Independent Study.

**Distribute** the handout, Independent Study Planner Step 3: Learning Agenda, or refer them to the Learning Agenda in the Planner. Refer them also to the examples on the handout, Thinking it Through, and to the handout Higher Level 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills in Action.

**Tell students** to brainstorm and make notes on the Learning Agenda items 1 and 2, for about 10 minutes. Have students review each others' ideas in pairs or threes.

## 3. FINALIZING OBJECTIVES

**Give students** another 5 minutes or so to complete the Learning Agenda objectives.

**Ask** what students identified and wrote as objectives.

**Discuss:** Do these seem achievable based on the project and the time?

## 4. RESEARCH COMPONENT (OMIT IF NOT REQUIRED)

**Ask** students if they've done research. What? Where did the research question come from? How did they gather information?

**Explain:** Thinking about your Independent Study, what piece might you want to learn more about? What could you dig into further? Refer to Session 1, Thinking it Through. Under the section, What Could You Do, are several examples of research areas.

**Explain** any requirements provided by subject or class teachers who will be reviewing the research component.

**Refer** students to the Independent Study Planner section, Build in a Research Component. Allow students about 10 minutes to make notes.

**Ask** for examples of ideas; discuss.

Follow any other procedures required by subject or classroom teacher.



## 5. CLOSING AND NEXT STEPS

**Refer** students back to the handout, Higher Level 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills in Action.

**Ask** students if their Learning Agenda addresses any of these. Which?

**Explain** that the next session is the last part of planning, and will address how students will demonstrate learning. The Portfolio provides a record and written evidence of what students did and learned. In addition, they will do a demonstration and presentation.

**Explain** that after the planning, they will complete the Contract, which will be quick, since all the work and thinking was done in the Planner.

**Ask** for questions, comments, thoughts.



# 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.



# INDEPENDENT STUDY PLANNER

STEP  
3

## LEARNING AGENDA

### 1. WHAT DO YOU HOPE TO LEARN FROM YOUR EXPERIENCE?

---

---

---

---

### 2. SET YOUR LEARNING OBJECTIVES.

These can include building skills or gaining knowledge, such as

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Research skills                 | <input type="checkbox"/> Writing skills      |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Critical or analytical thinking | <input type="checkbox"/> Presentation skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Leadership                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Global learning     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Technology skills or knowledge  | <input type="checkbox"/> Presenting data     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Communication skills            | <input type="checkbox"/> Work habits         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creativity                      | <input type="checkbox"/> College prep        |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Career prep                     |  |

Objectives may start with:

Learn more about [topic] \_\_\_\_\_

Learn how to [skills] \_\_\_\_\_

Become better at [skills] \_\_\_\_\_

It should include *how*.

...by working at

...by working with

...by doing [activity] for [amount of time]

...by writing at least a paragraph each week



### 3. BUILD IN A RESEARCH COMPONENT

Independent Study may include a research component.

What do you want to learn more about?

---

---

---

---

---

---

What could be your research question? For example, if you have a job, your research questions might be: 'Who sets the minimum wage? Is it enough to live on?'

---

---

---

---

---

---

What kind of research do you like to do?

- ☐ Interviews and surveys, then analyzing and showing results
- ☐ Gathering information on the web, and writing a report with your analysis
- ☐ Reading books or articles on a topic
- ☐ Other ideas: \_\_\_\_\_

---

Finalize your research question, methods of research, time frame for work and due dates.

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# THINKING IT THROUGH

## EXAMPLE 1: KID CARE

**WORK OR ACTIVITY:** I take care of my little brother and sister

**HOW MUCH TIME:** About 10 hours a week

### WHAT COULD YOU LEARN?

- How to be a good sister or a good parent
- How children grow and what they need to grow up well
- Child development
- Nutrition and health

### WHAT COULD YOU DO?

- Learn more about child development or child psychology
- See if I can tell what stages and behaviors my sister and brother show
- Give examples of what I should do as a good parent or good sister or brother to help them grow up well
- Find out what other people my age think good parenting, big-sistering or big-brothering is
- Prepare a position paper on, what young adults should learn and know about little kids and how to raise them
- Do a set of skits on little kid behavior and parent or sibling responses

## EXAMPLE 2: ENVIRONMENT

**INTEREST AREA TOPIC:** Taking care of the environment

### HOW MUCH TIME CAN YOU PUT IN?

About 10 hours per week

### WHAT COULD YOU LEARN?

- How to clean up the environment
- Things to do in my neighborhood that would make a difference
- Why it's important to take care of the environment
- Which organizations or companies are committed to this cause
- What is already in place
- What materials are considered "green" or environmentally safe

### WHAT COULD YOU DO?

- Learn more about causes of pollution
- Organize a group of my friends to clean up a park
- Make and distribute flyers about the importance of recycling
- Prepare a research paper that reflects my position on cleaning up the planet
- Give a PowerPoint® presentation of neighborhood areas showing environmental distress, and areas that are positive for the environment.