

2021 Learning Acceleration Resources

Fostering Student Ownership Through Thinking and Problem-Solving



At NIET, [student ownership is defined](#) as the stage when **students can articulate what they are learning, why they are learning, strategies that support their learning, and how they will use these strategies in the future**. This tool shares ideas and examples to help teachers foster student ownership through the NIET rubric indicators of Thinking and Problem-Solving, specifically. It can be used by teachers to consider what actions they can take to strengthen student ownership as well as by coaches to help guide instructional practices.

Below are descriptions of how students demonstrate ownership, how teachers can support student ownership, key markers in the classroom environment that signal increased ownership, and guiding questions to help teachers continue thinking about fostering student ownership. Consider using this as you plan for accelerated learning or before your next classroom walkthrough.

NIET Rubric Indicator	Teacher Actions	Student Actions	Potential Evidence of Impact	Next Steps
Thinking	<p>Teachers support student ownership by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Structuring and communicating clear expectations. Asking scaffolded questions. Engaging students in developing questions. Modeling expectations and thinking types. Providing opportunities for students to think and reflect. Providing opportunities for students to interact and talk about their thinking and learning. Allowing students to struggle productively and grapple with their learning. 	<p>Students demonstrate ownership by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing questions to guide their learning. Self-directing their learning by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analyzing, comparing and contrasting, evaluating, and explaining. Applying their learning in real-world scenarios. Creating, designing, imagining, and supposing. Exploring and reviewing a variety of ideas, models, and solutions to problems. 	<p>Classroom environment shifts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is safe for students to ask questions about their learning. It is safe to differ in opinion or ideas from their peers and express their opinions respectfully. Independent thinking and self-regulation are normalized. Creativity in thinking is valued. The focus on big ideas and enduring understandings allow for a greater transfer and application of knowledge. 	<p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How do you plan for activities/assignments that promote different types of thinking? How will you ensure that students have the opportunity to interact with each other about their learning and discuss their understandings? How will you ensure that students have the opportunity to think in different ways? How will you plan for students to show their thinking?

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing high-quality academic feedback aligned to the standard and success criteria. ● Modeling how to self-assess their learning and progress toward mastery. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Generating alternatives to solving problems. ● Persevering through challenging tasks. ● Supporting their opinions and responses with relevant justifications and reasoning. ● Identifying and discussing their progress toward mastery. 	<p>Student dispositional shifts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students feel empowered and share their unique voices. ● Students take purposeful initiative. ● Students value peer collaboration. ● Students express enthusiasm for their work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How will you model/promote perseverance through challenging tasks? ● How will you provide opportunities for student choice in expressing their thinking and understanding? ● Where in the lesson are there opportune times for students to collaborate and deepen their thinking around the objective?
Problem-Solving	<p>Teachers support student ownership by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Providing opportunities for students to practice many different approaches to solving problems/tasks. ● Developing and communicating high expectations for thinking and learning to solve problems and tasks. ● Modeling different approaches to solving problems/tasks. ● Developing tasks/activities that require multiple types of problem-solving. 	<p>Students demonstrate ownership by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Taking initiative in independent or group work to develop a plan to solve a task or problem in more than one way. ● Expressing their thinking and understanding in ways that support their learning style. ● Producing products that require thinking and understanding of a concept/objective. ● Persevering in deep engagement to solve problems/tasks to arrive at a solution. 	<p>Classroom environment shifts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The teacher and students value differences in opinion and thought and respectfully express their different ideas. ● It is safe for students to express their thoughts and opinions even if it differs from their peers. ● Students are able to approach problems independently and self-regulate themselves. ● Creativity in problem-solving is valued. ● The ability to practice application allows students to produce solutions through adopting a variety 	<p>Guiding questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How do you plan for activities/assignments that promote different types of problem-solving? ● What kinds of evidence/artifacts will you require students to produce to show progress toward mastery of the standard/objective? ● How will you ensure that students have the opportunity to interact with each other about their learning? ● How will the pacing of the lesson provide sufficient time for students to problem solve?

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			<p>of strategies and techniques they have learned.</p> <p>Student dispositional shifts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students feel empowered and share their unique voices. ● Students take purposeful initiative. ● Students value peer collaboration. ● Students express enthusiasm for their work. 	