



# James A. Bellanca

Presented by: Anish Peringol, University of Central Oklahoma  
Jackson College of Graduate Studies, Adult and Higher Education – Interdisciplinary  
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Lori Risley



**Background:** From 1972-1978, James A. Bellanca was the founder and lead teacher of the Center for Self-Directed Learning in New Trier High School, Illinois. Since 2009, he continues to serve as the Executive Director of the Illinois Consortium for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools. He has been a Senior Fellow of the Partnership for 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning, DC, for the past four years. He has also worked with MindQuest21 PBL since 2013.

## Major Contributions to SDL:

Supporting graduation requirements based on SDL proficiency demonstration by students.

Instructional climate and methods for adolescents.

Promoting SDL “how to” via written word.

Shaping school designs to integrate deeper learning practices high in student agency, leading to self-directed learners as key outcomes.

## Recommendations:

How does SDL/student agency enhance K-12 learning?

- school’s and teacher’s role/methods
- SDL characteristics
- desired learner outcomes
- student’s role and behaviors
- role of collaboration
- methods: PBL, Inquiry, personalized plans
- technology as sole or embedded tool
- effects of PBL and SDL on student agency

## Current SDL Research and Application:

Developing self-directed learning for K-12: the process, methods, and outcomes.

Enabling student agency: a 21<sup>st</sup> Century result

Creating deeper learners via student agency

## ISSDL:

Dr. James Bellanca is a 2013 recipient of the Malcolm Knowles Memorial Self-Directed Learning Award.

The Self-Directed Learner	
Sounds Like	Acts Like
This is what I have in Mind	Sets learning goals
This is my first interest	Weights Strategies
This is my priority	Problem Solves
What needs to be done?	Challenges assumptions
Why? Why not?	Ask tough questions
Where's the evidence?	Unfazed by rigor
Here is how I would solve that	Targets thinking priorities
Here is my plan	Makes precise schedules
This is my strategy	Celebrates milestones
I will do this part differently	Sets learning priorities
Here's my goal	Listens carefully
The precise answer is	Finishes tasks
Let's brainstorm these options	Makes detailed plans
I love to learn about	Balances priorities
I get passionate when I study	Welcomes new learning challenges
There's so much more to do	Thinks flexibility
The ways I can most improve are	Synthesizes opposite points of view
I am curious about how	Determines facts and analyzes data
Let's try that a different way	Embraces new ideas and divergent ways of thinking

## Important SDL Publications:

Bellanca, J., & Brandt, R. (2010). *21st century skills: Rethinking how students learn*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Bellanca, J. (2010). *Enriched learning projects: A practical pathway to 21st century skills*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Bellanca, J., Arline, P., & Paul, M. (Eds.). (2014). *Becoming self-directed learners: Student & faculty memoirs of an experimenting high school 40 years later*. Chicago, IL: Windy City Publishers.

Bellanca, J. (2014). Self-directed learning: What’s in a name?. *P21 Blog*, 8(1). Retrieved from <http://www.p21.org/news-events/p21blog/1487-bellanca-self-directed-learning-whats-in-a-name> (**illustrated left**)

Bellanca, J. (2015) *Wad-ja-learn? Assessing for deeper learning in 21st century classrooms*. Northbrook, IL: International Renewal Press.

Bellanca, J. (Ed.). (2015). *Deeper learning: 21st century skills*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

Bellanca, J. (Ed.). (2015). *Connecting the dots: Teacher effectiveness and deeper professional learning*. Bloomington, IN: Solution Tree Press.

