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ARTICLE

SELF-DIRECTEDNESS AND PROFESSIONAL FORMATION: CONNECTING TWO CRITICAL CONCEPTS IN LEGAL EDUCATION

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INTRODUCTION

Since the publication of the landmark reports on legal education in 2007, *Educating Lawyers* (Carnegie Report)¹ and *Best Practices for Legal Education* (Best Practices Report)² (collectively, the 2007 Reports), legal scholars have wrestled with how law schools can best enhance students' professional identity formation. The challenges to law schools in this area have stemmed from various sources, from questions about what pedagogical and curricular approaches work best to pressures from dwindling law school budgets that prioritize students' analytical and practical skill development over their professional identity formation.³

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1. WILLIAM M. SULLIVAN ET AL., *EDUCATING LAWYERS: PREPARATION FOR THE PROFESSION OF LAW* (2007) [hereinafter *EDUCATING LAWYERS* in notes and "Carnegie Report" in text].

2. ROY STUCKEY ET AL., *BEST PRACTICES FOR LEGAL EDUCATION* (2007) [hereinafter *BEST PRACTICES* in notes and "Best Practices Report" in text].

3. See, e.g., Benjamin V. Madison, III & Larry O. Natt Gantt, II, *The Emperor Has No Clothes but Does Anyone Really Care? How Law Schools Are Failing to Develop Students' Professional Identity and Practical Judgment*, 27 REGENT U. L. REV. 339, 365 (2014) (discussing survey results from twenty-eight law schools which found, on average, that while the schools devoted 55.6% of their efforts and resources to developing their students' analytical abilities (Carnegie's First Apprenticeship), they devoted only 14.8% of their efforts and resources to developing their students' professional identity (Carnegie's Third Apprenticeship)).

Certain law schools have shown great creativity in seeking to cultivate student professional identity formation;⁴ and recent surveys of lawyers, law students, and clients have affirmed the timeliness of the 2007 Reports' call for increased emphasis on professional formation in legal education.⁵ At the same time, legal education generally has hesitated to embrace fully a professional formation movement in part because schools have struggled with quantifying the benefits of such a focus.

In the midst of this discussion regarding student professional formation, another movement has been brewing in legal education. Michael Hunter Schwartz was among the first legal educators to recognize the value of self-directed learning in legal education. His 2003 article *Teaching Law Students to Be Self-Regulated Learners* made a compelling case for self-directed learning as an ideal means of helping law students not only succeed in law school but also prepare for practice.⁶ Dean Schwartz reasoned that cultivating self-directed learning would benefit students both in learning doctrine and in developing other competencies important to lawyers: "The . . . listed sub-skills [developed by self-directed learning] include: setting goals, managing time and resources and being able to work collaboratively with other lawyers."⁷ Since 2003, many legal scholars have focused on self-directed learning, but the emphasis has largely been on how the construct relates to helping students learn doctrinal information, as opposed to professional competencies.⁸ For instance, the burgeoning academic support movement in legal education has seized on self-directed learning as a

4. For instance, the Institute for the Advancement of the American Legal System, of which EDUCATING LAWYERS lead author William Sullivan is a leader, established an initiative called Educating Tomorrow's Lawyers (ETL). ETL demonstrated its commitment to helping schools promote student professional formation by holding its first conference in 2012 on professional identity formation, and subsequent conferences have also included presentations relevant to student professional formation. See *The Development of Professional Identity: 1st Annual Educating Tomorrow's Lawyers Conference*, INST. FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF THE AM. LEGAL SYS. (Sept. 29, 2012), <http://iaals.du.edu/educating-tomorrows-lawyers/events/development-professional-identity>.

5. See, e.g., ALLI GERKMAN & LOGAN CORNETT, FOUNDATIONS FOR PRACTICE: THE WHOLE LAWYER AND THE CHARACTER QUOTIENT 14 (2016) (describing a 2014–2015 survey of over 24,000 U.S. lawyers who identified specific character traits as necessary for entering lawyers to have to achieve professional success); BREE BUCHANAN ET AL., THE PATH TO LAWYER WELL-BEING: PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR POSITIVE CHANGE 7, 35–40 (2017) (discussing survey results released in 2016 which found high rates of mental health issues and alcohol abuse among lawyers and law students and offering recommendations to law schools for how to address these problems).

6. See Michael Hunter Schwartz, *Teaching Law Students to Be Self-Regulated Learners*, 2003 MICH. ST. DCL L. REV. 447 (2003).

7. *Id.* at 468.

8. For instance, Dean Schwartz has written a book, *Expert Learning for Law Students*, that helps law students develop the skill of "self-regulated learning" so they can be expert learners and achieve academic success in law school. See MICHAEL HUNTER SCHWARTZ, *EXPERT LEARNING FOR LAW STUDENTS*, at xi–xii, 3 (2d ed. 2008).

core skill law students should obtain for academic success.⁹ In sum, the focus on self-directed *learning* has implicitly fueled an emphasis on how the concept promotes learning information in the academic context as opposed to how self-directedness more broadly relates to professional formation.

This Article connects these two concepts as a way to address some of the challenges facing the professional formation movement. For law students to move towards real professional identity formation in their career, they must be self-directed. The Article begins by discussing general educational insights gleaned from the literature on self-directed learning and how those insights relate to the development of professional identity formation. The Article then discusses recent survey research on law students' assessment of their educational goals and their levels of self-directed learning. It next considers the current efforts certain law schools have undertaken to promote self-directedness and enhance their students' professional identity formation. The Article concludes by discussing suggestions for pedagogical and curricular innovations to foster law student self-directed learning and professional identity formation.

I. SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING IN EDUCATION

A. *General Educational Insights*

Self-directed learning (sometimes called self-regulated learning) is not new.¹⁰ Plato's Dialogues show Socrates encouraging his students to develop methods of investigation and learning in which they had to consider questions and reach answers on their own.¹¹ Nevertheless, self-directed learning did not attract significant attention in the United States until the 1960s. In 1961, Cyril Houle, a pioneering expert in adult education, wrote *The Inquiring Mind*, in which he described his work with adult learners and how more successful learners took responsibility for their own learning autonomously.¹² One of Houle's students, Malcolm Knowles, expanded on his teacher's observations in his influential 1975 book *Self-Directed Learn-*

9. See, e.g., Louis N. Schulze, Jr., *Alternative Justifications for Law School Academic Support Programs: Self-Determination Theory, Autonomy Support, and Humanizing the Law School*, 5 CHARLESTON L. REV. 269, 282 (2011) (discussing "the philosophy that the goal of academic support should be to help students understand how to teach themselves to learn more efficiently [which] often focuses on meta-cognition—thinking about thinking, focusing students on their preferred learning style, and creating 'self-learners'—students able to teach themselves").

10. See Henry Khat, *Measuring Self-Directed Learning: A Diagnostic Tool for Adult Learners*, 12 J.U. TEACHING & LEARNING PRAC., no. 2, 2015, at 1, 2 ("The concept of self-directed and self-regulated learning are not distinguished clearly in the literature, and in fact are used interchangeably in many studies.") (citation omitted).

11. See THE COLLECTED DIALOGUES OF PLATO, at xiv–xv (Edith Hamilton & Huntington Cairns eds., 1961).

12. CYRIL HOULE, THE INQUIRING MIND (1961).

ing.¹³ There, Knowles described self-directed learning as “a process by which individuals take the initiative . . . in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying the human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes.”¹⁴

The literature on self-directed learning since Houle’s and Knowles’s seminal works has grown considerably.¹⁵ The presumption of self-directed learning is that its methodology involves traits and skills that can be cultivated in anyone and are not reserved to a select few.¹⁶ Research shows “no evidence” that “self-direction has any correlation with age, sex, or ethnicity.”¹⁷ Each learner, however, is at a different state of readiness to engage in self-directed learning.¹⁸ Correlations, for instance, have been established “between self-direction and scholarship that tend to indicate that those who went to school for a longer period of time had acquired basic tools necessary to be an effective learner.”¹⁹ This research supports the presumption that law students should be good candidates for self-directed learning because law students have earned at least a bachelor’s degree.²⁰

B. *Self-Directed Learning for Law Students (and Lawyers)*

Self-directed learning may not only be something law students are well-suited to do; it may also be crucial to their success. As noted above, since Dean Schwartz’s 2003 article, numerous publications in legal education have touted self-directed learning as fundamental to law school academic success.²¹ In fact, the importance of self-directed learning has been so emphasized that publications on effective law teaching encourage law

13. MALCOLM KNOWLES, SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING (1975).

14. *Id.* at 18.

15. See generally GUIDEPOSTS TO SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING: EXPERT COMMENTARY ON ESSENTIAL CONCEPTS (Gary J. Confessore & Sharon J. Confessore eds., 1992) (reviewing significant studies and publications on self-directed learning).

16. See, e.g., MOVING TOWARD SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING: HIGHLIGHTS OF RELEVANT RESEARCH AND PROMISING PRACTICES 1–38 (Elmo Della-Dorea & Lois Jerfy Blanchard eds., 1979).

17. Nicole A. Tremblay, *Self-Directed Learning: Emerging Theory and Practice*, in GUIDEPOSTS TO SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING, *supra* note 15, at 143, 151.

18. See, e.g., Lucy M. Guglielmino, *Understanding and Facilitating Adult Learning*, in GUIDEPOSTS TO SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING, *supra* note 15, at 112, 116.

19. Tremblay, *supra* note 17, at 151.

20. ABA Standard 502 does allow an ABA-approved law school to admit to its J.D. program an applicant who does not have a bachelor’s degree but only in cases where the applicant either has three-fourths of his bachelor’s credits and is in an accredited bachelor’s/J.D. dual degree program, has an equivalent international degree, or in “an extraordinary case” when “the applicant’s experience, ability, and other qualifications clearly demonstrate an aptitude for the study of law.” ABA STANDARDS AND RULES OF PROCEDURE FOR APPROVAL OF LAW SCHOOLS 2016–2017, at 32 (2016) [hereinafter ABA STANDARDS] (discussing Standard 502). Admission under the first two exceptions closely parallels the regular U.S. bachelor’s experience and admission under the third is truly extraordinary; therefore, the vast majority of J.D. students have a bachelor’s degree.

21. See, e.g., Schulze, *supra* note 9.

teachers to teach their classes so that their students become more self-directed in their learning.²²

Amidst this development, Professor Neil Hamilton and his co-authors have published numerous articles exploring the plethora of ways in which self-directed learning can help law students acquire the competencies lawyers need and thus enhance the students' professional development.²³ The research noted below concerning millennials—something on which Professor Hamilton and his co-authors understandably did not concentrate—confirms the conclusions in his work and demonstrates the wisdom of increasing efforts to cultivate self-directed learning in legal education.²⁴ Indeed, in one of the articles in which Professor Hamilton did address this age group, his conclusions are consistent with research on millennials.²⁵

II. RESEARCH ON SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING AND RESULTS

In order to build on the work of Professor Hamilton and others and to assess the level of self-directedness of current first-year law students and the relationship between self-directedness and professional identity development, the authors analyzed two sets of results from surveys completed by first-year law students. They first analyzed survey results from 669 first-year students surveyed between fall 2015 and spring 2017 at five different law schools of different sizes and in different parts of the country: one large school in the West, one medium-sized school in the West, one medium-sized school in the Upper Midwest, one medium-sized school in the South,

22. MICHAEL HUNTER SCHWARTZ, SOPHIE SPARROW & GERALD HESS, *TEACHING LAW BY DESIGN: ENGAGING STUDENTS FROM THE SYLLABUS TO THE EXAM* 98–105 (2009) (advocating three pedagogical techniques for promoting self-directedness in students: persuasion, role modeling, and experiencing).

23. See, e.g., Neil Hamilton, *Formation-of-an-Ethical-Professional-Identity (Professionalism) Learning Outcomes and E-Portfolio Formative Assessments*, 48 U. PAC. L. REV. 847 (2017) [hereinafter Hamilton, *Formation*]; Neil Hamilton & Jerome M. Organ, *Thirty Reflection Questions to Help Each Student Find Meaningful Employment and Develop an Integrated Professional Identity (Professional Formation)*, 83 TENN. L. REV. 843 (2016) [hereinafter Hamilton & Organ, *Thirty Reflection Questions*]; Neil Hamilton & Sarah Schaefer, *What Legal Education Can Learn from Medical Education About Competency-Based Learning Outcomes Including Those Related to Professional Identity Formation and Professionalism*, 29 GEO. J. LEGAL ETHICS 399 (2016); Neil Hamilton, *A Professionalism/Professional Formation Challenge: Many Students Need Help with Self-Directed Learning Concerning Their Professional Development Toward Excellence*, 27 REGENT U. L. REV. 225 (2015) [hereinafter Hamilton, *Self-Directed Learning*]; Neil W. Hamilton, *Professional Formation with Emerging Adult Law Students in the 21–29 Age Group: Engaging Students to Take Ownership of Their Own Professional Development Toward Both Excellence and Meaningful Employment*, 2015 J. PROF. LAW. 125 (2015) [hereinafter Hamilton, *Emerging Adult Law Students*]; Neil Hamilton, *Law Firm Competency Models and Student Professional Success: Building on a Foundation of Professional Formation/Professionalism*, 11 U. ST. THOMAS L.J. 6 (2013); Neil W. Hamilton, Verna M. Monson & Jerome M. Organ, *Empirical Evidence that Legal Education Can Foster Student Professionalism/Professional Formation to Become an Effective Lawyer*, 10 U. ST. THOMAS L.J. 11 (2012).

24. See *infra* text accompanying notes 28–30.

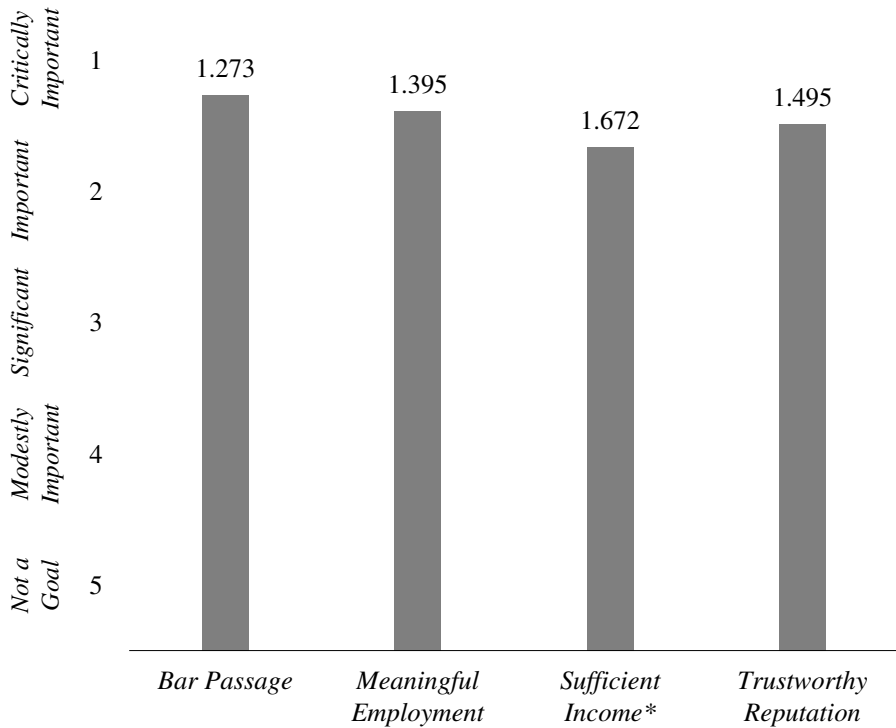
25. See Hamilton, *Emerging Adult Law Students*, *supra* note 23, at 145–146.

and one small school in the Southeast. On the survey, students were asked, “What are the professional goals you would like to achieve by six months after graduation?”²⁶ The survey then listed the following four goals: “bar passage,” “meaningful employment,” “trustworthy reputation,” and “sufficient income to meet loan obligations and a satisfactory living.” Students were asked to rate each of these four goals on the following scale:

- 1 = Critically Important Goal
- 2 = Important Goal
- 3 = Significant Goal
- 4 = Modestly Important Goal
- 5 = Not a Goal at this Time

The mean results are shown in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1. FIRST-YEAR LAW STUDENTS’ PROFESSIONAL GOALS FOR SIX MONTHS AFTER GRADUATION.



*Specifically, “sufficient income to meet loan obligations and a satisfactory living.”

The averages of students’ responses showed that “bar passage” had the highest rate, which is understandable because for most students, bar passage is a precursor to post-graduation employment. The second most important goal was “meaningful employment,” which was ranked more highly than a

26. The full survey is included in Appendix A.

“trustworthy reputation” and “sufficient income to meet loan obligations and a satisfactory living.”²⁷ This emphasis on meaningful employment comports with research more broadly on the professional goals of millennials.²⁸ Social science research confirms that “[m]illennials are seeking much more in return for their hard work than a paycheck. They are also looking for work that is meaningful and fulfilling.”²⁹ Moreover, they are looking for employers whose values “match their own.”³⁰

To find meaningful employment, students need to know where they find meaning. The challenge for law students to obtain work that aligns with their values and this desire for meaning requires, among other things: (1) self-awareness, (2) goal-setting, (3) developing strategies, and (4) initiative. To address how effective law students are in these areas, the authors sought to assess the extent to which such students are self-directed learners. The authors thus analyzed the second set of survey results. These results were from 609 first-year students who were surveyed between fall 2015 and fall 2016 at six law schools of different sizes and in different parts of the country: these included the five law schools from above and another medium-sized school in the South.³¹ In this survey, students were asked to identify the stage that best describes where they are now regarding their “commitment to your professional development.”³²

The survey then listed four stages of development based on Gerald Grow’s work in self-directed learning.³³ The description of each stage is summarized below:

(1) *Dependent Stage*: Students are passive regarding professional development; they lack insight on goals and are highly dependent on others.

27. The survey also included an “Other Goals” category, and students identified many different, additional goals in this category. For two of the law schools, for instance, sixty-one out of 186 students wrote in a goal in that category. Seven students provided a goal of “a balanced family.” Six wrote in “a balanced life”; two wrote in “health balance,” and five wrote in “happiness.” Students also rated these other goals. The average rate was 1.80.

28. Although scholars do not agree on the time period for the “millennial” generation, most agree that the generation begins with those born in or after 1980. *See, e.g.,* Eddy S.W. Ng, Linda Schweitzer & Sean T. Lyons, *New Generation, Great Expectations: A Field Study of the Millennial Generation*, 25 J. BUS. & PSYCHOL. 281, 281 (2010). Because some scholars opine that the next generation, Generation Z, covers those born from 1995 to 2012, theorists already are hypothesizing on how this next generation will impact the workforce. *See* DAVID & JONAH STILLMAN, *GEN Z WORK: HOW THE NEXT GENERATION IS TRANSFORMING THE WORKPLACE* (2017).

29. Ng et al., *supra* note 28, at 283 (citation omitted).

30. *Id.*

31. Of these results, 322 were obtained from Hamilton & Organ, *Thirty Reflection Questions*, *supra* note 23, at 858–859, and 114 were obtained from Hamilton, *Emerging Adult Law Students*, *supra* note 23, at 125, 133.

32. One of the medium-sized schools in the South surveyed 125 students, but eleven were non-responsive, and one answered zero. In the small school in the Southeast, sixty-one students were surveyed, but one was non-responsive.

33. Gerald O. Grow, *Teaching Learners to Be Self-Directed*, 41 ADULT EDUC. Q., no. 3, Spring 1991, at 125–149.

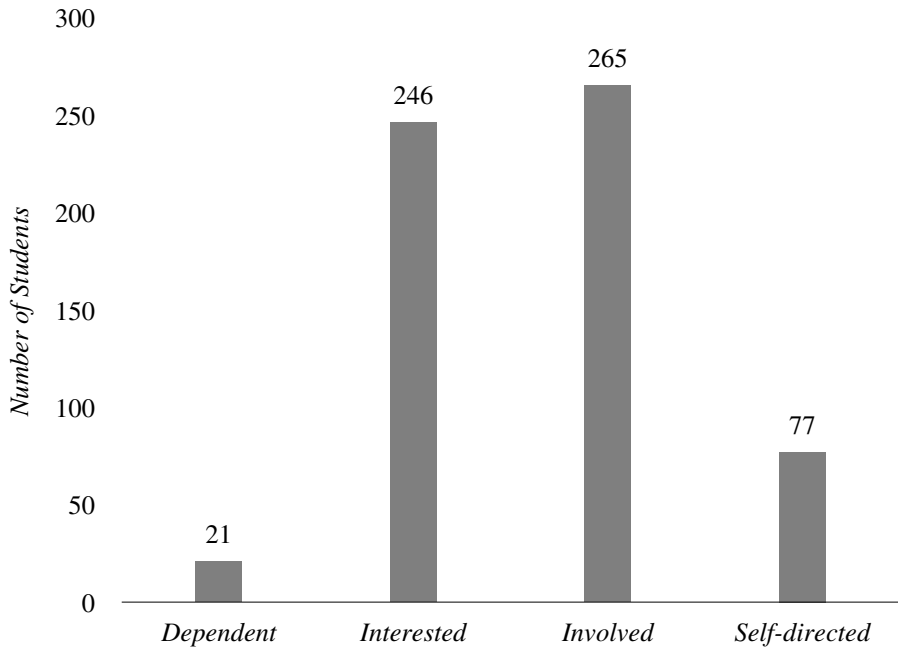
(2) *Interested Stage*: Students see self-interest in professional development and are willing to engage mentors or coaches on goal setting. Students take some initiative to learn competencies.

(3) *Involved Stage*: Students are committed to professional development and seek insight from mentors or coaches on goal setting. Students internalize their motivation and standard of excellence, and are persistent in learning competencies.

(4) *Self-Directed Stage*: Students are intrinsically motivated to professional development and are proactive in goal-setting and plan execution, and they are working with mentors or coaches. Students seek and reflect on feedback and challenges and have internalized a standard of excellence in all competencies.³⁴

The results, listed in Table 2 below, show that 21 of the students categorized themselves as in the Dependent Stage, 246 in the Interested Stage, 265 in the Involved Stage, and 77 in the Self-Directed Stage.³⁵

TABLE 2. FIRST-YEAR LAW STUDENTS’ SELF-REPORTED STAGES OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.



Given that entering law students have earned an undergraduate degree (if not an even higher degree) and that level of self-directedness is, as noted

34. The survey instrument, drafted by Neil Hamilton, lists specific “Student Characteristics” of each stage. See Appendix B for the actual survey.

35. These results overall show students rating themselves as more self-directed than the earlier survey results included within this data as described in the articles in note 32. Possible reasons for this increase in the self-reporting are discussed in the text.

above, correlated with level of education, it is not surprising that very few students categorized themselves in the Dependent Stage.³⁶ At that same time, the overall results do not point to high levels of self-directedness.

Over 40% of the respondents only categorized themselves as in the Interested Stage, and only 12.6% did so in the Self-Directed Stage, which provides the necessary skills to achieve established goals.

These results therefore point to the significant potential for law schools to enhance students' self-directedness. In fact, the results likely exaggerate the degree of students' self-directedness—and therefore underestimate this potential for improvement—for two reasons. First, this type of research is subject to “self-report bias” because “[i]n general, research participants want to respond in a way that makes them look as good as possible” and therefore respond in ways that are “socially desirable.”³⁷ Psychologists have reasoned that such bias “is particularly likely in organizational behavior research because employees often believe there is at least a remote possibility that their employer could gain access to their responses.”³⁸ Similarly, even with anonymous surveys, one would expect such bias in an educational setting among students who likely view it as more “socially desirable” that they be more self-directed.

Second, the survey results likely exaggerate the respondents' self-directedness due to an emphasis on self-directed learning in the orientation programming of some of the surveyed schools. Specifically, some of the participating law schools communicate to their students very early, such as during new student orientation before the students were surveyed, the importance of their becoming self-directed learners who take charge of their academic success and professional development. These initial communications may have led students to inflate their self-directed stage. For instance, results from fall 2016 in the small southeastern school where self-directedness is emphasized showed that, of the sixty student responses, none reported at the Dependent Stage, eleven did at the Interested Stage, thirty-nine did at the Involved Stage, and ten did at the Self-Directed Stage. This enhanced discussion early in certain schools' programs may have led to higher incidences of self-reporting bias, but it is also plausible that it led to actual changes in students' self-directedness. Either way, this data supports the conclusion that simply discussing self-directedness with students has an impact. It is still unclear, however, whether such discussions alone promote self-reporting bias or true change in self-directedness.

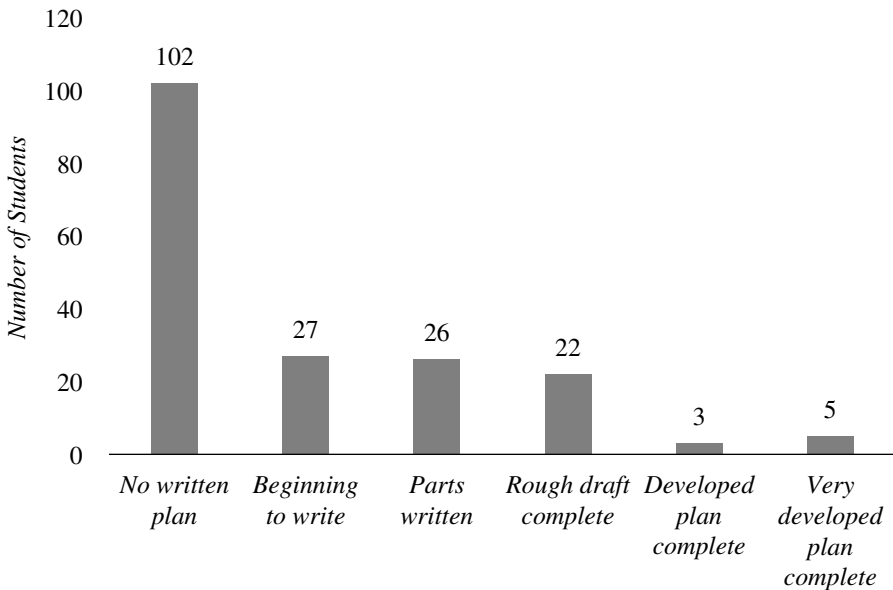
36. See Tremblay, *supra* note 17, at 151. As noted above, it is only in “extraordinary” cases that an ABA-approved law school can even admit applicants who do not have an undergraduate degree. See ABA STANDARDS, *supra* note 20, at 32 (Standard 502).

37. Stewart I. Donaldson & Elisa J. Grant-Vallone, *Understanding Self-Report Bias in Organizational Behavioral Research*, 17 J. BUS. & PSYCHOL. 245, 247 (2002).

38. *Id.*

To address this lack of clarity and more accurately assess the degree of students’ self-directedness, the authors analyzed the responses to a question added to the survey used in fall 2016 at two of the law schools, one of the medium-sized schools in the South and the small school in the Southeast.³⁹ This additional question asked students for evidence of their self-directedness by asking whether they had developed a written plan for achieving meaningful employment: “At this moment, how well developed is your written plan to secure post-graduation employment (including your plan for career advancement if you already have post-graduation employment)?”⁴⁰ This expanded survey was taken by 185 first-year law students, and their responses are reflected in Table 3 below.

TABLE 3. FIRST-YEAR LAW STUDENTS WITH WRITTEN PLANS FOR ACHIEVING MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT.



As reflected above, fifty-five percent of the law students surveyed had no written career plan and only four percent had completed a written career plan. Thus, although the vast majority of law students surveyed at all schools reported meaningful employment as critically important, the vast majority of students at these two schools asked about a written plan had none. These two schools followed the overall trends of the aggregate data, so their low levels of students with written plans cannot be attributed to

39. See Appendix B for the actual survey. This question was also included in different surveys used at two other law schools and discussed in previous research. See Hamilton, *Self-Directed Learning*, *supra* note 23, at 232–236.

40. One hundred twenty-five students were surveyed at the medium-sized school in the South, but one student was non-responsive.

these schools' particular populations. Specifically, the students at these two schools followed the overall trend in prioritizing meaningful employment; the medium-sized school in the South rated meaningful employment as 1.73 on average (lower in importance than the overall data but still with 1 as the median and the mode and second in importance behind bar passage), and the small school in the Southeast rated meaningful employment as 1.31 on average. In addition, these two schools followed the overall trend in levels of self-directedness and were even slightly more self-directed than the aggregate data from all the schools; their combined results were 3 students in the Dependent Stage, 47 in the Interested Stage, 102 in the Involved Stage, and 21 in the Self-Directed Stage.⁴¹

Because the students at all the law schools were surveyed after they may have been affected by any discussions at their schools about self-directedness, it is difficult to conclude those discussions had no impact. Indeed, the overall levels of self-directedness could have been even lower if the students had been surveyed, for instance, on the first day of orientation. Nevertheless, the fact that so many students at these two schools did not have written career plans supports the conclusion that any increase in the self-reporting of self-directedness by the students at all the schools may stem more from self-reporting bias than from change in actual self-directedness.

III. RECOMMENDATION FOR RESPONSES IN LEGAL EDUCATION

The results from all three research questions discussed above underscore that law schools have much to do to enhance students' self-directedness, and the authors believe that legal education needs to integrate efforts to cultivate self-directed learning skills throughout the curriculum. This Article presents recommendations and suggested methods to make self-directed learning a part of every law student's education, and it discusses the reasons and benefits of such initiatives.

A. *Reasons for Cultivating Self-Directed Learning and Skills*

In response to ABA Standard 302(c) and other factors, many law schools have adopted learning outcomes that include, as a goal, the development of students' professional formation.⁴² As the survey results above

41. This total number of 173 respondents differs from the 185 respondents to the career plan survey because more students were nonresponsive to the self-directed survey. Moreover, these results resemble the results from the two other law schools discussed in note 40, which found that many students who self-assessed at either the involved or self-directed stage had not yet written a professional development plan. See Hamilton, *Self-Directed Learning*, *supra* note 23, at 232–236.

42. See Hamilton & Organ, *Thirty Reflection Questions*, *supra* note 23, at 845–847. Also, the Holloran Center at the University of St. Thomas School of Law has compiled a database cataloging law school learning outcomes, and the database indicates the schools that have included student professional formation in their outcomes. See *Learning Outcomes Database*, HOLLORAN

demonstrate, students now entering law school lack the degree of self-directedness necessary to become professionally formed and to achieve the professional goals they identify as important. Schools that have adopted these learning outcomes are therefore on the correct path in helping students develop competencies they need in future legal practice. The reality, however, is that even schools on this path will need to support these learning outcomes with intentional curricular and pedagogical efforts. Such efforts can ensure that, upon graduation, students have an adequate sense of self-directedness both in learning and in handling professional responsibility.

Law students need to graduate with self-directed learning skills for several reasons. First, law is a profession in which lawyers need to be self-directed learners over the course of their careers. Unless they are among the few who go directly into a specialty practice for which they prepared in law school, most lawyers engage legal issues they never studied in law school. To address such areas competently, if the subject is a sophisticated one involving a highly-specialized area, the lawyer is well-advised either to refer the matter to a specialist or to associate with such a lawyer. In many cases, however, lawyers can address these areas by employing self-directed learning skills to teach themselves—with the general preparation that law school provides in legal research, reasoning, and analysis.⁴³ Most new associates would not last long in a firm if, when asked to produce a research memorandum, the associate had not developed the self-directed skills to research and analyze the relevant issues.

Second, the law is complex and ever-changing. In addition to the concerns just noted about working in new areas of the law, familiar areas of the law are constantly changing—as is the practice of law itself—and lawyers must be able to adapt to these changes. Ten or twelve hours of continuing legal education (CLE) are hardly enough to equip a lawyer to stay current in the changes that take place. CLE programs can signal to lawyers what they need to study, but these programs cannot keep them fully up to date on everything they need to know. Add to the pressure to keep current the obligations of ordinary practice. Clearly, demands on lawyers' time are significant. If lawyers do not possess the necessary skills in self-direction and self-regulation to manage a case load, they will likely flounder.

Recent research on the attributes of successful lawyers underscores the importance of these first two reasons. Specifically, in 2014 and 2015, Educating Tomorrow's Lawyers (ETL) surveyed 24,137 lawyers from across the United States on the skills, characteristics, and competencies lawyers

CTR., <https://www.stthomas.edu/hollorancenter/resourcesforlegaleducators/learningoutcomesdata base/> (last updated Nov. 2017).

43. The ABA Model Rules of Professional Conduct support this approach, noting that even new lawyers can become competent in an unfamiliar area of law. *See* MODEL RULES OF PROF'L CONDUCT r. 1.1 cmt. 2 (AM. BAR ASS'N 1983) ("A lawyer can provide adequate representation in a wholly novel field through necessary study.").

need for professional success. ETL grouped those skills, characteristics, and competencies (which it collectively called “foundations”) into different categories; generally, the respondents viewed those foundations in the Professional Development category as necessary for lawyers to acquire in the short term after law school graduation.⁴⁴ Most notably, 61.3% of the lawyers responded that it was necessary in the short term for new lawyers to “have an internalized commitment to developing toward excellence.”⁴⁵ Another 26.8% responded that such characteristic was not necessary in the short term but must be acquired over time.⁴⁶ This combination resulted in 88.1% of the 24,137 respondents concluding that lawyers need to be self-directed towards excellence in order to achieve professional success.

In addition to these above reasons, when combined with other tools and strategies that enable students to find the best fit between their skills, passions, and available opportunities in the law, an emphasis early in law school on developing students’ self-directedness ought to lead to lawyers who are more fulfilled in their professional lives. This benefit of self-directedness as a foundational attribute that can enhance personal fulfillment in the profession may be the most important benefit of all.⁴⁷ The authors believe that anything said about the development of self-directed learning needs to be taken within this larger context. Self-directed learning skills are a means by which students can achieve greater professional fulfillment. Developing these skills is not an end in itself. Overcoming the longstanding problem of lawyer unhappiness is the worthy goal to which greater self-directedness can lead.

To underscore this last point, it is important to revisit below the research showing that law student unhappiness occurs when students ignore the internal signals of “meaning” in work and instead focus on extrinsic goals. Building on this research, the Article then can explore the way current initiatives in proposals for curriculum and teaching encourage not only self-directedness, but also students’ internal reflection on their values and goals and the way those values and goals fit in the legal system. This encouragement is perhaps the most promising development in modern legal education.

44. GERKMAN & CORNETT, *supra* note 5, at 14.

45. *Id.*

46. *Id.*

47. See Larry O. Natt Gantt, II & Benjamin V. Madison III, *Teaching Knowledge, Skills, and Values of Professional Identity Formation*, in BUILDING ON BEST PRACTICES: TRANSFORMING LEGAL EDUCATION IN A CHANGING WORLD 253, 262 (Deborah Maranville et al. eds., 2015) (reasoning that self-motivation is key to ensure law students and lawyers follow through on what they believe is the right thing to do); Muriel J. Bebeau, *Promoting Ethical Development and Professionalism: Insights from Educational Research in the Professions*, 5 U. ST. THOMAS L.J. 366, 382–398 (2008) (discussing the need in professional school to promote acting on ethical values).

B. Research on Law Student Unhappiness and the Proper Emphases of Legal Education

In a study of undergraduate students and law students, Professors Lawrence Krieger and Ken Sheldon sought to measure the happiness and emotional health of law students on beginning law school and on graduating, as compared to undergraduate students.⁴⁸ Krieger and Sheldon's study showed that entering law students were happier and more emotionally well-adjusted than the undergraduates to which they were being compared.⁴⁹ As law school progressed, however, law students increasingly became unhappy, to the point of significant depression, and at the same time became more cynical.⁵⁰

From these results, Krieger and Sheldon concluded that law schools' pressure on students to succeed according to external standards, such as placement in the top ten percent of the class or getting a prestigious job, led to deterioration in students' ideals, values, and satisfaction.⁵¹ Krieger and Sheldon urged law schools to address this tendency among law students to focus on impressing others by reorienting students instead to find fulfillment by satisfying an internalized standard of doing their legal work well and staying true to their internal values.⁵² An attitude toward legal work that ignores the reasons why lawyers are doing the work in the first place leads students not to see purpose in their work, a key ingredient to fulfillment.⁵³

Observers have long suspected that the well-known dysfunction and unhappiness among lawyers are largely the direct results of this disconnection between lawyers' internal values and their actions.⁵⁴ Other explana-

48. See, e.g., Lawrence S. Krieger, *Institutional Denial About the Dark Side of Law School, and Fresh Empirical Guidance for Constructively Breaking the Silence*, 52 J. LEGAL EDUC. 112, 117 (2002); Kennon M. Sheldon & Lawrence S. Krieger, *Does Legal Education Have Undermining Effects on Law Students? Evaluating Changes in Motivation, Values, and Well-Being*, 22 BEHAV. SCI. & L. 261, 262–263 (2004).

49. See Lawrence S. Krieger, *The Inseparability of Professionalism and Personal Satisfaction: Perspectives on Values, Integrity, and Happiness*, 11 CLINICAL L. REV. 425, 433–434 (2005).

50. *Id.*

51. *Id.*; see also Krieger, *Institutional Denial*, *supra* note 48, at 117–124.

52. See Krieger, *Institutional Denial*, *supra* note 48, at 122–129.

53. See *id.*

54. See, e.g., JOSEPH ALLEGRETTI, *THE LAWYER'S CALLING* 19, 68 (1996) (contending that lawyers who separate their personal morality from their professional role suffer from “a kind of moral schizophrenia” which ultimately causes the lawyers' professional amorality to “infect” their personal life); Larry O. Natt Gantt, II, *Integration as Integrity: Postmodernism, Psychology, and Religion on the Role of Moral Counseling in the Attorney-Client Relationship*, 13 REGENT U. L. REV. 233, 248–255 (2004) (reasoning that lawyers need to integrate their personal and professional values so they are more fulfilled in practice and can better counsel their clients); Lawrence S. Krieger & Kennon M. Sheldon, *What Makes Lawyers Happy?: A Data-Driven Prescription to Redefine Professional Success*, 83 GEO. WASH. L. REV. 554, 576–585 (2015) (discussing survey results showing that lawyer happiness and satisfaction is associated with internal and psychological factors, not external factors connected to money and status).

tions exist for the dysfunction and unhappiness in the legal profession, such as billable hour quotas in law firms and the overall stress of law practice, but the ability to account for lawyer unhappiness and dysfunction solely on these grounds seems less persuasive in light of this research on law students. Both legal educators and lawyers must face the prospect that the dysfunction in the legal profession begins in law school.⁵⁵ The idea that legal education perpetuates a system that touts the highest salaries and encourages students to seek status over internal satisfaction is the essence of the dysfunctional system Professors Krieger and Sheldon expose.

The seeds of a positive change in focus in legal education were sown in the major reports on legal education. Twenty-six years ago, the first in the recent series of comprehensive calls for reform in legal education—known as the “MacCrate Report”—urged legal education to prioritize helping develop students’ skills in “organization and management of legal work.”⁵⁶ The MacCrate Report proceeded to list, as components of the self-directed skills one would need to organize and manage legal work: goal-setting, managing one’s time and one’s resources, and the ability to work with others in a collaborative manner.⁵⁷ Although the MacCrate Report was influential in leading to improved clinical education in law schools, and the students who participate in such education no doubt acquire some of these skills, the call to help all students develop the kinds of self-regulated traits listed has not been accomplished.

More recently, much has been written on the call of the Carnegie and Best Practices Reports to help students spend at least equal time in law school developing their professional identity and values as they spend developing their analytical reasoning and practical skills.⁵⁸ As with MacCrate’s call for self-regulated traits, however, the 2007 Reports’ call for professional identity development has been the least accepted part of the reports.⁵⁹

Even before the Carnegie and Best Practices Reports, Professor Susan Daicoff observed that law schools have not established approaches to develop the whole person.⁶⁰ Professor Daicoff highlights how many diverse

55. Krieger, *supra* note 49, at 433–434.

56. TASK FORCE ON LAW SCH. & LEGAL PROFESSION: NARROWING THE GAP, AM. BAR ASS’N, LEGAL EDUCATION AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT—AN EDUCATIONAL CONTINUUM 140 (1992) [hereinafter MACCRATE REPORT].

57. *Id.*

58. *E.g.*, Madison & Gantt, *supra* note 3.

59. *See id.* at 365 (discussing survey results from twenty-eight law schools which found, on average, that while the schools devoted 55.6% of their efforts and resources to developing their students’ analytical abilities (Carnegie’s First Apprenticeship), they devoted only 14.8% of their efforts and resources to developing their students’ professional identity (Carnegie’s Third Apprenticeship)).

60. *See* Susan Swaim Daicoff, *Expanding the Lawyer’s Toolkit of Skills and Competencies: Synthesizing Leadership, Professionalism, Emotional Intelligence, and Comprehensive Law*, 52 SANTA CLARA L. REV. 795, 810 n.54 (2012) (collecting sources).

competencies are included in the comprehensive survey of lawyer skills and competencies conducted by Marjorie Shultz and Sheldon Zedeck—the skills likely intended by MacCrate and the 2007 Reports as those that make up the whole lawyer.⁶¹ Many of the Shultz and Zedeck twenty-six competencies relate directly to self-directedness, such as the skill of “organizing and managing one’s own work,” “stress management,” and “self-development.”⁶² Professor Daicoff’s recognition of legal education’s lack of progress in developing the full range of competencies included in the MacCrate, Carnegie, and Best Practices Reports is on the mark:

Of these twenty-six competencies, perhaps seven (about twenty-seven percent) are skills traditionally taught in law school. Three to six more skills are often taught in elective clinical courses in law school. The remaining thirteen to sixteen (fifty to fifty-seven percent) are skills that may not be typically explicitly covered by most legal educators. This highlights the imbalance between legal education’s current focus and what competencies are determined by those in the occupation as necessary to be professionally prepared to practice law.⁶³

The authors believe law schools are not ignoring these self-directed and professional identity skills because they consider them unimportant. We believe instead the relative lack of progress stems from inertia. Now that some schools, however, have begun to develop methods that actually help students move toward greater internal orientation and likely to greater career satisfaction, it is time for the legal academy to make such efforts more mainstream. These efforts will be discussed next.

IV. CURRENT EFFORTS TO CULTIVATE STUDENT SELF-DIRECTEDNESS AS A CRUCIAL STEP TOWARD MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT

Over the last ten years, law schools have increasingly developed curricula that recognize the cultivation of self-directedness as essential to developing students’ professional identity. Law schools heeding the 2007 Reports’ call for professional identity formation are realizing they need to help students more than they originally thought so that the students develop a sense of their own values, appreciate the different avenues in law practice they could take, and move with intentionality in a direction that will result in fulfilled employment. Consider the observations of Professor Neil Hamilton and Professor Jerry Organ, who have studied professional formation for a combined fifty years: “The break-through in our own thinking in recent years has been ‘to go where they are’ in understanding that virtually

61. *See id.* at 822–825 (discussing MARJORIE M. SHULTZ & SHELDON ZEDECK, FINAL REPORT: IDENTIFICATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND VALIDATION OF PREDICTORS FOR SUCCESSFUL LAWYERING 15 (2008), <http://www.law.berkeley.edu/files/LSACREPORTfinal-12.pdf>).

62. *See* SHULTZ & ZEDECK, *supra* note 61, at 26–27.

63. Daicoff, *supra* note 60, at 823–824.

all, if not all, students want post-graduation employment that is meaningful to them given their life experiences, talents, and passions.”⁶⁴

We agree with Professors Hamilton and Organ wholeheartedly. Some students can take a first-semester, first-year professional formation course and figure out their professional values and how to find employment they will find fulfilling. But they are in a small minority. Indeed, as the survey research discussed above indicates, most students need help connecting reflection on their values with pursuing meaningful employment. As compared with previous generations, millennials show a more acute sense of need to serve the public good.⁶⁵ Therefore, if law schools “meet students where they are” and equip them with self-direction and other competencies they lack, these students may be more inclined to serve the public good than any generation in recent memory.

Our experience is that the current generation of law students welcomes help in developing these professional identity skills. Millennial students appreciate feedback and are open to training if they understand why they are developing these skills.⁶⁶ The answer we have found most helpful is to focus on the message that it will help such students obtain “meaningful employment”—something our research noted above shows is among one of the highest priorities of current law students. Thus, the following section outlines methods Regent University School of Law and other schools have used to help students develop self-directedness and other professional skills in the context of the larger goal of helping them find meaning in their work.

A. *Methods for Cultivating Self-Directedness*

Self-directedness (or self-regulation or self-management) is not sought solely for the end of producing autonomous students. Instead, it is the key many educators have found to helping students see the bigger picture and make their vision of how to conduct their professional lives a reality.⁶⁷ In other words, the goal of cultivating self-directedness should be part of the broader goal of assisting students in professional identity formation. Professionals, especially lawyers, must be able to monitor their own work, learn what they need to learn to handle a case or client matter, and generally be

64. Hamilton & Organ, *Thirty Reflection Questions*, *supra* note 23, at 876.

65. *See, e.g.*, Tonia Lediju, *Leadership Agility in the Public Sector: Understanding the Impact of Public Sector Managers on the Organizational Commitment and Performance of Millennial Employees* 26 (Aug. 2016) (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Saybrook University), ProQuest 10174150 (noting that “Millennials are less focused on moneymaking and instead look for organizations that are socially responsible and provide personal fulfillment on the job”) (citation omitted).

66. *See* Ng et al., *supra* note 28, at 283 (stating that millennials “want an atmosphere where supervisors and managers are constantly available for feedback”) (citation omitted).

67. *See* Hamilton & Organ, *Thirty Reflection Questions*, *supra* note 23, at 856 (citing Stephanie Boyer et al., *The Moderating Effect of the Self-Directed Learning Measurement Tool: A User’s Guide*, 10 INT’L J. SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING, no. 2, Fall 2013, at 21).

effective at self-management. Law schools do students no favors by allowing them to remain passive in law school, by not requiring them to take the initiative in their professional development, and by failing to challenge them to exercise their own self-management muscles.

One of the first steps in helping students cultivate self-directedness is to have students complete an instrument that assesses their degree of self-directedness. Part of the survey research discussed above used an adaptation of a self-directed learning assessment by which students self-assessed their self-directedness.⁶⁸ As noted, even with the likelihood of self-report bias, students did not rate themselves as high in self-direction as one might expect for incoming law students. Moreover, the fact that, in response to the added survey question, so few students reported having a developed written plan for meaningful employment underscores that the overall ratings on self-directedness may be inflated. In addition to these results, other evidence shows that the students who are most in need of developing self-directed skills are more likely than others to inflate their self-assessment. Psychologists who have observed this phenomenon comment: “People are typically overly optimistic when evaluating the quality of their performance on social and intellectual tasks. In particular, poor performers grossly overestimate their performances because their incompetence deprives them of the skills needed to recognize the deficits.”⁶⁹

Fortunately, researchers have developed assessment tools other than ones in which students assess themselves explicitly on self-directedness. For instance, one promising assessment that offers the ability to limit response bias is the “Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale (SDLRS),” which is also known as “Learning Preference Assessment (LPA).”⁷⁰ This instrument was developed by Dr. Lucy M. Guglielmino to provide an objective assessment of an individual’s stage of development in self-directedness.⁷¹ The user responds to a series of statements, such as “If there is something I want to learn, I can figure a way out to learn it” and “I don’t work very well on my own.” The user responds to fifty-eight items of this nature by stating, on a scale of one to five, the degree to which the user

68. See *supra* text accompanying notes 31–40.

69. Joyce Ehrlinger et al., *Why the Unskilled Are Unaware: Further Exploration of (Absent) Self-Insight Among the Incompetent*, 105 *ORGAN. BEHAV. & HUM. DECIS. PROCESS.* no. 1, Jan. 2008, at 98, 98; see also Susan Zvacek et al., *Accuracy of Self-Assessment Among Graduate Students in Mechanical Engineering*, in *PROCEEDINGS OF 2015 INT’L CONF. ON INTERACTIVE COLLABORATIVE LEARNING* 1130, 1132 (2015) (confirming lower performing students have tendency to overestimate their ability, while higher performing students often underestimate their abilities); see generally Hamilton, *Formation*, *supra* note 23, at 858 (analyzing how this tendency of poorer performers to be less accurate in assessing themselves is a problem legal education should address).

70. See Lucy Guglielmino, *Learning Preference Assessment*, <http://www.lpasdlrs.com/> (last visited Nov. 7, 2017) (allowing user to take the SDLRS/LPA).

71. See *id.*

agrees or disagrees with the statement.⁷² The user's responses to these questions produce a report of the stage of development in self-directedness attained by the user.⁷³

According to S.K. McCune, who analyzed the variety of assessments on self-directedness available, the SDLRS is the most widely used assessment of sixty-seven available options.⁷⁴ Tests of reliability on the instrument have included some negative results, but largely those are overshadowed by the positive findings of other tests.⁷⁵ The instrument is very affordable; a person taking the test by himself would pay only \$6.95, and if between two and one hundred tests are ordered, the cost is reduced to \$4.95. The SDLRS is thus a readily available and reasonably priced tool to help both student and teacher obtain a sense of the student's degree of self-directedness.

Professor Hamilton has recently published an article reviewing not only the SDLRS, which he recommends, but also a number of other assessment tools available to help determine a variety of qualities, traits, and aptitudes of students.⁷⁶ We support the use of these tools as one promising part of a broader effort to determine early in law school the stage of students' development and to encourage them, through the findings of the assessments and through the help of a coach (discussed below), to take responsibility for discerning what career path in law is most likely to fit the students' gifts and to provide work they find meaningful.

B. The Evolution of Curriculum and Teaching Methods Designed to Foster Self-Directed Learning, Formation of Professional Identity, and Discernment of "Meaningful" Employment: An Introduction to the Roadmap

The last ten years have witnessed considerable growth in the number of law schools that have developed formal programs related to professional identity formation. For instance, a 2017 report identified thirty law schools as currently having first-year programs that focus on students' professional formation.⁷⁷ Many of these programs were developed in the last few years

72. *See id.*

73. *See id.*

74. S. K. McCune, *A Meta-Analytic Study of Adult Self Direction in Learning: A Review of Research from 1977 to 1987*, at 16 (Aug. 1988) (unpublished doctoral dissertation, Texas A&M University).

75. *See* Neil Hamilton, *Off-the-Shelf Formative Assessments to Help Each Student Develop Toward a Professional Formation/Ethical Professional Identity Learning Outcome of an Internalized Commitment to the Student's Own Professional Development*, 68 *MERCER L. REV.* 687, 703–704 (2017) (collecting sources analyzing validity of SDLRS).

76. *See id.*

77. *See* Jerome M. Organ, *First-Year Courses/Programs Focused on Professional Development and Professional Identity Formation: Many Flowers are Blooming*, *PD QUARTERLY*, Aug. 2017, at 24. On May 22–23, 2017, the Holloran Center at the University of St. Thomas School of

largely because of the growing interest in the connection between professional formation and finding meaningful employment. We believe these programs will experience greater success as they focus more specifically on promoting students' self-direction and self-regulation.

Professors Hamilton and Organ at the University of St. Thomas School of Law have been at the forefront of legal education by developing a curriculum specifically designed to promote self-directedness, as well as professional identity formation and students' discernment of their most likely prospects for "meaningful" employment. The essence of this curriculum has been encapsulated in Professor's Hamilton's book *Roadmap: The Law Student's Guide to Preparing and Implementing a Successful Plan for Meaningful Employment* (hereinafter *Roadmap*).⁷⁸ This book, which received the 2015 ABA Gambrell Award for Professionalism,⁷⁹ offers invaluable aid to those who wish to help each student methodically contemplate and identify his particular values and then develop a plan to seek employment in a position that aligns with his gifts, values, and vision.

Other schools have begun to use curricular methods like those adopted by Professors Hamilton and Organ; and this section discusses how St. Thomas, Regent, and four other law schools use the *Roadmap* as a tool to promote their students' self-directedness. Because this Article focuses on cultivating self-directed learning and self-regulated behavior as part of students' development, the Article concentrates on the *Roadmap* because it provides a sequence and method by which students begin the all-important job of becoming self-aware and reflecting—with the help of a faculty coach—on their strengths and weaknesses and their deeply-held values. In addition, the *Roadmap* outlines a method through which students explore different opportunities in law and see where their strengths (or gifts) may be most needed.

The *Roadmap* is probably the best curricular tool available for law students to begin, in their first year, the process of knowing themselves and then knowing more about the legal profession. The book has the advantage of providing stages of inquiry in which students write out a plan they submit to their coach and then discuss with them. The plan outlines the student's steps for pursuing meaningful employment—i.e., a position in which the student is interested and which aligns with the student's qualities suggesting the student will not only succeed but also find the work rewarding. As part of this plan, students need to be reminded that the legal field they

Law sponsored a gathering in which many of these schools discussed their respective first-year courses and programs. *See id.*

78. NEIL W. HAMILTON, *ROADMAP: THE LAW STUDENT'S GUIDE TO PREPARING AND IMPLEMENTING A SUCCESSFUL PLAN FOR MEANINGFUL EMPLOYMENT* (2d ed. 2018).

79. *See* Press Release, Univ. of St. Thomas, School of Law's *Roadmap* Curriculum Wins Gambrell Award from ABA (June 12, 2015), <http://www.stthomas.edu/news/school-laws-roadmap-curriculum-wins-gambrell-award-aba/>.

identify as best fitting their skills and values may not be the field in which they start. The coach needs to cultivate self-directedness by reminding students to take the long view.

Before discussing the efforts of other schools, this section will first describe how St. Thomas' and Regent's curriculum and approach enhance student self-directedness and professional formation. At St. Thomas, Professors Hamilton and Organ found that requiring a first-year course in which students use the Roadmap is the best approach to foster students' professional formation. If the course is an elective, the students who most need the help the course provides are the least likely to take it. At Regent, we therefore similarly decided to adopt a professional formation course as a required, first-year, second-semester course.

The greatest benefits of such a course are in helping students who lack strong self-management skills. Because everyone is required to enroll in the course and each student receives a faculty coach, students learn the benefit of working with others in a methodical fashion. With the coach's help, students engage in self-evaluation and receive feedback from others. They reflect on what positions in the legal profession fit their passions and gifts (often informed by their first-semester courses and by guest speakers from law practice in the second-semester formation course), and they develop a step-by-step plan to explore these positions.

At both St. Thomas and Regent, students must complete the Roadmap plan as a course requirement. The Roadmap is divided into six components from which students build their written plan, and they then provide their plan to their individual coach and to those responsible for teaching the course. Given that many students procrastinate until their third year (or later) to develop specific vocational plans and that others look for the "perfect" job and refuse to see some positions as stepping stones to others, the written plan and the accountability that goes with it are critical components in fostering student self-directed skills and competencies.⁸⁰

The first two components of the Roadmap have students consider who they are—what they articulate as their identity based on past experience, what they believe, and what they value.⁸¹ The notion here is to help students in the process of developing a professional identity. In addition, the book encourages students to consider past life experience as a way of explaining traits, such as perseverance and diligence, that are important to law practice.⁸² Students need this encouragement to translate the lessons learned in past non-legal experiences into the development of these important traits.

80. The importance of these components is confirmed by the survey results reflected in Table 3 above, which show that many students who self-identify either at the involved or self-directed stage have no complete written plan for meaningful employment. See *supra* notes 39–41 and accompanying text.

81. See HAMILTON, *supra* note 78, at 48–51.

82. See *id.*

By reflecting on these past experiences, they are more likely to be able—when they find prospective legal employers they wish to pursue—to explain how they can display these traits in future professional settings.

The second component of the Roadmap plan also has students consider their strengths (or gifts) and weaknesses (or challenges).⁸³ To help students identify their strengths and weaknesses, the Roadmap suggests several assessments, including *StrengthsFinder 2.0*⁸⁴—a modestly priced book that contains an assessment tool that helps students identify those areas in which they are strongest and, by implication, those areas in which they can develop if necessary. At Regent, in determining an appropriate assessment tool in our professional formation course, the law school partnered with its University's School of Psychology and Counseling, our university experts in psychology testing. That school preferred for validity and reliability purposes that the law school use two other instruments—the NEO-PI-3⁸⁵ and the Strong Interest Inventory (SII).⁸⁶ The first instrument assesses an individual's dominant personality traits along the five major domains of neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.⁸⁷ The second instrument assesses an individual's interests in occupational and leisure activities as a way to guide career planning.⁸⁸ Both of these instruments are designed to be reviewed by a clinical psychologist who prepares a report on each individual taker. Our University Psychological Services Center therefore agreed to prepare reports for each respondent, and clinical psychology doctoral students then conducted individual meetings with each respondent to discuss his or her results.⁸⁹

The costs of using the NEO-PI-3 and SII are significantly more than *StrengthsFinder 2.0*, such that unless a law school is associated with a university whose psychology department or counseling center is willing to provide services at a reduced rate, the additional benefits of partnership with psychological professionals may be cost-prohibitive. Moreover, this part of the Roadmap is not designed to be an exact evaluation of students' strengths and weaknesses. Most coaches over time will, through getting to know their students, be able to provide those students an objective viewpoint so the students can better understand their strengths and weaknesses.

83. *See id.*

84. *See* Gallup, *About StrengthsFinder 2.0*, <http://strengths.gallup.com/110440/AboutStrengthsFinder-20.aspx> (last visited Nov. 7, 2017).

85. *See* SIGMA Assessment Systems, *NEO-PI-3*, <http://www.sigmaassessmentssystems.com/assessments/neo-personality-inventory-3/> (last visited Nov. 7, 2017).

86. *See* Strong Interest Inventory, <https://www.cpp.com/products/strong/index.aspx> (last visited Nov. 7, 2017).

87. *See* SIGMA Assessment Systems, *supra* note 85.

88. *See* Strong Assessment Data Sheet, https://www.cpp.com/Pdfs/STRONG_Product_Data_Sheet.pdf (last visited Nov. 7, 2017).

89. At Regent, in addition to the students taking the course, all full-time faculty took both instruments so they could be more informed about the instruments and better prepared to engage students about the results.

The point is that early in the process the Roadmap has students consider their gifts and, to the extent limitations stand in the way of what students want to pursue, their weaknesses or challenges. The ultimate goal is to help students internalize a proper understanding of their strengths so they can use those talents in the legal system to help others. The Roadmap process underscores that finding the meaning in “meaningful employment” requires students, in partnership with their coaches and others in their law school community, to find purpose in their work.

The last four components of the Roadmap are the ones in which students examine what employment options are available in the legal profession. Having been exposed to a variety of options (through invited speakers and readings showing the multitude of ways graduates are practicing in both traditional and non-traditional ways), students through these components draft a plan that outlines their primary prospects for future employment. This part of the plan also asks students to describe how they can use the remainder of their law school career in preparation for the prospects they have identified.⁹⁰

These last sections of the Roadmap are where students actually develop specific plans, with dates and strategies mapped out, for networking and interning in the area they have identified, for applying to prospective employers, and for essentially “trying out” what they believe to be their best prospects.⁹¹ Some students find, after experimenting, that they need to revise their plan. Such redirection is appropriate, as few lawyers are still in the first job they started after completing law school.⁹² The key is that students take responsibility much earlier than ever over this important process of career planning. The synergistic effect can be that students, with more concrete plans, start to see how their law school experiences really matter in preparing them for their career opportunities. Moreover, those students who do the footwork, in our experience, are often the ones who get the opportunities.

The most gratifying part of working with the Roadmap is that it fits our philosophy that neither law school nor work in the law need produce unhappy people. Professors Krieger and Sheldon were powerfully incisive when they identified the tendency to seek extrinsic goals (money, status, power) rather than intrinsic goals (what matters to the person, one’s internal sense of values and purpose) as a key to the problem with law student and lawyer unhappiness.⁹³ Given the tendency of law students to be high achievers, and the degree to which law schools have traditionally promoted

90. See HAMILTON, *supra* note 78, at 51–53.

91. See *id.*

92. See *id.* at 53 (noting “it may take several completions of the Roadmap (as you gain more experience) throughout a career to discern the best fit for employment at any particular stage of your career”).

93. See *supra* text accompanying notes 48–53.

extrinsic goals, law schools instead need to engage in a consistent and concerted effort in their culture to encourage students to pursue their intrinsic values.

In addition to St. Thomas and Regent, other schools are creatively adapting curricula based on the Roadmap approach. For instance, Texas A&M School of Law has adopted a mandatory, two-semester first-year course on cultivating students' professional identity.⁹⁴ The first semester does not focus on the Roadmap but does have students engage in numerous reflection exercise and experiences.⁹⁵ These help the students become more aware of themselves, their traits, and their strengths and weaknesses.⁹⁶ The second semester is more intense and includes assignments from the Roadmap in which students, who have developed self-awareness, begin to connect what they know about themselves with competencies in different legal positions.⁹⁷ One of the main goals of the second semester thus is for students to explore the competencies needed in different areas of law practice and seek not only to match students' competencies to an area of law, but also to prepare them to be able to explain to employers how their competencies will benefit them in law practice.⁹⁸

Students at Texas A&M in the spring semester are also presented with scenarios requiring them to work through ethical decisions. Students in this process are encouraged to reflect on what it is that leads them to believe a course of action is the right one (whether due to family, values learned elsewhere, or an internal sense of right and wrong). Ultimately, in line with the Roadmap approach, students are required to develop a written action plan.⁹⁹ The plan discusses the student's realizations of areas of law that would best fit his strengths, interests, and competencies.¹⁰⁰ The plan also highlights the professional values of which the student has become aware, how those help form the student's professional identity, and how the student will continue to grow as he enters practice.¹⁰¹

Another innovator in this area is Pepperdine University School of Law. Rather than the *StrengthsFinder 2.0*, Pepperdine relies on the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) test to enable students to become more self-aware of their traits, strengths, and weaknesses.¹⁰² Pepperdine shortens the

94. Interview with Jack Manhire, former Director of Program Development and Senior Lecturer, Texas A&M School of Law (Apr. 25, 2017); see also *Professionalism and Leadership Program*, TEXAS A&M UNIV. SCH. OF LAW, <https://law.tamu.edu/current-students/academics/centers-clinics-programs/professionalism-leadership-program> (last visited Nov. 7, 2017).

95. Interview with Jack Manhire, *supra* note 94.

96. *Id.*

97. *Id.*

98. *Id.*

99. *Id.*

100. *Id.*

101. *Id.*

102. Interview with Danny DeWalt, Dean of Students and Chief of Staff, Pepperdine University School of Law (Apr. 25, 2017).

Roadmap curriculum but still has students develop a written plan of action in their first year.

During “Launch Week” at the outset of the first year, students at Pepperdine Law School are introduced to the profession and to the importance of finding the way their gifts will lead them to a professional role where those gifts will be useful to others and, ideally, where the students will more likely be fulfilled.¹⁰³ Workshops throughout the first semester build on the stages students need to consider in exploring their professional identity, values, and interests—as well as where in the profession they can seek meaningful employment.¹⁰⁴ The components of the Roadmap are addressed primarily in these workshops; students are then assigned tasks that lead them to examine the career options available and to narrow down the options to those that are best suited for them.¹⁰⁵ The Pepperdine model relies heavily on mentoring both by professionals assigned through the school’s Parris Institute for Professional Formation and by upper-level students assigned as mentors to first-year students.¹⁰⁶

St. Mary’s University School of Law is another school that likewise incorporates the Roadmap into its effort to help students understand the meaning of the lawyer as a professional.¹⁰⁷ The entire law faculty reads the Roadmap and, in advising students, promotes the goals of self-awareness and self-directedness.¹⁰⁸ Students perform reflections not only on their strengths and weaknesses but also on what competencies are important in different types of legal careers.¹⁰⁹ In this process, with the guidance of advisors, each student at St. Mary’s is better able to identify the areas of law for which that particular student is suited.¹¹⁰ Recognizing that developing a written plan and being accountable are keys to the success of the Roadmap curriculum, those who spearhead this effort at St. Mary’s ensure students prepare and follow a plan.¹¹¹

An interesting variation on the above examples of law schools that employ the Roadmap curriculum is the University of California Hastings College of the Law Inns of Court program. Although not connected with the American Inns of Court, UC Hastings formed a program that is modeled on

103. *Id.*; see also *Parris Institute for Professional Formation*, PEPP. L. SCH., <https://law.pepperdine.edu/parris-institute/> (last visited Nov. 7, 2017).

104. Interview with Danny DeWalt, *supra* note 102.

105. *Id.*

106. *Id.*

107. Interview with Zoe Niesel, Assistant Professor of Law and Director of Law Success, St. Mary’s School of Law (Apr. 25, 2017); see also *Support for Law Success*, ST. MARY’S SCH. L., <https://law.stmarytx.edu/academics/student-services/support-for-academic-success/> (last visited Nov. 7, 2017).

108. Interview with Zoe Niesel, *supra* note 107.

109. *Id.*

110. *Id.*

111. *Id.*

the Inns of Court method of pupillage groups.¹¹² The UC Hastings program is comprised of judges, lawyers, faculty, and students. The program relies on the Roadmap as a central focus of meetings.¹¹³ For instance, students address the early stages of the Roadmap—i.e., they evaluate themselves and their strengths and weaknesses—in early meetings.¹¹⁴ As the meetings progress, students prepare the written Roadmap components, such as a description of the different opportunities available in the legal profession.¹¹⁵ Students then have the opportunity to discuss with the judges, lawyers, and faculty in the program what types of legal work would best fit the student.¹¹⁶ Moreover, in line with the focus on self-direction in the Roadmap, students receive guidance on steps to take in exploring the types of legal work they identify.¹¹⁷

The above description of schools using the Roadmap is not intended to be an exhaustive survey of all law schools' efforts in promoting student self-directedness. Instead, it is designed to illustrate some of the creative and new ways schools are recognizing the importance of developing self-directedness as a way to help students find meaningful employment. One noteworthy characteristic of these schools that have sought seriously to pursue developing their students' professional identity is that the schools offer students, in their first year, the opportunity to take a broader view of the legal profession. These schools encourage students to reflect on the values implicated in being a lawyer, and in turn, they encourage students to reflect on their own values and discover which values they find most important.

C. *The Benefits of One-on-One Work Between Student and Coach*

A critical component of successful first-year formation courses not fully explored above is that students develop one-on-one relationships with a mentor, or “coach,” who helps them find meaningful employment. The first component of a formation course in which students explore the legal system and related concepts such as justice and ethical decision-making lends itself to classes taught by one or two professors. At the point when students begin to work on their Roadmap and career plan, however, coaches

112. For more information on the American Inns of Court, see THE HISTORY OF THE AMERICAN INNS OF COURT, http://home.innsofcourt.org/AIC/About_Us/History/AIC/AIC_About_Us/History_of_the_American_Inns_of_Court.aspx?hkey7ee0c7-2df9-4af4-967e-1602688fd8f4 (last visited Nov. 7, 2017).

113. Interview with Sari Zimmerman, Assistant Dean of the Career Development Office, UC Hastings College of the Law (May 25, 2017).

114. *Id.*

115. *Id.*

116. *Id.*

117. *Id.*

who work one-on-one with students provide the best medium for helping them discover their pathway to meaningful employment.¹¹⁸

At Regent, full-time faculty members serve as coaches in our first-year professional formation course. Students participate in the selection process of their coaches by completing a form in which they identify their top three preferred coaches based on a listing provided to them outlining the respective practice settings in which each faculty worked (such as large firm, small firm, government) and each faculty's respective areas of expertise. Considering these preferences, the law school then assigns coaches to students. In the spring of 2017 and 2018, the first two years the course was offered, the law school was able to pair every student with one of their top three choices and still allocate all students relatively evenly among the faculty coaches.¹¹⁹

Although the faculty or staff member working with the student as part of a professional formation program could take on various titles, such as advisor, mentor, or coach, calling that person a "coach" may be preferable. As Professors Hamilton and Organ explain, most individuals view an advisor or mentor as someone to whom a student can come when she has questions.¹²⁰ In contrast, a coach is someone in our view who provides even more guidance; a coach encourages as would a mentor but also recognizes the individual's situation, tendencies, and personality and assumes a responsibility to work in that person's best interests.¹²¹ Coaches are not drill instructors. In our training with faculty coaches, we ask faculty members to think of themselves as individuals charged with the task of helping and training the student, of encouraging the student, and of holding the student accountable to his or her plan. Approaching the role in this way creates an expectation that faculty coaches will be more proactive than mentors in asking students questions and in ensuring the students are being held accountable in addition to being encouraged. Whereas mentors often wait for the protégé to come to the mentor for help, the coach initiates meetings and ensures the protégé stays on track.

Good coaches handle different students in different ways. Some students will not need prodding to work through their Roadmap. Others may

118. See Hamilton & Organ, *Thirty Reflection Questions*, *supra* note 23, at 874–875; Matthew J. Bundick, *The Benefits of Reflecting on and Discussing Purpose in Life in Emerging Adulthood*, 132 *NEW DIRECTIONS YOUTH DEV.* 89, 93 (2011) (providing empirical evidence supporting the benefits to undergraduates of individual coaching on the student's life purpose, core values, and life goals).

119. A handful of students did not complete a preference form, and these students were assigned a mentor based on the desire to allocate students evenly or other issues, such as whether the student was a transfer student (and so could be paired with the faculty member who focuses on working with transfer students).

120. For the views of Professors Hamilton and Organ on the difference between mentors and coaches, see Hamilton & Organ, *Thirty Reflection Questions*, *supra* note 23, at 874–875.

121. *Id.*

well need a coach to ask the student to rewrite a section in which the student has put negligible effort. Such a student may have an internal block to moving forward, often motivated by fear. If the student moves forward, he will be better prepared to perform as a professional. A human tendency in facing fear is to procrastinate.¹²² Such a student needs the coach to push him gently but firmly to own his gifts and to show the courage many in the legal profession have had to show to put themselves in positions where they can be criticized. The coach, in fact, can foster such courage by relating how he or she needed to listen to constructive criticism in order to grow as a professional.

This dialogue with the coach will promote growth in the student. It does little good to let students go through three years of law school and come out as afraid as they were in their first year of being in a position in which they will have responsibility or be criticized. Indeed, that students have been able to go through law school and avoid the growth we are describing in this article is a failure in legal pedagogy we need to address. The Roadmap plan, with the coach, is a sound way to address and overcome that failure.

CONCLUSION

A well-recognized concept across many disciplines,¹²³ self-directed learning provides great promise to energize the professional formation movement in legal education. Scholars for years have studied how experts learn, and they have applied these insights to develop principles of self-directed learning that have been proven to enhance learning across disciplines.¹²⁴ Now, legal education is coming to terms with the recognition that it needs to do much more to promote its students' professional identity formation. In its struggle to operationalize how best to promote such formation, teaching self-directed learning skills in the context of professional formation enables law schools to equip their students with the direction and motivation students need to internalize their values and apply them in their professional life.

The survey research analyzed above highlights how first-year law students have specific professional goals, such as obtaining meaningful employment, but they do not rate themselves particularly high in self-directedness nor have most developed a written plan to obtain such employment. We believe, like the educators mentioned in this Article, that little good comes from bemoaning students' lack of self-direction. "Meet the students where they are" makes sense,¹²⁵ and we endorse that approach to any

122. Some call procrastination "fear in five syllables" for that very reason.

123. See *supra* text accompanying note 67.

124. See SCHWARTZ, *supra* note 8, at 3–6; SUSAN A. AMBROSE ET AL., HOW LEARNING WORKS: SEVEN RESEARCH-BASED PRINCIPLES FOR SMART TEACHING 198 (2010).

125. See *supra* text accompanying notes 64–65.

law school wanting to help students develop self-directedness. Law schools thus should draw upon the vast, cross-disciplinary research on self-direction in order to promote their students' professional formation.

As discussed above, Neil Hamilton's Roadmap presents an excellent vehicle for joining self-direction and the search for meaningful employment. It challenges students to explore their values, become more self-aware, and apply this knowledge, ideally with help from a faculty or staff coach, to develop a concrete action plan for meaningful employment. The Roadmap process, however, is but one approach. The recent efforts by many law schools to promote their students' professional formation show the tremendous creative energy in this area of legal education.¹²⁶ We applaud such efforts and look forward to continued innovations as law schools embrace the challenge to equip their students with the skills, insight, and drive needed to take charge of their own professional identity information.

126. For examples in addition to the ones discussed in detail in the text, see Organ, *supra* note 77.

APPENDIX A
 WHAT ARE THE PROFESSIONAL GOALS YOU WOULD
 LIKE TO ACHIEVE BY SIX MONTHS AFTER
 GRADUATION?

Rate each goal on the scale below (you can rate more than one goal as critically important). Circle your rating on each goal.

1. Critically important goal?
2. Important goal?
3. Significant goal?
4. Modestly important goal?
5. Not a goal at this time?

Here is the list of possible goals:

1. Bar Passage	1	2	3	4	5
2. Meaningful Employment	1	2	3	4	5
3. Sufficient Income to Meet Student Loan Obligations and “Satisfactory Living”?	1	2	3	4	5
4. Continuing to Build a Reputation As Trustworthy in the Work	1	2	3	4	5
5. Other Goals	1	2	3	4	5

APPENDIX B

THERE IS ONE QUESTION ON EACH OF TWO PAGES. PLEASE ANSWER BOTH QUESTIONS AS HONESTLY AS POSSIBLE TO HELP OUR CURRICULUM DESIGN. THIS IS ANONYMOUS.

[Circle the Stage in the Left Column That Best Describes Where You Are Now Regarding Your Commitment to Your Professional Development*]

	Student Characteristics
Dependent Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Assumes passive role with respect to professional self-development - Lacks clear insight into professional strengths and weaknesses - Depends on external authority for explicit direction and validation - Lacks interest in developing needed competencies except minimum required by external authority
Interested Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Can see self-interest in professional self-development - May recognize weaknesses, but motivation to improve is principally externalized ? - Responds reasonably to questions and feedback on strengths and weaknesses - Is willing to engage mentors/coaches in goal-setting and implementation strategies - Shows some initiative and persistence to learn all needed competencies
Involved Stage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is committed to professional self-development - Identifies strengths and weaknesses in development of needed competencies - Responds positively to and reflects on feedback concerning strengths and weaknesses and how to improve - Seeks insight from mentors and coaches in goal-setting and implementation - Is internalizing motivation to learn new knowledge and skills continuously over a career - Is internalizing standard of excellence at all competencies - Shows substantial persistence in learning competencies

Self-Directed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is intrinsically motivated to professional self-development and learning new knowledge and skills over a career - Actively identifies both strengths and weaknesses in development and sets goals and creates and executes implementation plans - Proactively develops mentor and coach relationships and proactively seeks help and feedback from mentors and coaches - Reflects on feedback and responds to feedback appropriately - Knows when and how to seek help - Actively seeks challenges - Has internalized standard of excellence at all competencies
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* Adapted from Gerald Grow, "Teaching Learners to be Self-Directed," 41 ADULT EDUC. QUARTERLY (Spring 1991).

At this moment, how well developed is your written plan to secure post-graduation employment (including your plan for career advancement if you already have post-graduation employment)?

Circle your response.

0	1	2	3	4	5
do not	beginning	parts of	rough draft	developed	very
have	to write	plan	of plan	plan	developed
written	out plan	written	complete	complete	plan
plan					complete