



Self Directed Learning

Educational Principles

Research has shown that traditional learning activities rely for the most part on lectures, samples and books. While important and useful, this form of learning is not always satisfying for many adults and is therefore less likely to lead to significant changes in sales, performance and practice in any industry.

Summary

Approaches to learning that place control in the hands of workers and management are certainly effective. However, it is more difficult to certify and to define self-directed learning. Recognizing and certifying self-directed learning for Continuing Education Credits pushes the limits, expectations, and traditions of education in new directions.

Effective learning is based on certain principles:

- Learning is physical, emotional and intellectual. It is also personal and subjective.
- Learning occurs at all times and within the context of life. It is not a one-time event.
- Learning processes need active learner involvement at all stages from conceptualization, through planning to evaluation.

All learning originates from a sense of a need for skills, techniques and information.

Self-directed learning (SDL) links to desires for critical improvements in one's work or personal life.

- Self-directing learners look for accurate information, appropriate skills, techniques and information.
- Often the learning processes are as important as the learning itself.
- Self evaluation, built into the processes,

... earning credit for things learned outside the classroom.

What can we do to increase recognition for non-traditional learning?

enables learners to assess how their current knowledge and skills to meet the changing needs of the marketplace,

- Self-directed learners are self-critical - assessing how integrating new learning into business is working out.
- The self-directed learners need to facilitate, manage, and arrange their own experiences.
- Providers of Continuing Education should enhance learning opportunities, and work to certify, not direct or prescribe.

How does Self Directed Learning (SDL) happen?

In most traditional learning formats, the information comes before the question. The student must be taught – and the Teacher will take care of everything.

The SDL cycle begins when a learner formulates a specific question. Looking for answers prompts a search for resources or resource people. Interpretation of the data and direct application to personal or career lives follows. Learners reflect on their current business when developing questions and then reflect further when considering how to integrate new information / skills / techniques back into their situation.

Certifying Self-Directed Learning

In my experience, the criteria for awarding credits in S-DL are weak. Left to their own devices, individual learners would likely be much tougher on themselves in evaluating their own learning using ROI criteria such as usefulness, applications to immediate problem solution, the competitive edge and the bottom line.

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