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## TECHNIQUES, TOOLS, AND RESOURCES FOR THE SELF-DIRECTED LEARNER

### A. Planning Tools

#### *A1. The Learning Contract Plan/Learning Contract Design.*

[The learning contract](#) is a device whereby you can [plan and personalize any learning experience](#). It can take on many shapes and forms ranging from audio tapes, to outlines, to descriptive statements, [to elaborate explanations of process and product](#), to [electronically submitted forms](#). More examples can be found in O'Donnell, J. M., & Caffarella, R. S. (1990). Learning contracts. In M. W. Galbraith (Ed.), [Adult learning methods: A guide for effective instruction](#) (pp. 133-160). Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company. Most contracts contain information on your learning goals, anticipated learning resources and strategies, a projected time line, and ideas for how you will evaluate or validate your learning achievements.

#### *A2. Self Diagnostic Form.*

A self diagnostic form is an instrument designed to assist you in assessing personal levels of competence and need related to possible areas of study. Such information typically helps in identifying and developing many of the professional competencies required to understand a particular topic of interest or need and often is used as a precursor to construction of a learning contract. Here is [example one](#) and [example two](#) from different graduate courses.

#### *A3. Self Analysis as a Learner.*

This involves you in carrying out an analysis of yourself or others as a learner. It includes determining such factors as the ways you learn best, developmental patterns or social roles which impact on your learning efforts, subject areas which you like best, strengths and weaknesses as a learner, and what, if any, you would change to improve your learning performance. Several self-administered instruments are available for your use if desired.

1. [Competencies for performing life roles](#)
2. [Self-directed learning skills](#)
3. [Competencies for carrying out self-directed learning projects](#)

#### A4. *Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale.*

A self-administered and self-scored instrument entitled the Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale ([SDLRS](#)) is available for comparison of yourself with normed information. An opportunity also is provided for you to detail what the results means in terms of future learning approaches and efforts.

A5. [Self-Directed Learning Perception Scale](#) (SDLPS), a self-report instrument, to monitor the support of a self-directed learning environment.

#### A6. [Self Rating on Self-Directed Learning Competencies.](#)

A self-administered and self-scored competency rating device is available for obtaining information about self-directed learning abilities. An opportunity also is provided for you to detail what the results means in terms of future learning approaches and needed competency acquisitions.

#### A7. [Self-Assessment Exercise.](#)

This exercise helps you gain an understanding of and practice with a self-diagnosis process. A model of desired behaviors or required competencies pertaining to learning about a particular topic is created and any gaps identified in current competency levels becomes the basis for planning future learning.

#### A8. [Analyzing Your Thinking Skills and Intelligence Types.](#)

You are introduced to various thinking skill types and [personal intelligence types](#) and the nature of the information typically foundational to each type. A self-assessment of how your thinking approaches and/or personal intelligence fit the various types is determined and you can then determine some of the implications for your future learning activities studied.

#### A9. [Determining Your Learning Style.](#)

[Several self-administered and self-scoring instruments are available](#) to help identify your own learning style. One or more of these can be completed and the resulting scores and associated meanings used to think through implications and approaches for subsequent learning efforts.

#### A10. *Determining Your Teaching Style.*

The PALS ( [Principles of Adult Learning Scale](#)) instrument is a device that measures the various things that a teacher or trainer does when working with adult learners. You complete, self score the instrument, and compare the results with some normed information to determine any implications for future efforts

to improve your teaching or training abilities. Contact the instrument developer, [Gary Conti](#), or you can find the instrument and scoring information in Conti, G. J. (1990). Identifying your teaching style. In M. W. Galbraith (Ed.), [Adult learning methods: A guide for effective instruction](#) (pp. 79-96). Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company.

### *A11. Determining Individual Change Styles.*

The "Change Styles Questionnaire" is an instrument developed to assess how an individual's self-directed and problem solving approaches or preferences coalesce to create various individual change styles. Knowledge about such styles helps individuals and teachers or trainers find ways of dealing with learning and changes in the workplace and other settings. Contact [Dr. John Burns](#) for more information about the instrument. See also a [background paper](#) on the instrument.

### *A11. [Constructing a Gantt Chart](#).*

Critical Path Analysis (CPA) and the creation of a Gantt Chart is a useful tool for planning, scheduling, and managing various self-study activities. You are shown how to delineate and sequence those activities necessary for carrying out a set of learning objectives. The calendar dating of a CPA network and creation of a Gantt time management chart are included in the process.

## B. Individual Study Techniques

### *B1. [Mind Mapping/Concept Mapping](#).*

Mind mapping is a visually oriented technique designed to allow you to see or make connections among widely disparate elements of some subject you are studying. You are shown how to use interconnecting arrows, branching ideas, and personal patterns to expand your knowledge about a particular topic. In this technique you also learn how to develop mind or concept maps to pinpoint the various misconceptions or nuances of meaning that you may hold so that your interpretation skills are increased.

### *B2. [Using Probes in Learning](#).*

Probes are ideas, questions, and insights you develop while you are in the process of learning something about a new topic or field. You learn how to use dialogue, conversation, and questioning that turns learning something new from a passive to an active process. Developing propositions and revised propositions become a part of your learning repertory.

### *B3. [Vee Diagramming/Vee Heuristic Technique](#).*

The Vee diagramming/heuristic technique is a problem solving aid in helping you see the interplay between what you already know and knowledge you are producing or attempting to understand. You

learn how to use a Vee to point to events or objects that serve as foundations for any knowledge being developed or learned.

B4. [How to Read a Journal/Magazine.](#)

B5. [Learning from TV and Radio.](#)

B6. *Exercising.*

An important means for establishing your physiological state for individualized learning is to carry out some brisk exercising. The World Wide Web has a multitude of sites related to exercising.

B7. [Self-education, Self-university.](#)

B8. [Analyzing Your Preferred Learning Environment.](#)

B9. [Relaxation Training.](#)

B10. [Memory Enhancement Techniques.](#)

B11. [Learning with Computers.](#)

B12. *Using Self-Paced Modules.*

B13. *Using Communication Technology.*

B14. *Self-Directed Learning Modules.*

B15. [Learning from Your Experiences.](#)

B16. [The Use of Penetrating Questions.](#)

B17. *Designing a Personal Learning Project.*

B18. *Walkabout.*

B19. *Developing Lists of Resources.*

B20. *Using Mediated Resources.*

B21. [Repertory Grid-Based Technique](#).

B22. *Correspondence Study*.

B23. *Constructing a Planning/Design Model*.

B24. [Improving Writing Skills](#).

B25. *Individualized Learning within an Organizational Setting*.

Increasingly, more and more organizations are recognizing the value in providing resources and opportunities for employees to "train" themselves through various self-directed techniques. [Guglielmino and Guglielmino \(1994\)](#) suggest several resources that are being established in some organizations.

B26. [Yoga or Tai Chi](#)

### C. Personal Reflection Tools

C1. [Book/Article/Media Review Techniques](#).

C2. [Creating an Interactive Reading Log](#).

The interactive reading log is a learning activity designed to give you a thoughtful exposure to a broad area of subject matter. It is intended to place relatively greater stress on reading and less stress on intensive writing related to a limited topic. A log is not an outline nor a summary of your reading. Rather, it is essentially a series of reactions to those elements in your readings that are particularly meaningful and/or provocative.

C3. [Creating a Media Log](#).

C4. [Journal/Diary Writing Techniques](#).

The personalized journal or diary is a tool to aid you in terms of personal growth, synthesis, and/or reflection on any new knowledge that is acquired in learning efforts. You are shown how a diary can be created and given examples of how others have created one.

C5. [Creating your Personal Philosophy Statement](#).

The way one teaches is tied to a personal philosophy of life. This activity helps you understand more about various philosophical models or frameworks. You are shown how to eclectically draw from

various models in creating your own [statement of philosophy](#). An instrument developed by Lorraine M. Zinn, that demonstrates your preference for various philosophical views [is available](#) or can be found in Zinn, L. M. (1990). Identifying your philosophical orientation. In M. W. Galbraith (Ed.), [Adult learning methods: A guide for effective instruction](#) (pp. 39-77). Malabar, FL: Krieger Publishing Company

*C6. Analyzing a Theory.*

*C7. [Creating a Theory Log](#).*

*C8. [Reading a Book Proactively](#).*

*C9. Using Human Resources Proactively.*

*C10. Learning Through [Intuition](#) and [Dreams](#).*

*C11. Reflecting on Learning at Home or the Workplace.*

*C12. Analyzing Your Thinking Skills.*

*C13. [Relaxation](#). [Dealing with stress](#).*

*C14. Imaginary Dialogues.*

*C15. [Analyzing Personal Ethics](#).*

*C16. Thinking About Learning.*

*C17. [Personal Inventories](#).*

*C18. [Personality Measures](#).*

## D. Individual Skill Development

*D1. Skill Practice Exercises.*

*D2. Portfolio Development. [Here is one good resource](#). [Here is a second one](#).*

*D3. Improving Your Writing Skills.*

*D4. [Enhancing Your Lecturing Skills.](#)*

*D5. [Enhancing Your Discussing Skills.](#)*

*D6. [Enhancing Your Questioning Skills.](#)*

*D7. [Enhancing Your Coaching Skills.](#)*

*D8. [Enhancing Your Understanding of Various Teaching Techniques.](#)*

*D9. [Effective Use of Gaming Devices.](#)*

*D10. [Using a Study Center/Learning Lab.](#)*

#### E. Group Study Techniques

*E1. [A Study Group Activity.](#)*

*E2. [Debates.](#)*

*E3. [Discussion Groups or Discussion Networks.](#)*

*E4. [Quality Circles.](#)*

*E5. [Study Clubs/Study Circles.](#)*

#### F. Using The Educative Community

*F1. [Community Study.](#)*

There are a variety of resources existing in any community that can be used to meet various of your education or training needs. You are shown how to better understand this educative community notion by using various community study techniques. You learn how to seek out that information important for your personal growth and development.

*F2. [Using Another Person as a Resource for Learning.](#)*

*F3. [Obtaining Feedback from Others.](#)*

*F4. [Agency Visit.](#) Here is an [interview schedule](#) you could use to examine an agency and determine its*

potential for self-directed learning. Here is a [guide](#) for analyzing the potential within an agency for learner control.

F5. [Mini-Internship](#).

F6. [Interviewing Adult Learners](#).

It is assumed that you can learn a great deal about your own learning from studying, observing, and/or talking with other adult learners. You are shown how to interview adults to determine what you can about their learning activities, approaches, and resource preferences. You then are encouraged to derive a statement of personal reflection and assessment in terms of your own learning needs and approaches.

F7. [Using Agency Resources](#).

F8. *Obtaining Feedback*.

F9. [Learning From Mentors](#). [Thoughts on Mentoring](#).

F10. *Learning From a Resource*.

F11. [Career Counseling](#).

F12. [Organizational Audit](#).

F13. *Power Structure Analysis*.

F14. *Peer Review*.

F15. [Peer Coaching](#).

F16. [Using A Library and the Web](#).

F17. *Attending a Conference*.

F18. Using [Museums/Art Galleries](#).

F19. *Travel as a Learning Event*.

F20. *Networks and Networking*.



*F21. Study Tours.*

*F22. Directed Learning.*

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[Thanks to students who have completed my AED 5250 Self-Directed and Individualized Adult Learning course for their many contributions to this resource.]

December 30, 2005



[-- Return to SDL home page](#)



[-- Return me back to the first page](#)