

DIRECTED INDEPENDENT LEARNING: REFERENCES AND RESOURCES

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References (General)

Anderson, L. W. and Krathwohl, D. R., et al (Eds.) (2001) *A Taxonomy for Learning, Teaching, and Assessing: A Revision of Bloom’s Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*. Allyn & Bacon. Boston, MA (Pearson Education Group)

Evans, C. et al 2018 Higher Education Pedagogies Special Issue on Learning Gain (issue due out in early autumn 2018)

Healey, M. (2014) *Developing Independent & Autonomous Learning* Unpublished handout.

Thomas, Liz, Jones, Robert and Ottaway, James (2015a). *Effective practice in the design of directed independent learning opportunities*. QAA and Higher Education Academy. heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/effective-practice-design-directed-independent-learning-opportunities (accessed April 2018)

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Wilson, Leslie Owen (2016) understanding the new version of bloom's taxonomy: a succinct discussion of the revisions to Bloom's classic cognitive taxonomy by Anderson and Krathwohl and how to use them effectively. thesecondprinciple.com/teaching-essentials/beyond-bloom-cognitive-taxonomy-revised/ (accessed April 2018)

Tools and resources to support the development of DIL

1. Developing shared understanding of the nature and benefits of DIL

Definitions and characteristics of independent learning (Thomas 2015a table 6): page 4 of this document

'Diamond Nine' tool for reaching team consensus on the nature of DIL within the discipline: page 5 of this document

2. Communication and expectation setting

See the suggested output for the 'Diamond nine' activity listed above – a self-created resource

nottingham.ac.uk/studyingeffectively/studying/independent.aspx (videos - student talking heads giving advice on how HE differs from school, and how to cope)

3. Induction and transition

[Induction and transition work and resources at Swansea](#)

Thomas 'What works? Student retention and success change programme' heacademy.ac.uk/individuals/strategic-priorities/retention/what-works

Skills4Uni interactive student self-access mini-course skills4uni.bham.ac.uk/

Milsom et al., Stepping up to the second year: amazon.co.uk/Stepping-Second-Year-University-psychological/dp/0415718511

4. Curriculum design

Swansea University [Library Academic Staff Support Guide](#)

Introduction to constructive alignment sheffield.ac.uk/lets/toolkit/curriculum/modprog

Using Biggs' model of constructive alignment in curriculum design

ucdoer.ie/index.php/Using_Biggs'_Model_of_Constructive_Alignment_in_Curriculum_Design/Introduction

SEEC level descriptors seec.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/SEEC-descriptors-2016.pdf

Iowa State University's 3D version of Bloom's taxonomy (includes the metacognitive dimension) celt.iastate.edu/teaching/effective-teaching-practices/revised-blooms-taxonomy

Thomas, Liz (Ed) (2015b). *Compendium of effective practice in directed independent learning*. QAA and Higher Education Academy. heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/effective-practice-design-directed-independent-learning-opportunities (accessed April 2018)

5. Learning design

Designing for inquiry-based blended learning (DIBL) birmingham.ac.uk/research/activity/social-policy/ceimh/film-resources/designing-for-enquiry-based-blended-learning.aspx

Centre for Excellence in Enquiry-based Learning resources ceeb1.manchester.ac.uk/resources/

Viewpoint cards (learner engagement) wiki.ulster.ac.uk/display/VPR/Workshop+Toolkit

McLinden and Edwards student-facing EBL framework (diagram can be used to explain EBL to students) – page 7 of this document

Effective group work (HEA resource) heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/group-work

Team-based flipped learning - great ideas for getting students to prepare thoroughly for their face to face sessions, but in a structured (directed) way teche.mq.edu.au/2018/04/wtf-is-tbl/

UCL Active learning toolkit ucl.ac.uk/teaching-learning/active-learning-toolkit

Tech Trumps: free software that can support engaged and active student learning, e.g. team work techtrumps.co.uk/ and jiscdesignstudio.pbworks.com/w/page/63225947/Technology%20Top%20Trumps

TESEP 3 E approach to progressively more independent learning (See diagram reproduced in 'Directed independent learning: an overview') napier.ac.uk/transform/TESEP_3E_Approach.pdf

York St John Technology Enhanced Learning framework (includes lots of ideas for enacting the 3E staged approach through the VLE yorks.ac.uk/media/content-assets/registry/documents/TEL-Framework-FINAL.pdf)

Verenikina, I, Scaffolding and learning: its role in nurturing new learners, in Kell, P, Vialle, W, Konza, D and Vogl, G (eds), *Learning and the learner: exploring learning for new times*, University of Wollongong, 2008 ro.uow.edu.au/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1043&context=edupapers

6. Learning environment and support

[Inclusive Library Support Services](#)

[Swansea peer mentoring toolkit](#)
[Swansea info on academic mentoring](#)
[Swansea study spaces outside the Libraries](#)
[Swansea IT information](#)
[Staff guidance on online learning](#)
[Swansea University Library Guides](#)

Flexible learning guide for students heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/flexible-learning-practical-introduction-students

7. Learning literacies

[Swansea Academic Success programme](#) (includes a number of study skills and 'learning how to learn' workshops) <https://www.swansea.ac.uk/academic-success/>
Swansea Library [Information and Digital Literacy Framework](#)

Viewpoint cards: Information skills wiki.ulster.ac.uk/display/VPR/Workshop+Toolkit

iTest (self-assessment of digital literacy level for students)

wip.exeter.ac.uk/collaborate/itest/

Swansea University Bb Online course for students: Academic Success: Skills for Learning, Skills for Life

Skills4Uni skills4uni.bham.ac.uk/

Descriptors of novice, intermediate and expert scholars' abilities for six dimensions of information and digital literacy are available in the [Information and Digital Literacy Framework Sheffield University](#) document and interactively at: sheffield.ac.uk/library/idlt; these could be adapted as learning outcomes / assessment criteria when embedding DIL in the curriculum

AMOSSHE Students' resilience toolkit resiliencetoolkit.org.uk/

8. Assessment and feedback

Viewpoint cards: Assessment and feedback
wiki.ulster.ac.uk/display/VPR/Workshop+Toolkit

Evans 'EAT' tools: assessment and feedback design to support the development of self-regulating learners

https://www.southampton.ac.uk/assets/imported/transforms/content-block/UsefulDownloads_Download/A0999D3AF2AF4C5AA24B5BEA08C61D8E/EAT%20Guide%20April%20FINAL1%20ALL.pdf

Programme Assessment Strategies Project pass.brad.ac.uk

Selected case studies from Thomas, Liz (Ed) (2015b). *Compendium of effective practice in directed independent learning*. QAA and Higher Education Academy. heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/effective-practice-design-directed-independent-learning-opportunities (accessed April 2018)

Prompts for students to reflect on how previous feedback informs a current assessment – programme teams are encouraged to add a section to their existing marking pro forma for 'feed forward' to support this. Page 7 of this document.

9. Inclusive curriculum

Inclusive assessment briefing paper – see separate document in this toolkit

[Inclusive teaching, learning and assessment](https://plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/teaching-and-learning/inclusivity) (Plymouth University website)
plymouth.ac.uk/your-university/teaching-and-learning/inclusivity

10. Staff engagement and support

The main resource to support staff is this toolkit

[International student lifecycle](https://heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/international-student-lifecycle-0): although the focus of this set of materials is international students, it covers many aspects of directed independent learning that would be equally relevant to home students. [Note – the links from the contents page are currently broken – I have reported this to Advance HE – it may take some time to fix give their ongoing restructure.] heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/international-student-lifecycle-0

Other generic material on independent learning:

heacademy.ac.uk/knowledge-hub/compendium-effective-practice-directed-independent-learning

learnhigher.ac.uk/learning-at-university/independent-learning/

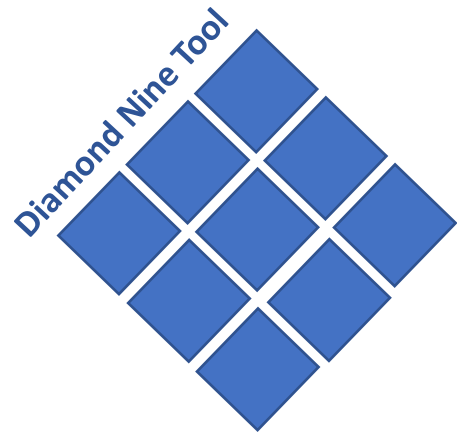
sheffield.ac.uk/lets/toolkit/learning/independent

brookes.ac.uk/services/ocslid/resources/independent.html

From Thomas, Liz, Jones, Robert and Ottaway, James (2015a). Effective practice in the design of directed independent learning opportunities. QAA and Higher Education Academy. Page 17.

Table 6: Definitions and characteristics			
Author	Definition	Role of students	Role of staff
1 Candy (1991)	A student acquires knowledge by his or her own efforts and develops the ability for inquiry and critical evaluation; it includes freedom of choice in determining those objectives, within the limits of a given project or program and with the aid of an academic member of staff; it requires freedom of process to carry out the objectives; it places increased educational responsibility on the student for the achieving of objectives and for the value of the goals.	Own efforts Freedom of choice Increased responsibility	Assistance of staff
2 Research team	Students are guided by the curriculum contents, pedagogy and academic staff, but they play an active role in their learning experience either on their own, or in collaboration with peers. Students are supported in their independent learning by learning resources, including libraries, online materials and learning environments, and physical learning spaces; and by the development of their academic capacity either through the core curriculum or through additional support services.	Play active role	Guided by staff Supported Developing Academic capacity
3 Murad and Varkey (2008)	The educator is a facilitator, rather than a teacher, providing a framework for interaction and learning. Students play an active role in developing their learning needs, and these are used to develop learning objectives and learning outcomes for the activity. Students, together with academics, select appropriate learning resources. Students make commitment to the learning via a formal learning contract. Evaluation of learning process demonstrates that learning outcomes have been achieved.	Play active role Partner	Facilitator Framework Provider Partner
4 Meyer et al. (2008)	The student is actively involved in their learning because they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • set their own goals; • plan how to realise these goals; • monitor their progress as they follow this plan; • assess and reflect on what they have achieved. Thus students taking more responsibility for organising their own learning rather than relying upon the academic staff – who act more as facilitators rather than as traditional imparters of knowledge and skills.	Actively involved Setting goals, planning, monitoring, assessing increased responsibility	Facilitator more than imparter of knowledge
5 Linden and Edwards (2011)	An environment in which learning takes place through enquiry rather than simple knowledge transmission. This enables students to take increasing control of their own learning as they progress through their degree programmes. This is intended to foster deep engagement with complex problems, and incorporates structures and forms of support to help and encourage students to create and conduct their own enquiries for learning. The most important task of the teacher is to develop an atmosphere or an attitude in which students 'seek'.	Enabled to take control	Enabler to take control, fostering engagement, provider of structure and support

The first definition in the table (Candy 1991) most explicitly refers to the student's freedom to act: freedom of choice in determining objectives, and freedom of process to carry them out. The fourth definition (Meyer et al. 2008) carries some of this emphasis – the student sets their own goals and plans for them – but there is also a different role for the academic staff: in the first definition, the staff 'aid' the student; for Meyer et al. (2008), the staff are facilitators. Of the vignettes, the fifth definition (Linden and Edwards 2011) is the least student-centred. It emphasises what is done to the environment of learning to enable students, and students themselves only appear, linguistically speaking, as passive subjects: they



Instructions:

1. **Each team member should read the short, introductory paper ‘directed independent learning: an overview’ (takes about 5 minutes or can be done in advance).**
2. Each person takes nine medium-sized post-it notes and working individually, notes the nine aspects of independent learning that they think students in your programme(s) find the **most challenging** and/or that should be the **focus for development activity** [about 10 mins]
3. Compare ideas among the group, and discuss to agree which are the **top nine** [15 mins]
4. Arrange your selected items in any way which makes sense (rank order, clusters, connections, a diamond etc). [10 mins] When you’ve done this consider:
 - a. Which of your perceived challenges reflect particular features of your discipline, and which are discipline-neutral’?
 - b. How will you communicate to students and others what ‘independent learning’ means in your discipline? Can you draft some statements describing what learners on your programmes will be supported to do and become in relation to independent study? (See the notes on communication and expectation setting).

This activity should involve the whole course team if possible

Its purpose is twofold:

- i. To consider what independent learning means in the context of your discipline and
- ii. to come to a team consensus on what aspects of independent learning development you most need to focus on in your programme(s) of study

Variants and follow-up

1. Include some students as members of the team. They may have some different and surprising views. Final years are a good choice as they will understand the hurdles they had to get over in the early stages of study.
2. Triangulate your team findings against student feedback such as NSS free text comments, module evaluations etc. Can you see the independent learning challenges reflected in the data?
3. Show your team findings to students and ask them to comment.
4. Compare your findings with those of another team.

Enquiry-based learning – the student perspective



Extract from 'Cultivating student expectations of a research- informed curriculum: Developing and promoting pedagogic resonance in the undergraduate student learning pathway' McLinden, M. and Edwards, C. (2017) In *Developing the Higher Education Curriculum: Research -Based Education in Practice*. Eds. Carnell, B and Fung, D. pages 14 – 30. Available under a Creative Commons license from hucl.ac.uk/ucl-press/browse-books/developing-the-higher-education-curriculum

Prompts for students to reflect on how previous feedback informs a current assessment

Not all students will act on (or even read) the advice that tutors give when writing feedback comments on assessed work. Programme teams are encouraged to add a section to their existing marking pro forma for 'feed forward' to support this, and also to require students to submit with each piece of coursework a short account of how they have used previous feedback to inform the current piece.

Effective feedback on assessed work needs to contain three elements:

- first, an indication of how well the work meets the assessment and marking criteria (this explains the grade awarded);
- second, the nature of any gaps between the work and the standard required, so students are helped to understand what 'good' looks like;
- and third, advice on what to do to close those gaps in future work. This is best kept succinct, and in cases of weak work, it is more helpful to limit feed forward advice to around three) points that the student should focus on for their next piece.

Unless you are giving feedback on how to retrieve a fail grade on resubmission, this latter section needs to focus on academic skills in general, not specific content of the work you are marking, in order to be useful to future, different assessment tasks.

Example template 1: making the 'feed forward' element of feedback explicit

Section 1: Grade and assessment criteria mapping

Copy here the assessment criteria at the levels/grades which match the students' work. Alternatively reproduce the whole set of criteria, with the standards which apply highlighted. This is quick for markers, and allows the student to see what the higher standards are, compared to their own work.

Section 2: Feedback comments

Include here brief comments on

- *things the student has done well, especially for aspects that have improved on previous work*
- *the three or four main things that prevented the student from getting a higher grade, and what they would have needed to have done differently to get the higher grade.*

Be specific to the work submitted so the student can relate the generic criteria to the example of their current assessment. E.g. 'It is good to see you quoting from relevant

Example template 1: making the 'feed forward' element of feedback explicit

sources, but the quotes you include need to be there for a purpose. For example, the quote from Smith on page 4 of your work is relevant to the topic, but it is not clear why you have included it at this particular point. It would have been better placed on page 6, to support your conclusion'.

Section 3: Aspects to keep in mind for your next piece of work (3 to 5 points)

Include here three to five aspects of work to focus on that will make the most difference to the quality of the next piece of work. E.g. 'plan the structure of your argument first, and then support the points you make with relevant quotes from the literature, rather than just quoting a selection of things that relate to the topic without it being clear why they are included'.

Other comments: [You may direct students to sources of support, for example]

For inclusion as part of the cover sheet for submission of students' coursework

What did the marker of your last piece of work advise you to work on to improve your grade?

How have you addressed this advice in this piece of work? (Write a few sentences to say how you think this piece is stronger in the aspects the marker highlighted for improvement last time).



Directed Independent Learning Toolkit

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