

Self-directed learning

Knowles (1975) described self-learning as a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, to evaluate their learning needs, to formulate learning objectives, to identify human and material resources for learning, to choose and implement appropriate strategies and to assess learning outcomes.

If the subject engages in self-directed learning, it is because she has freely chosen a project that motivates her. But other motivational levers must be activated, with external support : confidence in one's possibilities and the pleasure of learning. Then the subject will have to self-regulate her learning, to use cognitive, material and human techniques and resources.

Self-learning is an attitude that creates a continuum of learning between periods of formal training, which it enriches, and all other moments when learning is possible, in an accommodation place, at home, through participating in different activities or at work.

Which posture for the trainer-coach ?

The trainer-coach can play the role of inducer by acting on several levels :

- the definition and confirmation of the project (see Design a personal roadmap) ;
- the creation of steps and milestones with sub-objectives to be achieved (see Design a personal roadmap) ;
- strengthening the subject's ability to learn (see Learning to learn) ;
- giving positive feedback to maintain and develop self-confidence ;
- proposing methods and techniques to support self-learning.

She must be aware that self-learning is influenced by the context and socio-cultural background of the learner. Motivational factors, the relative importance of the person compared to the group, the taking into account of family expectations, the underlying values, what is expected from the trainer, verbalisation and communication skills : all this and many other drivers vary according to cultures and religions.

Suggested methods and techniques to support self-directed learning

- Organise the training according to the principle of individualised training workshops : everyone learns at their own pace based on an initial assessment and the objective pursued. Learners use self-study materials and benefit from the personalised support of pedagogues.
- Engage the learner through a contract.
- Train to search for information.
- Provide free and extended access to a resource centre.
- Create third places as spaces where persons can meet, gather and exchange informally. Encourage and facilitate access to existing third places.

- Explain how to build a personal learning environment including various facilities : document repository, note-taking, annotations, information flow management, exchanges with others... Digital technologies allows to integrate several components accessible from any device, computer or smartphone.
- Suggest to solve problems in small groups
- Use role-playing. It allows migrants to explore and express their feelings, to become aware of their attitudes, values, perceptions, behaviours and of the effects they may cause. They make it possible to analyse a problem from different angles.
- Propose the mental training method, to rationally analyse problems encountered in daily life.
- Suggest to develop a portfolio to monitor learning. The subject records her vision of education, what she believes, what she wishes to do, the human and material resources that will allow her to progress, a reflection on her progress, an evaluation of her actions. It can include achievements that demonstrate progress towards the targeted objectives.
- Facilitate mentoring connections where the mentor is a third person who guides and advises the migrant in the advancement of her career or personal development. She facilitates her integration into the culture of the new country. She can act as a role model.
- Support the creation of self-help groups that can be applied in job search clubs.
- Inform about knowledge exchange networks because they can help to become aware of one's achievements and the value one has for others.

Resources

- KNOWLES, M. (1975). Self-Directed Learning A Guide for Learners and Teachers. Chicago, IL Follett Publishing Company.
- TREMBLAY, N. A. Quelques méthodes et techniques In : L'autoformation : Pour apprendre autrement [en ligne]. Montréal : Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2003.
- CARRÉ, P. et MOISAN, A. (dir.). La formation autodirigée. Aspects psychologiques et pédagogiques. Paris : L'Harmattan. 2002.



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