

Facilitate for Impact

Module 7 Transcript

Welcome back to Facilitate for Impact. This is module seven. If you've ever heard the phrase, we learn best by doing, that's self-directed learning in action, but the concept is not new.

It's been around for 150 years or so, long before podcasts and LinkedIn learning and online certification platforms. It surged in popularity in the 60s and 70s, but lately it's kind of been a lost art. And that's really a shame because in a world that changes this fast, being a self-directed learner is one of the most valuable professional skills anybody can have.

So what is self-directed learning? In short, it's when learners take charge of their own learning. They identify what they need to learn, they set the goals, they find the right resources, they experiment with strategies, and evaluate their progress all while steering their own ship. Now it's not a solo act, always.

Self-directed learning works best when there's a learning counselor or what I like to call an advising facilitator who supports the learner's progress. The facilitator helps set the direction, but the learner holds the wheel. The key is clear communication about the why, why the learning matters, why they should learn it.

If the why is not clear, motivation evaporates pretty quickly. Self-directed learning or SDL is all about metacognition, understanding yourself as a learner. We dug into that in module 5. Metacognition prompts us to ask questions like how do I best retain new information, what detracts or derails me, what kind of learning feels most natural.

And when learners know those answers, they can shape experiences that actually work for them. So how it works. In self-directed learning, the learner, with the support and guidance of that advising facilitator in some cases, they identify the needs, their goals, what do they need or want to learn.

They find the resources. Who or what can help me? What resources do I need? What do I have at my disposal? They implement the strategies. How am I going to learn this best? And then they evaluate the outcomes.

Did I actually learn this? How can I apply it? How can I retain it? It's flexible, it's empowering, and it's deeply personal because it's about the learner. Learners aren't just absorbing information, they're owning it. And here's the beautiful part.

With self-directed learning, learning sticks longer, goes deeper, and feels more meaningful. SDL is not without its challenges. It's not perfect.

Like anything worth doing, it's not perfect. It takes time. It's not always efficient for corporate training, especially when compliance check boxes are involved.

It challenges tradition. Many still prefer classroom training because it feels structured and controllable, and it's how we've always done it. Assessment can be tricky sometimes.

Measuring the success can get messy if the learners take different paths than the facilitator, the advising facilitator thinks they should. Sometimes there's a lack of continuity between what the advising facilitator thinks learning means or how learning fits versus the learner. Motivation can sometimes waver.

Some adults struggle to stay on track without deadlines or some external accountability. It definitely requires a high level of self-awareness. Without that high level of self-awareness, learners can misjudge progress or overestimate how much they've mastered.

And information overload is real. If you have gotten lost on YouTube or Pinterest or Instagram or anything else, even just googling something sometimes or researching something through a search engine, sometimes it's just like, ah, just give me the answer. Don't make me dig through a thousand links to find the answer.

It can be difficult with endless videos and blogs and podcasts. Filtering quality from noise can be overwhelming for the learner. So the bottom line is self-directed learning is not a one size fits all solution.

It's far from impossible. And with the right facilitator support, it can absolutely thrive even in structured environments. So with all those challenges, you may think, why bother? Because SDL develops exactly the kind of learners we need in today's world.

They're adaptable, they're curious, and they're resilient. Self-directed learning gives us enhanced skills because it builds self-management and critical thinking, problem-solving skills, steeper learning. When we connect information to our own interests, it sticks.

It creates higher motivation because when I have control, my engagement naturally increases. When I get to learn what I want to learn, it feels different. Tailored growth.

Each person learns in a way that matches their goals and their values and their learning process. And it creates lifelong learning. It creates continuous learners who keep growing long after the course ends or long after they read the article.

It creates that need, that urge, that yearning to learn more, and it creates adaptability. Self-directed learners compute it more easily in changing environments. So in short, self-directed learning makes growth sustainable, not situational.

All right, think about the learners that you've worked with, the ones who light up when a new idea connects to one of their goals, or they learn something that's going to solve one of their problems. Those are your self-directed learners. They're not waiting for permission to learn.

They're on the learning journey. And as facilitators, it's our role to nurture that spark, to act as guides, not gatekeepers. Now I'm going to encourage you to tackle prompt seven in your workbook.

It's going to walk you through exploring some examples, and you'll probably notice that the examples you come up with during that learning prompt point back to one truth. The more

ownership we give learners, the deeper their learning becomes. Now I'm going to leave you with this.

Self-directed learning is not a buzzword. It is a mindset. When learners understand their own style and take control of their goals and have supportive facilitators cheering them on, learning becomes limitless.

Because self-directed learning doesn't teach people, it transforms them. That's it for this module. We'll see you next time.