

MAN 100 Personal and Professional Development

WEEK 1- 7 LECTURE NOTES

Learning Outcome:

Understand how self-managed learning can enhance lifelong development

Learning Objectives:

WEEK ONE

Self-managed learning: self-initiation of learning processes; clear goal setting, eg aims and requirements, personal orientation achievement goals, dates for achievement, self-reflection

WEEK TWO

Learning styles: personal preferences; activist; pragmatist; theorist; reflector, eg reflexive modernisation theory; Kolb's learning cycle

WEEK THREE

Approaches: learning through research; learning from others, eg mentoring/coaching, seminars, conferences, secondments, interviews, use of the internet, social networks, use of bulletin boards, news groups

WEEK FOUR

Effective learning: skills of personal assessment; planning, organisation and evaluation

WEEK FIVE & WEEK SIX

Lifelong learning: self-directed learning; continuing professional development; linking higher education with industry, further education, Recognition of Prior Learning, Apprenticeships, Credit Accumulation and Transfer Schemes

WEEK SEVEN

Assessment of learning: improved ability range with personal learning; evidence of improved levels of skill; feedback from others; learning achievements and disappointments

Self-managed learning: Self-initiation of learning processes

What is Self Managed Learning?

Self Managed Learning (SML) is about individuals managing their own learning. This includes people taking responsibility for decisions about: -

- what you learn
- how you learn
- when you learn
- where you learn
- why you learn.

The most fundamental questions that stimulate the above mentioned question is "Why Learn", this is where a link between personal development and organizational development could be established. So what does SML do for Individuals and what does it do for Organizations.

All of this is carried out in the context of live organisational needs. But organisational needs cannot be met without individuals feeling a personal sense of commitment to what is required by the organisation. You can compel someone to sit in a classroom – but you can't guarantee what they will learn. As the old saying goes:

“You can take a horse to water – but you can't make it drink”.

Although everyone manages their own learning to some extent, it's clear that just telling people to take charge of their own learning can be very inefficient. Research indicates that people who are effective at, for example, leading major organisations, have managed their own learning very well throughout their careers. This does not mean, though, that they have been on more courses than others. Managing their own learning has meant the person using a wide range of opportunities for learning. These include: -

- learning from others around them
- travel
- reading
- secondments
- projects
- being coached/mentored.

The examples quoted are only a few of the many experiences we can use for learning. Self managing learners use a range to suit themselves. The problem is that unstructured, unplanned learning is very inefficient.

Benefits of self-managed learning to the individual

Starting with the individual, SML creates value for learning among individuals,

- self actualisation
- Learning brings a constant feeling of development among individuals and that is directly linked to being able to advance in career (job promotions)
- increased job satisfaction
- help them take on board their weaknesses, and how they can get over them,
- it help achieve increased level of self-confidence among participants due to the ability to acquire new skills,
- help creates ability to work more effectively with the colleagues.
- its a place where individuals could be more open about their issues and achieve a constructive feedback and most importantly
- individuals set their targets assessing their own shortcomings.

Benefits of self-managed learning to the Organisation

What does SML has to offer the Organizations,

- the first and foremost is that it get the employees on the track of learning, that is the key to its survival.
- it helps create a better work environment as employees learn how to work effectively with others, also resulting in low staff turnover.
- learning results in increased profitability and growth in the organization.
- Knowing and understanding their job better will directly result in increased job performance
- enhances staff focus thus helping in achievement of goals of the business.

SML could very work be the key to successful organizations, but management must make sure they help their employees understand the need of continuous learning and the need for self-direction in adult learning.

Life-long Learning

What is lifelong learning?

According to the European Commission, the scale of current economic and social change, the rapid transition to a knowledge-based society and demographic pressures resulting from an ageing population are all challenges which demand a new approach to education and training, within the framework of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is defined as

‘all learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence, within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective.’

We are on the way to “knowledge society”!

We live in time shaped by;

- deep demographic changes
- rapid transformation in technology, science and economy.

These factors effect and change in a decisive way the life styles and life conditions of all people and the state of the society.

These developments are expressed in the term “knowledge society”.

These developments demand from all people - independent of sex and age, education, social position - the willingness to learn and to accept individual and social responsibility.

Learning to see learning as "mediation of the ability to coping with problems" becomes itself a learning goal of prime importance.

(Continuing) education is no longer a privilege, but a basic necessity in order to be able to follow social and economic changes and to influence them.

Knowledge is conscious organisation of information and its assessment according to meaning.

What is “knowledge society”?

The people of today and of tomorrow have to;

- process more information
- cope with social developments and critical situations
- make more decisions

Self-managed learning becomes a central issue in the “knowledge society”

With "self-managed learning" a learning is understood, "in which the learner steers in essence his/her own learning process" (Dohmen, 1997) and that he/she decides to a large degree alone if, what and when, how and with which goal he/she learns.

The four necessary prerequisites for self-managed learning (key qualifications)

1. the ability for life-long learning in the way of disposing over formal strategies of learning to cope with new learning demands
2. the ability to place the learn process in social contexts as a basic prerequisite for an active participation in forming our world
3. the ability to acquire orientation knowledge of larger thematic contexts
4. the ability to acquire detailed knowledge in selected areas in the way of deepening individual thematic contexts (Stadelhofer, 1999)

The meeting of informal and formal education

Educational and learning processes encompass all life spheres of people.

Informal education as "situation-related experience learning" and formal education as "systematic learning" (Dohmen, 1997) are both closely related.

Self-managed learning includes application of experience learning and informal learning.

Clear goal setting, eg aims and requirements, personal orientation achievement goals, dates for achievement, self-reflection

Research on successful top managers and leaders shows that they set clear goals for themselves in relation to their learning. It is not purely random. They establish;

- personal orientation achievement goals,
- dates for achievement,
- self-reflection
- self-initiation of learning processes;

PERSONAL GOAL SETTING

According to Mind Tools

“Goal setting is a powerful process for thinking about your ideal future, and for motivating yourself to turn your vision of this future into reality. The process of setting goals helps you choose where you want to go in life. By knowing precisely what you want to achieve, you know where you have to concentrate your efforts. You'll also quickly spot the distractions that can, so easily, lead you astray.

Why Set Goals?

Goal setting is used by top-level athletes, successful business-people and achievers in all fields. Setting goals gives you long-term vision and short-term motivation. It focuses your acquisition of knowledge, and helps you to organize your time and your resources so that you can make the very most of your life.

By setting sharp, clearly defined goals, you can measure and take pride in the achievement of those goals, and you'll see forward progress in what might previously have seemed a long pointless grind. You will also raise your self-confidence, as you recognize your own ability and competence in achieving the goals that you've set.

Starting to Set Personal Goals

You set your goals on a number of levels:

First you create your "big picture" of what you want to do with your life (or over, say, the next 10 years), and identify the large-scale goals that you want to achieve.

Then, you break these down into the smaller and smaller targets that you must hit to reach your lifetime goals.

Finally, once you have your plan, you start working on it to achieve these goals.

This is why we start the process of goal setting by looking at your lifetime goals. Then, we work down to the things that you can do in, say, the next five years, then next year, next month, next week, and today, to start moving towards them.

Step 1: Setting Lifetime Goals

The first step in setting personal goals is to consider what you want to achieve in your lifetime (or at least, by a significant and distant age in the future). Setting lifetime goals gives you the overall perspective that shapes all other aspects of your decision making.

To give a broad, balanced coverage of all important areas in your life, try to set goals in some of the following categories (or in other categories of your own, where these are important to you):

1. **Career** - What level do you want to reach in your career, or what do you want to achieve?
2. **Financial** - How much do you want to earn, by what stage? How is this related to your career goals?
3. **Education** - Is there any knowledge you want to acquire in particular? What information and skills will you need to have in order to achieve other goals?
4. **Family** - Do you want to be a parent? If so, how are you going to be a good parent? How do you want to be seen by a partner or by members of your extended family?
5. **Artistic** - Do you want to achieve any artistic goals?
6. **Attitude** - Is any part of your mindset holding you back? Is there any part of the way that you behave that upsets you? (If so, set a goal to improve your behavior or find a solution to the problem.)
7. **Physical** - Are there any athletic goals that you want to achieve, or do you want good health deep into old age? What steps are you going to take to achieve this?
8. **Pleasure** - How do you want to enjoy yourself? (You should ensure that some of your life is for you!)
9. **Public Service** - Do you want to make the world a better place? If so, how?

Spend some time brainstorming these things, and then select one or more goals in each category that best reflect what you want to do. Then consider trimming again so that you have a small number of really significant goals that you can focus on.

As you do this, make sure that the goals that you have set are ones that you genuinely want to achieve, not ones that your parents, family, or employers might want. (If you have a partner, you probably want to consider what he or she wants - however, make sure that you also remain true to yourself!)

Tip: **Personal Mission Statements.** Crafting a personal mission statement can help bring your most important goals into sharp focus.

Step 2: Setting Smaller Goals

1. *Once you have set your lifetime goals, set a five-year plan of smaller goals that you need to complete if you are to reach your lifetime plan.*
2. *Then create a one-year plan, six-month plan, and a one-month plan of progressively smaller goals that you should reach to achieve your lifetime goals. Each of these should be based on the previous plan.*
3. *Then create a daily To-Do List of things that you should do today to work towards your lifetime goals. At an early stage, your smaller goals might be to read books and gather information on the achievement of your higher level goals. This will help you to improve the quality and realism of your goal setting.*
4. *Finally review your plans, and make sure that they fit the way in which you want to live your life.*

Staying on Course

Once you've decided on your first set of goals, keep the processes going by reviewing and updating your To-Do List on a daily basis.

Periodically review the longer term plans, and modify them to reflect your changing priorities and experience. (A good way of doing this is to schedule regular, repeating reviews using a computer-based diary.)

SMART Goals

A useful way of making goals more powerful is to use the SMART mnemonic. While there are plenty of variants (some of which we've included in parenthesis), SMART usually stands for:

- S - Specific (or Significant).
- M - Measurable (or Meaningful).
- A - Attainable (or Action-Oriented).
- R - Relevant (or Rewarding).
- T - Time-bound (or Trackable).

For example, instead of having "To sail around the world" as a goal, it's more powerful to say "To have completed my trip around the world by December 31, 2015." Obviously, this will only be attainable if a lot of preparation has been completed beforehand!

Further Goal Setting Tips

The following broad guidelines will help you to set effective, achievable goals:

State each goal as a positive statement - Express your goals positively – "Execute this technique well" is a much better goal than "Don't make this stupid mistake."

Be precise: Set precise goals, putting in dates, times and amounts so that you can measure achievement. If you do this, you'll know exactly when you have achieved the goal, and can take complete satisfaction from having achieved it.

Set priorities - When you have several goals, give each a priority. This helps you to avoid feeling overwhelmed by having too many goals, and helps to direct your attention to the most important ones.

Write goals down - This crystallizes them and gives them more force.

Keep operational goals small - Keep the low-level goals that you're working towards small and achievable. If a goal is too large, then it can seem that you are not making progress towards it. Keeping goals small and incremental gives more opportunities for reward.

Set performance goals, not outcome goals - You should take care to set goals over which you have as much control as possible. It can be quite dispiriting to fail to achieve a personal goal for reasons beyond your control! In business, these reasons could be bad business environments or unexpected effects of government policy. In sport, they could include poor judging, bad weather, injury, or just plain bad luck. If you base your goals on personal performance, then you can keep control over the achievement of your goals, and draw satisfaction from them.

Set realistic goals - It's important to set goals that you can achieve. All sorts of people (for example, employers, parents, media, or society) can set unrealistic goals for you. They will often do this in ignorance of your own desires and ambitions.

Achieving Goals

It's also possible to set goals that are too difficult because you might not appreciate either the obstacles in the way, or understand quite how much skill you need to develop to achieve a particular level of performance.

When you've achieved a goal, take the time to enjoy the satisfaction of having done so. Absorb the implications of the goal achievement, and observe the progress that you've made towards other goals.

If the goal was a significant one, reward yourself appropriately. All of this helps you build the self-confidence you deserve.

With the experience of having achieved this goal, review the rest of your goal plans:

- If you achieved the goal too easily, make your next goal harder.
- If the goal took a dispiriting length of time to achieve, make the next goal a little easier.
- If you learned something that would lead you to change other goals, do so.
- If you noticed a deficit in your skills despite achieving the goal, decide whether to set goals to fix this.

Feed lessons learned back into your goal setting. Remember too that your goals will change as time goes on. Adjust them regularly to reflect growth in your knowledge and experience, and if goals do not hold any attraction any longer, consider letting them go.

Goal Setting Example

For her New Year's Resolution, Susan has decided to think about what she really wants to do with her life.

Her lifetime goals are as follows:

- ❖ **Career** - "To be managing editor of the magazine that I work for."
- ❖ **Artistic** - "To keep working on my illustration skills. Ultimately I want to have my own show in our downtown gallery."
- ❖ **Physical** - "To run a marathon."

Now that Susan has listed her lifetime goals, she then breaks down each one into smaller, more manageable goals.

Let's take a closer look at how she might break down her lifetime career goal - becoming managing editor of her magazine:

- ❖ **Five-year goal:** "Become deputy editor."
- ❖ **One-year goal:** "Volunteer for projects that the current Managing Editor is heading up."
- ❖ **Six-month goal:** "Go back to school and finish my journalism degree."
- ❖ **One-month goal:** "Talk to the current managing editor to determine what skills are needed to do the job."
- ❖ **One-week goal:** "Book the meeting with the Managing Editor."

As you can see from this example, breaking big goals down into smaller, more manageable goals makes it far easier to see how the goal will get accomplished".

Self Reflection

Myrko Thum (n.d) describes Self Reflection as “the way to remove inner road-blocks, to first become aware of the things that really holding me back and then tackle them by finding a solution”.

He provides the following Advise:

“1. Get into the right state and environment

To be effective with Self-Reflection it is good to get into a suitable mental state and environment. Firstly it is helpful to have all of our attention at the process, so don't be distracted by maybe having the TV turned on etc. It is best if you don't have anything else on your mind. You don't want to get interrupted either.

2. Ask the right questions

I usually start by asking myself the question that is on my mind, the question that expresses an inner conflict. It is something that has a continuing influence on me, where I am not satisfied with and want to change.

By asking a good question you give your brain something to work on. It will try to find a good explanation to it, starting the process of Self-Reflection. So it is crucial to ask the right question here, the one that expresses your topic. Good questions are always the ones that bring your topic to the point by asking “How can I ...”. Usually questions starting with “Why ...” are not very effective. By asking Why-Questions you will get answers why it is that way. But you want to improve here, that's why a How-Question is more solution-oriented and therefore usually much more empowering.

3. Be 100% truthful

When thinking about your question, answer it to the best degree of truth you can. Break out of social conditioning and of beliefs and things that other people put onto you. If you really ask yourself, you usually can find a much deeper answer to questions. Being truthful to yourself is the key, without this you won't get very far. Of course, this truth may be unpleasant or even scary. But let me tell you something: Nothing will get better, until you tell yourself the truth. Nothing can really change. You can delude yourself for a while, but life finds always a way to show to you if you are off course. The power lies within telling yourself the truth and then act from there.

4. Attain clarity: Analyze the situation by writing and coming to a solution

That's the whole idea of reflecting: getting to the core of the matter and by that getting an "Aha-Moment". This is a realization of a new quality, an insight that came out of the reflection-process, something that you have not seen before and that gives you a better perspective on the topic. Here the solution can be found.

Often this process involves several steps: maybe you come from your first question to another, deeper question. Don't lose sight of the original personal question you wanted to answer for yourself. Otherwise you could drift into different topics, getting overwhelmed and finally getting nowhere really. So stay focused on the question and expect to find an answer to it. This is a critical skill in analyzing in general.

You are not finished until you found a solution that really satisfies you, that is the best solution for your current situation. Yes, maybe it is not the solution that solves all the problems at once. But it is the best way given the current circumstances to go on.

5. Make a decision and commit to it

If you found a good answer to your initial question you now have the power to work from this new knowledge and really make a very positive and pleasing change. The realization alone will have a very positive impact. Maybe it means you have to stop something, or to intensify something. Whatever it is, to use this self-attained knowledge is the key now. So you make the conclusion and make a decision. Commit to the decision, which should be pretty straight-forward since it is in harmony with the answer you got to your question during Self-Reflection.

Reflection vs. Action

I want to close this post by a quote from Johann Wolfgang von Goethe who said: "Never by reflection, but only by doing is self-knowledge possible to one." While this first seems like a contradiction to the process of Self-Reflection, it is not. The reason to do Self-Reflection is to be more effective in the doing. As I described I see it as cleaning my inner space, getting an answer and then using this knowledge, testing it in reality by doing. Maybe I get a better answer or even a better question later, but I made real progress along the way".

WEEK TWO

Learning styles

personal preferences; activist; pragmatist; theorist; reflector, eg reflexive modernisation theory; Kolb's learning cycle

Learning-Styles-Online.com provides the following;

Overview of Learning Styles

“Many people recognize that each person prefers different learning styles and techniques. Learning styles group common ways that people learn. Everyone has a mix of learning styles. Some people may find that they have a dominant style of learning, with far less use of the other styles. Others may find that they use different styles in different circumstances. There is no right mix. Nor are your styles fixed. You can develop ability in less dominant styles, as well as further develop styles that you already use well.

Using multiple learning styles and multiple intelligences for learning is a relatively new approach. This approach is one that educators have only recently started to recognize. Traditional schooling used (and continues to use) mainly linguistic and logical teaching methods. It also uses a limited range of learning and teaching techniques. Many schools still rely on classroom and book-based teaching, much repetition, and pressured exams for reinforcement and review. A result is that we often label those who use these learning styles and techniques as bright. Those who use less favored learning styles often find themselves in lower classes, with various not-so-complimentary labels and sometimes lower quality teaching. This can create positive and negative spirals that reinforce the belief that one is "smart" or "dumb". By recognizing and understanding your own learning styles, you can use techniques better suited to you. This improves the speed and quality of your learning.

The Seven Learning Styles

1. **Visual (spatial):** You prefer using pictures, images, and spatial understanding.
2. **Aural (auditory-musical):** You prefer using sound and music.
3. **Verbal (linguistic):** You prefer using words, both in speech and writing.
4. **Physical (kinesthetic):** You prefer using your body, hands and sense of touch.
5. **Logical (mathematical):** You prefer using logic, reasoning and systems.
6. **Social (interpersonal):** You prefer to learn in groups or with other people.
7. **Solitary (intrapersonal):** You prefer to work alone and use self-study.

Kolb's Learning Cycle

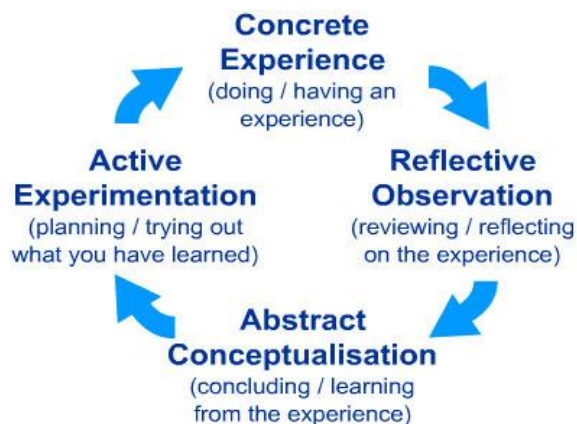
"Learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience." (Saul M., 2013 citing David A. Kolb, 1984)

(Saul, M 2013) provides the following on Kolb's Learning Cycle;

"Kolb's experiential learning style theory is typically represented by a four stage learning cycle in which the learner 'touches all the bases':

The Experiential Learning Cycle

1. Concrete Experience - (a new experience of situation is encountered, or a reinterpretation of existing experience).
2. Reflective Observation (of the new experience. Of particular importance are any inconsistencies between experience and understanding).
3. Abstract Conceptualization (Reflection gives rise to a new idea, or a modification of an existing abstract concept).
4. Active Experimentation (the learner applies them to the world around them to see what results).



Effective learning is seen when a person progresses through a cycle of four stages of:

- (1) having a concrete experience followed by
- (2) observation of and reflection on that experience which leads to
- (3) the formation of abstract concepts (analysis) and generalizations (conclusions) which are then
- (4) used to test hypothesis in future situations, resulting in new experiences.

Kolb (1975) views learning as an integrated process with each stage being mutually supportive of and feeding into the next. It is possible to enter the cycle at any stage and follow it through its logical sequence.

However, effective learning only occurs when a learner is able to execute all four stages of the model. Therefore, no one stage of the cycle is an effective as a learning procedure on its own.

Here are brief descriptions of the Four Kolb learning styles:

Diverging (feeling and watching - CE/RO)

These people are able to look at things from different perspectives. They are sensitive. They prefer to watch rather than do, tending to gather information and use imagination to solve problems. They are best at viewing concrete situations several different viewpoints.

Kolb called this style 'diverging' because these people perform better in situations that require ideas-generation, for example, brainstorming. People with a diverging learning style have broad cultural interests and like to gather information. They are interested in people, tend to be imaginative and emotional, and tend to be strong in the arts. People with the diverging style prefer to work in groups, to listen with an open mind and to receive personal feedback.

Assimilating (watching and thinking - AC/RO)

The Assimilating learning preference is for a concise, logical approach. Ideas and concepts are more important than people. These people require good clear explanation rather than practical opportunity. They excel at understanding wide-ranging information and organizing it a clear logical format.

People with an assimilating learning style are less focused on people and more interested in ideas and abstract concepts. People with this style are more attracted to logically sound theories than approaches based on practical value.

In formal learning situations, people with this style prefer readings, lectures, exploring analytical models, and having time to think things through.

Converging (doing and thinking - AC/AE)

People with a converging learning style can solve problems and will use their learning to find solutions to practical issues. They prefer technical tasks, and are less concerned with people and interpersonal aspects. People with a converging learning style are best at finding practical uses for ideas and theories. They can solve problems and make decisions by finding solutions to questions and problems.

People with a converging learning style are more attracted to technical tasks and problems than social or interpersonal issues. A converging learning style enables specialist and technology abilities. People with a converging style like to experiment with new ideas, to simulate, and to work with practical applications.

Accommodating (doing and feeling - CE/AE)

The Accommodating learning style is 'hands-on', and relies on intuition rather than logic. These people use other people's analysis, and prefer to take a practical, experiential approach. They are attracted to new challenges and experiences, and to carrying out plans. They commonly act on 'gut' instinct rather than logical analysis. People with an accommodating learning style will tend to rely on others for information than carry out their own analysis. This learning style is prevalent within the general population”.

Businessballs.com discusses the following;

“Various resources (including this one in the past) refer to the terms 'activist', 'reflector', 'theorist', and 'pragmatist' (respectively representing the four key stages or learning steps) in seeking to explain Kolb's model. In fact, 'activist', 'reflector', 'theorist', and 'pragmatist' are from a learning styles model developed by Honey and Mumford, which although based on Kolb's work, is different. Arguably therefore the terms 'activist', 'reflector', 'theorist', and 'pragmatist' effectively 'belong' to the Honey and Mumford theory.

Honey and Mumford's variation on the kolb system

Peter Honey and Alan Mumford developed their learning styles system as a variation on the Kolb model while working on a project for the Chloride corporation in the 1970's.

Honey and Mumford say of their system:

"Our description of the stages in the learning cycle originated from the work of David Kolb. Kolb uses different words to describe the stages of the learning cycle and four learning styles..."

And, "...The similarities between his model and ours are greater than the differences.."
(Honey & Mumford)

In summary here are brief descriptions of the four H&M key stages/styles, which incidentally are directly mutually corresponding and overlaid, as distinct from the Kolb model in which the learning styles are a product of combinations of the learning cycle stages.

'Having an Experience' (stage 1), and Activists (style 1): 'here and now', gregarious, seek challenge and immediate experience, open-minded, bored with implementation.

'Reviewing the Experience' (stage 2) and Reflectors (style 2): 'stand back', gather data, ponder and analyse, delay reaching conclusions, listen before speaking, thoughtful.

'Concluding from the Experience' (stage 3) and Theorists (style 3): think things through in logical steps, assimilate disparate facts into coherent theories, rationally objective, reject subjectivity and flippancy.

'Planning the next steps' (stage 4) and Pragmatists (style 4): seek and try out new ideas, practical, down-to-earth, enjoy problem solving and decision-making quickly, bored with long discussions.

There is arguably a strong similarity between the Honey and Mumford styles/stages and the corresponding Kolb learning styles:

Activist = Accommodating

Reflector = Diverging

Theorist = Assimilating

Pragmatist = Converging"

WEEK THREE – WEEK SEVEN

Approaches: learning through research; learning from others, eg mentoring/coaching, seminars, conferences, secondments, interviews, use of the internet, social networks, use of bulletin boards, news groups

Effective learning: skills of personal assessment; planning, organisation and evaluation

Lifelong learning: self-directed learning; continuing professional development; linking higher education with industry, further education, Recognition of Prior Learning, Apprenticeships, Credit Accumulation and Transfer Schemes

Assessment of learning: improved ability range with personal learning; evidence of improved levels of skill; feedback from others; learning achievements and disappointments

WEEK THREE

Approaches to Learning

1. Learning through research

Learning through research as an example of self-managed learning

- ✚ "Learning through research" encompasses understanding of learning, in which the learner determines, tests and reflects own learning goals in a self-managed and self-responsible way.
- ✚ "Learning through research" is realised through individual work
 - work in autonomous learning groups
 - co-operation in research projects

The method of "learning through research" makes possible,

- ✚ that older people select and work on forgotten or unexploited research subjects or draw attention to not yet researched facts
- ✚ that older students' attitudes and their professional and life experiences are considered in the design of research projects
- ✚ to learn about ageing and about social issues and at the same time about the way how ageing and social issues are researched
- ✚ The tasks of the teachers are those of a teaching moderator, they consist in the initiation of project groups and their accompaniment from search for a subject through to documentation of results.
- ✚ The new information and communication technologies can strengthen self-determination as well as the independent research work of the learners.
- ✚ At the University of Ulm, in context of scientific continuing education of older people, there are currently 18 project groups consisting of 6-15 senior students each, working in the way of "learning through research" on subjects of their choice from the areas of medicine, natural and social sciences, economy, humanities and informatics.

Learning from others

Mentoring

"Mentoring is to support and encourage people to manage their own learning in order that they may maximise their potential, develop their skills, improve their performance and become the person they want to be." (Mentorset,(n.d.) quoting Eric Parsloe, The Oxford School of Coaching & Mentoring)

According to MentorSet

"Mentoring is a powerful personal development and empowerment tool. It is an effective way of helping people to progress in their careers and is becoming increasingly popular as its potential is realised. It is a partnership between two people (mentor and mentee) normally working in a similar field or sharing similar experiences. It is a helpful relationship based upon mutual trust and respect.

A mentor is a guide who can help the mentee to find the right direction and who can help them to develop solutions to career issues. Mentors rely upon having had similar experiences to gain an empathy with the mentee and an understanding of their issues. Mentoring provides the mentee with an opportunity to think about career options and progress.

A mentor should help the mentee to believe in herself and boost her confidence. A mentor should ask questions and challenge, while providing guidance and encouragement. Mentoring allows the mentee to explore new ideas in confidence. It is a chance to look more closely at yourself, your issues, opportunities and what you want in life. Mentoring is about becoming more self aware, taking responsibility for your life and directing your life in the direction you decide, rather than leaving it to chance."

Coaching

Effective Coaching in the Workplace

Prysdale Partners, describes the need for Effective Coaching in the Workplace. They write;

“The term coaching has been around in business for much of the last decade, and yet still has varied interpretations. Simply defined, coaching is one person guiding another through a process, leading to performance enhancement. The applications can vary... support to achieve a specific project, helping an individual to do better what they already do well, or developing a skill they don't yet possess.

What is Coaching?

Coaching focuses on future possibilities and utilises learning from past experiences. Coaching is more about how things are done, rather than what things are done. It is about unlocking a person's potential and maximising their performance. It is about helping people to discover answers for themselves rather than advising.

Coaching works on resolving problems below the level where they occur. For example, beliefs and values drive behaviours and beliefs and values come from our identity. Therefore, working with a problem that manifests itself at the level of behaviour, means the coach working with you at the level of beliefs and values. It is like peeling away the top layers of an onion to discover that the problem lies at the core. Coaching done well is about working at the core, which resolves not only the presenting problem but also problems which at the time are not even manifesting themselves yet.

Coaching is about building a relationship which is based on choices rather than advice. For Prydale, coaching is holistic, it takes into account the whole person and the complete range of issues which require resolution or improvement. Coaching is a way of thinking, a way of being, and a way of accelerating development.

Why should organisations use coaching?

Coaching is a lever for unleashing potential! A tool for unlocking performance! An approach to change! It can be used to enhance the performance of the coachees

beyond their dreams. Once that performance is unleashed, that automatically means change in thinking, doing and acting.

Many successful companies today are going through continuous change, which results in greater ownership for employees. They take responsibility for their own functions, which opens their thinking to new and more effective ways of working. In companies such as IBM and Federal Express, for example, coaching supports new thinking, which leads to a continuous improvement change process.

Focused coaching can and does improve performance in individuals, teams and the organisation itself. Over the last three years there has been widespread growth of interest in one to one coaching, with individuals recognising the benefits that this approach can bring to their own performance and success.

When can coaching be used?

Taking into account the philosophies outlined above, coaching can be used in many situations, including:

- Motivating staff
- Building teams
- Performance enhancement
- Building relationships
- Resolving personal issues
- Developing individuals
- Accelerating/enhancing learning”

Seminars

Ehow provides the The Objectives of Seminars for Profit Organizations as follow;

The Objectives of Seminars for Profit Organizations

“Seminars cover topics essential to running a successful organization. Topics are often presented by field experts. A wide variety of skills can be learned by attending seminars. Financial reporting, marketing, human resource guidelines, software use and

management skills are common topics presented at seminars. Seminars are an excellent learning tool and management resource.”

Business Management

Business management is a common seminar objective. Seminars are conducted to teach basic management skills. Financial recording, marketing, employee relations and business law are presented. A business management seminar is designed to give you an overview of the tools needed to run a successful organization.

Marketing

Marketing seminars teach the skills needed for successful marketing. Direct marketing and advertising skills are presented. Attendance at a marketing seminar will teach you how to reach out to potential customers.

Financial

Seminars are available to teach you the basic financial skills needed to run a profitable organization. Accounting requirements, investments and business tax laws are common topics of financial seminars. Attending seminars will keep you up to date with changes in financial reporting laws.

Software

Seminars are available to teach you how to use a particular software program. Software users will gain the tools needed to efficiently use the software in place at your organization. Learning how to use a particular program is valuable for all employees. Software seminars are often conducted by the provider of the program.

Conferences

Wikipedia provides the following definition;

“A professional conference is a meeting of professionals in a given subject or profession, dealing with organizational matters, matters concerning the status of the profession, and scientific or technical developments. It differs from an academic conference in having broader goals, and usually a much broader attendance. they are normally sponsored by the professional society in the field, and usually are organized

on a national basis. Some are international, usually organized by federations or groups of the national societies in a subject, such as the conferences held by the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA). Some are local, normally by state, province, or other local sections of a national body. They are often held annually, or on some other recurring basis. Some of the largest societies hold more than one a year. Others are held as a one time event, and are usually devoted to a specific topic.”

Secondments

According to Dr. Catherine Armstrong;

What is secondment?

“Many people do not realise that it is possible to explore different career possibilities by temporarily changing roles within the same company. This is often known as ‘going on secondment’ and is especially prevalent in the commercial sector where companies are adept at making the best use of the various skills and interests of their staff. However, some public sector bodies, including universities, do operate secondment systems, although this does not really apply to academic staff, who have been employed because they are an expert in a particular field.

The change could last any length of time and could lead to new employment opportunities for the person concerned. The terms of each secondment scheme vary, in some cases it is only open to those in full time permanent employment, although other schemes offer this to contracted and part time staff members too.

Why go on secondment?

There are various advantages to taking up a secondment posting. Perhaps the salary and working conditions on offer are better than those in your current role, but more likely the change is one of improving your career chances by developing your CV. It is not necessary to change jobs completely in order to maximise these sorts of opportunity, so secondment offers members of staff who are happy in their current company or workplace the chance to try something new.

This is exactly how Chris Halvorsen saw the process. She is a data analyst at Ernst and Young in London and she said 'staying within the company was a desirable step, as I have found the culture and atmosphere very good. The move to the Global branch of the company will provide a unique opportunity to learn about the different working practices and organisational structure. In the longer term, the secondment will hopefully demonstrate my flexibility and adaptability as an employee, and open up other opportunities. It is a fantastic way to meet people in other areas. The secondment is for a period of 3 months, and provides a huge challenge, both personally and professionally.'

”

Interviews

“Job interviews are always stressful - even for job seekers who have gone on countless interviews. The best way to reduce the stress is to be prepared. Take the time to review common interview questions you will most likely be asked. Also, review sample answers and advice on how to answer these typical interview questions” at

<http://jobsearch.about.com/od/interviewquestionsanswers/a/interviewquest.htm>

Social Networks

The website Mashable provides the following;

“A social networking service is an online service, platform, or site that focuses on facilitating the building of social networks or social relations among people who, for example, share interests, activities, backgrounds, or real-life connections. A social network service consists of a representation of each user (often a profile), his/her social links, and a variety of additional services. Most social network services are web-based and provide means for users to interact over the Internet, such as e-mail and instant messaging. Online community services are sometimes considered as a social network service, though in a broader sense, social network service usually means an individual-centered service whereas online community services are group-centered. Social networking sites allow users to share ideas, activities, events, and interests within their individual networks.”

Bulletin Boards

The website Employment Law Weekly provides the following;

“Employers commonly use bulletin boards as a means of posting information for employees, and as a place where employees can post information. Bulletin boards are typically located in lunch/break areas in the workplace. An employer is not required to have a bulletin board, although some union contracts require bulletin board space for use by the union. Employers should address the use of bulletin boards in the employee handbook, and in particular should require that items posted on the bulletin board are approved prior to posting by a supervisor to ensure that discriminatory/harassing/inappropriate items are not posted. In addition, employers/supervisors should check bulletin boards on a regular basis to ensure that inappropriate/unlawful items have not been posted.”

News Groups

The website Inc. provides the following;

“Newsgroups are online discussion groups that deal with a variety of topics. A common analogy used to describe newsgroups is online bulletin boards.....newsgroups can be active forums for the exchange of ideas and information, providing a small business with opportunities for networking, learning more about the industry and competition, and marketing and sales possibilities. Newsgroups also tend to be noncommercial (although commercial newsgroups do exist), so it is crucial that participants become aware of a group's purpose, makeup, and rules of etiquette.

Newsgroups are both moderated and unmoderated. A moderated newsgroup is monitored by an administrator who may screen posts to the group, on the basis of appropriateness of content.”

WEEK FOUR

Effective Learning

Self-Evaluation

The following is an excerpt from NDT Resource Centre

“In order to become lifelong learners, students need to learn the importance of self-evaluation. They can do this by filling out self-evaluation forms, journalizing, taking tests, writing revisions of work, asking questions, and through discussions. When students evaluate themselves, they are assessing what they know, do not know, and what they would like to know. They begin to recognize their own strengths and weaknesses. They become more familiar with their own beliefs, and possibly their misconceptions. After they self-evaluate they will be able to set goals that they feel they can attain with the new knowledge they have about themselves.

Teachers should encourage self-evaluation because self-assessment makes the students active participants in their education (Sloan, 1996). There are a variety of ways for teachers to provide the students with self-assessments. Research suggests that the simplest tools to encourage student self-assessment are evaluative questions that force students to think about their work (Hart, 1999). Some examples of these questions include the following:

1. How much time and effort did you put into this?
2. What do you think your strengths and weaknesses were in this assignment?
3. How could you improve your assignment?
4. What are the most valuable things you learned from this assignment?

It is important for teachers to model self-assessment too. Teachers need to show their students that it is important for everybody to self-evaluate by doing their own self-evaluations. One thing teachers can do is to ask their students for feedback on how the class is going and what the teacher is doing well and not so well. In this way the teacher is showing that they want to make improvements where needed. Teachers could put up a suggestion box, and they can hand out evaluation forms at different times of the year. This shows the students that continuous improvement is important.”

Assessing Your Skills

What Makes You Different from All the Others?

According to Carole Martin, Monster Contributing Writer,

“Gina had recently been laid off after working as a marketing manager in a high tech company for the past five years. She was distracted as she walked through the aisles of the supermarket. She was thinking about ways to market herself into a new job. She stood in front of the cereal selection, overwhelmed by the number of brands to choose from -- more than 100 varieties.

Suddenly, it dawned on her: This must be what it's like for hiring managers to look at all those resumes received in answer to ads and postings. How do they choose? What do they look for? How does one get selected? How can I make my product stand out?

The Packaging

The packaging on the cereal box is certainly the start. Eye-catching colors and descriptive words will draw attention -- low fat, energy boosting, added vitamins -- all the things consumers are looking for. But what are employers looking for? The words you choose will be key. Using words that will interest the companies will grab their attention.

The Ingredients

The list of ingredients -- the skills you have to offer -- is also important. Gina couldn't wait to get home and write down her skills and what made her unique to the position. She had a new slant to explore.

She remembered reading in a book that skills can be grouped into three categories:

- Skills learned through past experience and education (knowledge-based skills).
- Skills you bring with you to any job (transferable or portable skills).
- Personal traits, the things that make you who you are.

The Assessment Tool

Gina divided a piece of paper into three columns and labeled them with "previous experience," "portable skills" and "personality," the three P's of marketing.

In the "previous experience" column she wrote:

- Marketing knowledge
- Communications skills
- Vendor management
- Press and industry relations
- Web channel marketing
- Product development
- Computer skills

Under "portable skills" she wrote:

- Customer focus
- Communications
- Writing skills
- Very organized
- Good at coordinating
- Team leader
- Problem solving
- Project management
- Excellent follow-through
- Good with budgets and numbers
- Time management

In the "personality column" she wrote:

- Self-starter
- Independent
- Friendly
- Well-organized
- Quick learner
- Good judgment
- Good attitude
- Creative
- Analytical
- Flexible

- Good sense of humor
- Goal-directed

When she was finished, she sat back and checked the list over. She was surprised at how easily the list had come together. By dividing the skills, the task became manageable. Trying to look at everything at once is like looking at those cereal boxes.

Getting words on paper is one of the most difficult steps of putting your "ingredients" list together. This is a good exercise for anyone beginning the search process, or as a periodic check or inventory. Gina can now use the list to put together her resume, write a summary statement or compose a personal statement. The skills will be the foundation of the strategy she will use to sell herself. She still has some work to do before she can take her product to market, but she certainly has made a good start.”

Personal and key skills: self-assessment

“Personal and key skills can be seen as the building blocks that underpin your learning in different situations and that allow you to adapt and apply what you’ve learned to other contexts. We all possess such skills – but it’s inevitable that some will be more in evidence than others. “

Click on the link below and have a go at this audit to identify where your strengths and weaknesses lie, and to help you identify where you give to justify your rating?

http://www.exeter.ac.uk/media/level1/academicserviceswebsite/studentandstaffdevelopment/documents/pdp/Personal_and_Key_Skills_Self_Assessment_Audit.pdf

WEEK FIVE

Self-direction in adult learning

The PRO model: a framework for understanding self-direction in adult learning

a conceptual framework for understanding self-direction in adult learning. In this chapter from *Self-Direction in Adult Learning* (1991), Ralph G. Brockett and Roger Hiemstra argue that self-direction in learning refers to two distinct but related dimensions:

- as an instructional process where a learner assumes primary responsibility for the learning process; and
- as a personality characteristic centering on a learner's desire or preference for assuming responsibility for learning.

The idea of self-direction in learning is viewed as comprising both

1. instructional method processes (self-directed learning) and
2. personality characteristics of the individual (learner self-direction),

it is important to consider how these two dimensions are related. As a way of illustrating this relationship, we propose a model that distinguishes between these two dimensions while at the same time, recognizing that the two dimensions are inextricably linked to a broader view of self-direction. This model, which we refer to as the "Personal Responsibility Orientation" (PRO) model of self-direction in adult learning is designed to recognize both the differences and similarities between self-directed learning as an instructional method and learner self-direction as a personality characteristic. The model is not only intended to serve as a way of better understanding self-direction, it can also serve as a framework for building future theory, research, and practice. The major components of the PRO model, illustrated in Figure 2.1, are outlined below.

Figure 2.1:

The "Personal Responsibility Orientation" (PRO) Model



Personal Responsibility as a Central Concept.

As can be seen in Figure 2.1, the point of departure for understanding self-direction in adult learning, according to the PRO model, is the notion of personal responsibility.

- By personal responsibility we mean that individuals assume ownership for their own thoughts and actions. Personal responsibility does not necessarily mean control over personal life circumstances or environment. However, it does mean that a person has control over how to respond to a situation.

As summarized by Elias and Merriam (1980), behavior "is the consequence of human choice which individuals can freely exercise" (p. 118). For instance, oppressed people typically lack control over their social environment; however, they can choose how they will respond to the environment. They can resign themselves to accepting the status quo or they can choose to act in a way designed to alter the current situation. In the latter case, while the outcome may not always be what is desired, the decision to act in a certain way reflects a choice not to willingly accept "the way things are."

- Personal Responsibility within the context of learning, is the ability and/or willingness of individuals to take control of their own learning that determines their potential for self-direction.

Drawing largely on assumptions of humanistic philosophy, we base this emphasis on personal responsibility on two ideas. First, we embrace the view that human nature is basically good and that individuals possess virtually unlimited potential for growth. Second, we believe that only by accepting responsibility for one's own learning is it possible to take a proactive approach to the learning process. These assumptions imply a great deal of faith and trust in the learner and, thus, offer a foundation for the notion of personal responsibility relative to learning.

Perhaps another way of understanding what we mean by personal responsibility can be found in the idea of autonomy, as discussed by Chene, who provides the following perspective: "Autonomy means that one can and does set one's own rules, and can choose for oneself the norms one will respect. In other words, autonomy refers to one's

ability to choose what has value, that is to say, to make choices in harmony with self-realization." (1983, p. 39)

Autonomy, as defined above, assumes that one will take personal responsibility, because one is independent "from all exterior regulations and constraints" (Chene, 1983, p. 39).

While we envision personal responsibility as the cornerstone of self-direction in learning, it is important to stress three related points.

1. First, while we emphasize our commitment to the view that human potential is unlimited, we believe that each individual assumes some degree of personal responsibility. It is not an either/or characteristic. Thus, adult learners will possess different degrees of willingness to accept responsibility for themselves as learners. It is a misconception to assume that learners necessarily enter a learning experience with a high level of self-direction already intact. Self-direction is not a panacea for all problems associated with adult learning. Nor is it always necessary for one to be highly self-directed in order to be a successful learner. However, if being able to assume greater control for one's destiny is a desirable goal of adult education (and we believe it is!), then a role for educators of adults is to help learners become increasingly able to assume personal responsibility for their own learning.
2. Second, the emphasis on personal responsibility as the cornerstone of self-direction in learning implies that the primary focus of the learning process is on the individual, as opposed to the larger society. Yet, accepting responsibility for one's actions as a learner does not ignore the social context in which the learning takes place. Such a view would be extremely short sighted. What personal responsibility does mean, however, is that the point of departure for understanding learning lies within the individual. Once this individual dimension is recognized, it is then important to examine the social dimensions that impact upon the learning process. And related to this point is a belief that one who assumes personal responsibility as an individual is in a stronger position to also be more socially responsible.

3. Finally, it is important to point out that in taking responsibility for one's thoughts and actions, one also assumes responsibility for the consequences of those actions. As Rogers (1961, p. 171) has stated, to be "self-directing means that one chooses--and then learns from the consequences." Within the context of adult education, Day (1988) has used fictional literature to illustrate this point. Drawing from the works *Oedipus Rex*, *Martin Eden*, *Pygmalion*, and *Educating Rita*, Day argues that adults are "decision-making beings" who are "ultimately responsible" for the decisions they make, that the "results of our learning experiences may as likely lead to discontent as to a state of well-being," and that in general "learning produces consequences" (p. 125).

In conclusion, the notion of personal responsibility, as we are using it in the PRO model, means that learners have choices about the directions they pursue as learners. Along with this goes a responsibility for accepting the consequences of one's thoughts and actions as a learner.

Self-Directed Learning: The Process Orientation.

Self-directed learning, as we have come to view the term, refers to an instructional method.

- It is a process that centers on the activities of planning, implementing, and evaluating learning.

Most of the writings and research on self-directed and self-planned learning from the early and mid-1970s were developed from this perspective (e.g., Knowles, 1975; Tough, 1979). Similarly, the definitions of self-directed learning that we have used previously (Hiemstra, 1976a; Brockett, 1983a) stress this process orientation.

The process orientation of self-direction in adult learning focuses on characteristics of the teaching-learning transaction. Thus, when considering this aspect of self-direction, concern revolves around factors external to the individual.

- Needs assessment,
- evaluation, learning resources,
- facilitator roles and skills,

- and independent study

are a few of the concepts that fall within the domain of the self-directed learning process. The illustrations compiled in recent books by Knowles and Associates (1984) and Brookfield (1985) exemplify this concept of self-directed learning as an instructional process in such areas as human resource development, continuing professional education, graduate and undergraduate study, and community education.

Learner Self-Direction: The Personal Orientation.

While most of the work that has been seminal to the foundation of self-direction in learning has focused on the process orientation described above, the importance of understanding characteristics of successful self-directed learners has generally been stressed as well. For instance, Knowles (1970) identified several assumptions underlying the concept of andragogy as a model for helping adults learn. The first of these assumptions was that the self-concept of adult learners is characterized by self-direction, whereas dependence characterizes the self-concept of the child. Knowles (1980) later revised his view of pedagogy and andragogy from a dichotomy to a continuum. However, his emphasis on self-concept reflects the centrality of personality as an element of self-direction in learning. This emphasis on personality characteristics of the learner, or factors internal to the individual, is what we refer to as the "personal orientation" or learner self-direction.

Thus, in our view, learner self-direction refers to characteristics of an individual that predispose one toward taking primary responsibility for personal learning endeavors. Conceptually, the notion of learner self-direction grows largely from ideas addressed by Rogers (1961, 1983), Maslow (1970), and other writers from the area of humanistic psychology. Evidence of this personal orientation can be found in much of the research on self-direction in adult learning since the late 1970s. For instance, self-directedness has been studied in relation to such variables as creativity (Torrance & Mourad, 1978), self-concept (Sabbaghian, 1980), life satisfaction (Brockett 1983c, 1985a), intellectual development (Shaw, 1987), and hemisphericity (Blackwood, 1988). Learner self-direction among other works.

Self-Direction in Learning: The Vital Link.

As we pointed out earlier, self-direction in learning is a term that we use as an umbrella concept to recognize both external factors that facilitate the learner taking primary responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating learning, and internal factors or personality characteristics that predispose one toward accepting responsibility for one's thoughts and actions as a learner. The PRO model illustrates this distinction between external and internal forces. At the same time it recognizes, through the notion of personal responsibility, that there is a strong connection between self-directed learning and learner self-direction. This connection provides a key to understanding the success of self-direction in a given learning context.

We suggest that optimal conditions for learning result when there is a balance or congruence between the learner's level of self-direction and the extent to which opportunity for self-directed learning is possible in a given situation. If, for example, one is predisposed toward a high level of self-directedness and is engaged in a learning experience where self-direction is actively facilitated, chances for success are high.

Similarly, the learner who is not as high in self-directedness is likely to find comfort and, in all likelihood, a greater chance of success in a situation where the instructor assumes a more directive role. In both instances, the chances for success are relatively high, since the learner's expectations are congruent with the conditions of the learning situation.

Where difficulties and frustrations arise is when the balance between internal characteristics of the learner is not in harmony with external characteristics of the teaching-learning transaction. Individuals who enter a learning situation with a clear idea of how and what they wish to learn are likely to become frustrated and disenchanted if not given the freedom to pursue these directions. In the same vein, the learner who seeks a high level of guidance and direction will probably have similar feelings in a situation where the facilitator emphasizes an active leadership role by the learners. For individuals in either situation, the problem is that the teaching-learning situation is not in harmony with the needs and desires the learner brought to the situation. This does not mean that the learner was "unsuccessful," nor that the facilitator was "ineffective."

Rather, it suggests that success and effectiveness are relative terms that depend on clear communication of needs and expectations among all parties engaged in the teaching-learning transaction.

The notion of learner self-direction, as an element of the PRO model, suggests a general tendency that exists to a greater or lesser degree in all learners. However, it is important to recognize that situational factors are often likely to impact on the type of instructional method a learner will seek. An adult who seeks to learn about current trends in real estate, for example, may be willing to relinquish control over the learning situation to the session leader for reasons of expedience or because of a personal lack of knowledge and experience in the real estate area. This does not diminish the learner's level of self-direction; indeed, the decision to relinquish a degree of control was consciously made by the learner.

The Social Context for Self-Direction in Learning.

The final element of the PRO model is represented by the circle encompassing the other elements. One of the most frequent criticisms of self-direction in learning has been an overemphasis on the individual, which is usually accompanied a failure to consider the social context in which learning takes place. Brookfield (1984c), for example, has suggested that by "concentrating attention on the features of individual learner control over the planning, conduct and evaluation of learning, the importance of learning networks and informal learning exchanges has been forgotten" (p. 67). In the PRO model, the individual learner is, in fact, central to the idea of self-direction. However, such learning activities cannot be divorced from the social context in which they occur. We agree with Brookfield that social context is vital to understanding self-direction and that, to date, this concern has largely been overlooked. Brookfield's (1981) own research, in which he found that "independent adult learners" often function as a "fellowship of learning" is a noteworthy exception to this gap in knowledge. One of the myths of self-direction identified in Chapter One is that such learning takes place in isolation. In order to truly understand the impact of self-direction, both as an instructional method and as a personality characteristic, it is crucial to recognize the social milieu in which such activity transpires.

Related to the social context are the political implications of self-direction in learning. Again, Brookfield (1984c) has helped to raise consciousness about the politics of self-direction. This, in turn, triggered the following response: "Brookfield's comments are most insightful, for they force us to ponder the real consequences of situations where learners are truly in control of their learning. . . . many individuals, especially those who can be considered "hard-to-reach", may believe that formal educational settings can reinforce conformity while stifling creativity. For such persons, institutions may be perceived as antithetical to the self-directed learning process. On a larger scale, these issues are amplified in situations where individuals view themselves as powerless in determining the direction of their lives. What are the potential consequences. . . of promoting self-direction in societies where individual human rights may be in question? Clearly, the issue of control is a crucial one because, ultimately, it must move beyond the individual dimension into the social and political arenas." (Brockett, 1985c, p. 58)

Thus, while the individual is the "starting point" for understanding self-direction in adult learning, the social context provides the arena in which the activity of self-direction is played out. In order for us to truly understand the phenomenon of self-direction in adult learning, it will be crucial to recognize and deal with the interface between these individual and social dimensions.

WEEK SIX

Continuing Education

Continuing education is any training or classes that one takes after completing formal education. Continuing education can be college classes taken after completing a formal degree program or seminars and training taken to improve one's job skills. Many professions require that members of their profession continue learning new and changing skills to retain their credentials or even licenses. For example Certified Public Accountants in most states are required to take continuing education hours every year to keep their licenses current. In Nigeria the Teachers Registration Council Law requires all certified teachers to participate in approved continuing education courses as a condition of periodic renewal of registration.

Continuing education includes formal and informal training. Workers may earn college degrees through formal programs, concentrate on professional development courses aimed at personal enrichment in informal surroundings, or participate in programs that include both formal and informal elements. Generally, continuing education refers to classes and seminars that focus on job-related skills and knowledge.

The Goals of Continuing Education

Ideally, continuing-education programs benefit both businesses and workers. Businesses encourage continuing education in order to sustain a highly skilled and specialized workforce—a workforce with the skills to perform a variety of tasks or workers with "cross-functional" skills.

Workers, on the other hand, may receive promotions, gain more power in the job market, or become more valuable employees by enrolling continuing-education programs. Courses are available through a variety of channels. High schools, community colleges, universities, and trade/professional societies and organizations all provide continuing-education programs. Many offer night courses or run weekend-only programs that provide a convenient alternative for those with traditional Monday through Friday schedules. Schools sometimes team up with businesses and organizations to offer programs jointly. In addition, many companies run their own continuing-education

programs, ranging from workshops and seminars to full-fledged college-credit curriculums.

While advancing technology played a role in creating the need for continuing education, it also created new avenues for providing continuing education. The Internet, for example, eased the burden of enhancing business skills by allowing professionals to learn at home whenever convenient, alleviating the commuting and the time constraints associated with traditional classes. Universities as well as professional societies and organizations set up Internet classrooms or web sites that provide audio and visual instruction in such fields as insurance, accounting, real estate, and computer software.

The Benefits of Continuing Education

People who upgrade their work skills and knowledge not only can keep up with the latest technologies and business techniques, but they also can receive other benefits, such as the training needed to climb the corporate ladder and to realize additional career goals. Training facilities often house state-of-the-art equipment such as computers and computer-based training equipment. Computers can facilitate interactive training through computer networks such as the Internet. With this technology, learners have instant access to experts in virtually every vocation.

While continuing education is sometimes perceived as largely a means to career advancement, researchers in the late 1990s argued that continuing education was becoming less of an option and more of a necessity. Hence, one of the greatest benefits workers may derive from continuing education is simply keeping their jobs. Nevertheless, additional education still can help employees receive promotions and land better jobs.

Besides these basic advantages, some experts contend that continuing education provides additional benefits at a more abstract level. Continuing education allows workers to clarify and understand the purpose and goals of their occupations. In addition, continuing education can help advance various occupations by giving employees the opportunity to acquire both theoretical and practical occupational

knowledge and to improve their problem-solving skills. Continuing education also facilitates establishing and regulating occupational standards for some professions.

Perhaps the ultimate benefit of continuing education, however, is its ability to impart an attitude or disposition that encourages workers to find and use the best techniques available at any given time and to realize that these techniques will need to be improved or replaced, according to Cyril O. Houle in *Continuing Learning in the Professions*. This attitude became all the more important late in the 20th century with the persistent technological advances, the growth of competition for jobs, and the shift from a manufacturing-based economy to a service based economy.

The Learning Organisation

According to Insights;

“The 'learning organization' has its origins in companies like Shell, where Arie de Geus described learning as the only sustainable competitive advantage. The Learning Organization is seen as a response to an increasingly unpredictable and dynamic business environment. Here are some definitions by key writers:

"The essence of organisational learning is the organization's ability to use the amazing mental capacity of all its members to create the kind of processes that will improve its own" (Nancy Dixon 1994)

"A Learning Company is an organisation that facilitates the learning of all its members and continually transforms itself" (M. Pedler, J. Burgoyne and Tom Boydell, 1991)

"Organizations where people continually expand their capacity to create the results they truly desire, where new and expansive patterns of thinking are nurtured, where collective aspiration is set free, and where people are continually learning to learn together" (Peter Senge, 1990)

We have drawn on these and more to develop a definition to help guide managers wanting to develop LO capabilities:

Learning organizations are those that have in place systems, mechanisms and processes, that are used to continually enhance their capabilities and those who work with it or for it, to achieve sustainable objectives - for themselves and the communities in which they participate.

The important points to note about this definition are that learning organizations:

- Are adaptive to their external environment
- Continually enhance their capability to change/adapt
- Develop collective as well as individual learning
- Use the results of learning to achieve better results”

WEEK SEVEN

Assessment of learning: improved ability range with personal learning; evidence of improved levels of skill; feedback from others; learning achievements and disappointments

Good learning and information skills are essential for successful professionals.

Early in your career you must study a huge volume of information, simply to become effective. As you become increasingly successful, you'll need to process large volumes of documents, data and reports, just to keep up-to-date in your field.

Personal Learning: Progressing towards the Associate Degree Level

YEAR 1: The learning focus statements for Year 1 and 2 provide advice about learning experiences that will assist students to work towards the achievement of the standards at the Associate Degree Level.

The individual learner

- with teacher direction, use of prior knowledge as an important source for learning
- preparation for learning; for example, organisation and concentration
- knowledge of the role of questions in learning
- awareness of behaviours that contribute to a positive learning environment; for example, being quiet when appropriate, exhibiting friendly and safe behaviour, participating in structured discussion
- with teacher guidance, gathering of information and knowledge from a variety of sources
- awareness of their personal learning preferences
- thoughtful questioning and sharing of ideas
- use of questioning to clarify meaning
- use of strategies for linking prior knowledge with learning; for example, discussion, questioning, reflection, and checking past worksheets or notes
- with teacher direction, use of strategies which assist personal learning; for example, summarising, trial and error, perspective taking, and completing homework
- interest in the feelings, needs, ideas and opinions of others
- responsiveness to advice about their own learning strengths and weaknesses

Managing personal learning

- preparation for learning through maintenance of basic resources such as pencils, paper, notebooks
- knowledge of strategies, such as planning, setting priorities and seeking help, for completing tasks
- awareness of personal factors in successful task management; for example, optimism, cooperation, application, perseverance and organization
- strategies for identifying choices that influence learning goals; for example, listening to others, exploring possibilities, considering alternatives
- organised behaviour with personal resources such as books and equipment
- planning and time management for completing short tasks
- monitoring of progress during a task through self correction, self explanation and discussion
- reflection, with teacher direction, to identify personal goals
- maintenance of organised learning records such as neat notebooks and orderly portfolios
- use of strategies to manage tasks; for example, questioning, reflecting, experimenting, adapting and seeking help
- attributes that influence successful task management; for example, optimism, cooperation, application, perseverance, organization
- reflection, with teacher direction, on learning priorities and goal setting

YEAR 2:

The individual learner

Students describe the factors that affect learning and identify strategies that will enhance their own learning. With support, they identify their learning strengths and weaknesses and learning habits that improve learning outcomes. They seek teacher feedback to develop their content knowledge and understanding. They make and justify some decisions about their learning and, with support, set learning improvement goals. They contribute to the development of protocols that create a positive learning environment in the classroom.

Managing personal learning

Students set short-term, achievable goals in relation to specific tasks. They complete short tasks by planning and allocating appropriate time and resources. They undertake some multi-step, extended tasks independently. They comment on task progress and achievements. They manage their feelings in pursuit of goals and demonstrate a positive attitude towards their learning.

The individual learner

- teacher-directed use of methods for organising knowledge; for example, graphic organisers and mind maps
- communication and questioning skills that facilitate explanation and assistance
- identification of choices made within tasks; for example, the choice of a particular focus within a nominated experimental procedure in Science
- use of a variety of criteria for evaluating learning skills; for example, 'How much have I improved?'
- 'How original was my idea?' with teacher support, experimentation when using diverse strategies for enquiring and problem solving
- choice of appropriate organisers for categorising knowledge
- creation and sharing of considered questions to explore and elaborate on their own and others' ideas
- selection from a range of resources for seeking assistance and sharing ideas; for example, parents, peers, multi-media and the library independent use of organisers, such as categories, Venn diagrams, mind maps and fishbone charts, when recording information
- use of questioning and strategies for exploring alternative perspectives and ideas
- thoughtful consideration of support and/or advice from peers, teachers and family
- evidence of strategic change made or proposed in response to evaluation; for example, 'I decided to do it this way because...', 'We'll be quicker if I...', 'Next time I will...'

Managing personal learning

- development of routines and habits; for example, keeping work in order, asking questions about previous work to maintain record keeping
- awareness of self talk and its role in learning
- use of teacher-provided strategies for identifying and setting personal goals

- strategies for planning to complete tasks; for example, developing and following realistic timelines
- awareness of personal factors that support positive study; for example, a quiet environment, concentration, homework routines
- location of resources, with support from peers, teachers and other adults
- monitoring and checking of negative self talk
- organisation and persistence in maintaining focus on personal goals
- strategies for monitoring progress toward completing tasks; for example, using simple charts or tables to track activity
- use of peers, teachers and other adults as learning resources
- development of the habit of using encouraging and motivating self talk
- use of evaluation strategies and criteria for measuring progress toward goals
- adaptability, persistence and willingness to seek support when undertaking tasks

YEAR 3:

The learning focus statements for Year 3 and 4 provide advice about learning experiences that will assist students to work towards the achievement of the standards at the Bachelor Degree Level.

The individual learner

Students identify, with support, their preferred learning styles and use strategies that promote learning. They monitor and describe progress in their learning and demonstrate learning habits that address their individual needs. They seek and respond to teacher feedback to develop their content knowledge and understanding. They identify and explain how different perspectives and attitudes can affect learning. They negotiate learning improvement goals and justify the choices they make about their own learning. Students actively develop, monitor and refine protocols that create a positive learning environment in the classroom.

Managing personal learning

Students develop and implement plans to complete short-term and long-term tasks within timeframes set by the teacher, utilising appropriate resources. They undertake some set tasks independently, identifying stages for completion. They describe task progress and achievements, suggesting how outcomes may have been improved. They persist when experiencing difficulty with learning tasks. They seek and use learning support when needed from peers, teachers and other adults. They practise positive self talk. They demonstrate a positive attitude to learning within and outside the classroom.

The individual learner

- open-mindedness when considering alternative views and strategies for enquiring and problem solving
- with teacher support, use of appropriate domainbased strategies to complete set work
- with teacher assistance, identification of their strengths and weaknesses in different domains; for example, through the use of self-evaluation rubrics
- consideration of the views and needs of others in the learning environment
- thoughtful questioning when comprehending, exploring or elaborating alternative views
- selection of appropriate domain-based strategies to complete set work
- evaluation of performance using self-evaluation rubrics
- development of learning goals, as appropriate, for different domains
- acknowledgment of resources used in learning, including contributions made by peers
- experimentation with domain-based strategies to complete set work; for example, applying knowledge of design briefs gained from Design, Creativity and Technology to a publishing project in Communication
- open-minded consideration of a range of views and values in a variety of learning situations

- proficiency in gathering information about their own performance; for example, through asking questions and seeking feedback
- with teacher guidance, consideration of ways to improve their performance
- understanding that learning is governed by ethical as well as strategic considerations; for example, that plagiarism is unacceptable

Managing personal learning

- practice of habits that lead to effective learning behaviour; for example, study routines, organisation of time
- motivation by checking negative self talk and by encouraging positive self talk
- justification of personal learning goals and the following of instructions to achieve those goals
- management of set tasks by organising, prioritising and planning
- development of study habits to assist learning; for example, diary keeping, organisation, a homework routine
- coping and problem-solving strategies for persistence in working towards achievement
- monitoring and evaluation of progress toward achieving short and long-term learning goals
- development of criteria to monitor action plans when completing set tasks
- evaluation of study habits in response to learning challenges
- use of a variety of strategies to manage moods and emotions when pursuing learning goals; for example, self talk, relaxation, avoiding negative triggers, taking time out, and giving and seeking help
- adaptability in overcoming challenges to achieve learning goals
- revision and adaptation of action plans to complete set tasks

YEAR 4

The individual learner

Students monitor and describe their progress as learners, identifying their strengths and weaknesses and taking actions to address their weaknesses. They identify a variety of learning habits and adopt those which assist their learning. They identify, select and use an expanded repertoire of learning strategies appropriate to particular tasks. They seek and respond to feedback from peers, teachers and other adults and explain how their ideas have changed to develop and refine their content knowledge and understanding.

Students demonstrate an awareness of different cultural and societal beliefs, values and practices, identifying and discussing the effect of ethical issues on learning and working with others. With support, students determine learning improvement goals, justifying their decisions and making appropriate modifications as necessary. They consider both their own and others' needs when making decisions about suitable learning processes and the creation of positive learning environments within and outside the classroom.

Managing personal learning

Students set realistic short-term and long-term learning goals within a variety of tasks and describe their progress towards achieving these.

They complete competing short, extended and group tasks within set timeframes, prioritising their available time, utilising appropriate resources and demonstrating motivation. They initiate and undertake some tasks independently, within negotiated timeframes. They review the effectiveness of the management of tasks, identifying successes and suggesting strategies that would improve outcomes. They develop and use criteria to evaluate their work, and use these criteria to make appropriate refinements. They demonstrate a positive and structured approach to learning, identifying and using effective strategies that assist with study, both at school and at home.

The individual learner

- knowledge and skills for encoding, categorising and retrieving domain-specific knowledge
- awareness of their preferred learning style and how this affects their learning
- selection and application of multiple learning strategies to complete a set task
- development of learning goals based on knowledge of their achievement; for example, as a response to teacher assessment and feedback
- recognition that their own and other's values and beliefs may influence their approaches to learning
- application of learning style preferences to increase the effectiveness of their own learning
- independent use of strategic learning behaviours to complete complex tasks; for example, clarifying, drafting and checking

- flexible use of multiple learning strategies to complete a set task
- self assessment of work performance against set achievement criteria such as personal learning goals
- understanding that enquiry and research may challenge their own and others' values and beliefs
- recognition of, and respect for, a range of protocols that support learning; for example, rules of discussion in a class forum
- use of goal-directed learning behaviours to improve learning
- independent selection and implementation of appropriate learning strategies for set tasks; for example, note taking of guest speakers' presentations, use of concept maps to understand relationships between ideas
- improvements in work performance based on personal assessments, domain criteria and learning goals
- persistence when challenged by conflicting information, values and views

Managing personal learning

- effective study skill planning and behaviour; for example, keeping a diary, taking notes, memorising, organising and rehearsing
- experimentation with strategies to assist resilience when pursuing learning goals; for example, seeking help, positive self talk and solution-focused problem solving
- use of a range of domain-specific reporting
- continuous monitoring and evaluation of study skill planning and behaviour
- knowledge of a diverse range of coping strategies for managing learning
- selection and/or adaptation of domain-specific reporting processes to suit tasks
- self-directed time management with a focus on task requirements
- adaptable study skill behaviour in response to changing requirements
- adaptable coping behaviour in response to learning challenges
- independent reporting on tasks; for example, identifying and changing task requirements, evaluating their own performance and reviewing time management

YEAR 5

The learning focus statements for Year 5 provide advice about learning experiences that will assist students to work towards the achievement of the standards at the Postgraduate Level to fulfill the requirements of the BTEC Edexcel Level 7 Postgraduate Diploma.

The individual learner

At the Professional Level, students work independently to implement a range of strategies, as appropriate, to maximise their learning. They monitor and reflect on and discuss their progress as autonomous learners, identifying areas for improvement in their learning and implementing actions to address them. Students seek and respond to feedback from peers, teachers and other adults to develop and refine their content knowledge and understanding, identifying areas for further investigation. They evaluate the effectiveness of their learning strategies, study techniques and learning habits, and make appropriate modifications. They identify their interests, strengths and weaknesses and use these to determine future learning needs, especially in relation to the postcompulsory pathways.

Students identify the ethical frameworks that underpin their own and others' beliefs and values and describe how the conflicts and dilemmas they identify may affect learning. They determine, monitor and modify learning improvement goals, taking into account current and future learning needs. They determine the factors that contribute to the creation of positive learning environments and establish, follow and monitor protocols for a variety of learning situations.

Managing personal learning

Students initiate personal short-term and long-term learning goals and negotiate appropriate courses of action to achieve them. Students allocate appropriate time and identify and utilise appropriate resources to manage competing priorities and complete tasks, including learner-directed projects, within set timeframes. They initiate and negotiate a range of independent activities with their teachers, providing progress and summative reports for teachers and stakeholders. They monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of their task and resource management skills, reflecting on their progress and suggesting and implementing appropriate management strategies for improvement. They take responsibility for their learning environments, both at school and at home, anticipating the consequences of their actions. They demonstrate control of impulses and mood modulation. Students review and modify the criteria they use to check that their work is relevant, accurate and meets task objectives and make appropriate changes to completed tasks using these criteria. They identify and refine the strategies they use to study, organise and revise their work, both at school and at home.

The individual learner

- independent use of a range of domain-specific research skills for retrieving and extending knowledge and skills
- application of personal strategies appropriate for the learning context; for example, when to take risks, when to be patient, when to be careful
- the habit of thoughtful planning to complete set work, including a rationale for the strategies to be employed; for example, outlining what might work, what might not, and why
- reference to the influence of personal views, values or beliefs when evaluating their own work
- domain-specific organisational skills for recording information
- adaptable personal learning strategies and behaviours in order to improve performance
- the habit of regular self monitoring during set work, including checking the effectiveness of strategies employed; for example, outlining what is working, what is not, and what changes could be made
- on-balance judgment in challenging learning situations; for example, when presented with conflicting information, values and views
- domain-specific analytical skills for determining the quality of gathered information
- motivation to extend domain knowledge and understanding beyond a set task
- the habit of regular self evaluation during and after completion of set work, including assessment of the effectiveness of strategies employed; for example, outlining what worked, what did not, and why
- familiarity with a range of issues related to the pursuit of learning; for example, the impact of scientific discovery on beliefs and values

Managing personal learning

- a routine of planning and study that facilitates orderly record keeping of notes and learning goals
- an optimistic attitude that supports perseverance and adaptable behaviour when facing learning challenges
- attention to detail when clarifying task objectives and setting work plans
- knowledge and skills for managing a collaborative learning environment
- record keeping that improves understanding of set texts; for example, structuring notes to highlight major points, using graphic organisers, identifying issues and elaborating where necessary
- self motivation in persevering to overcome learning challenges

- identification of core objectives when planning and monitoring multi-faceted tasks
- leadership and motivation of peers during collaborative learning opportunities
- record keeping that facilitates efficient preparation for senior schooling, including examinations
- a diverse repertoire of coping strategies for managing challenges in learning
- implementation of action plans that monitor and evaluate quality of performance
- strategic leadership to optimise collaborative learning opportunities

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