Tools you can use...

Learning Project Self-Development Plan

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Introduction

This tool is based on the Learning Project Self-Development (a.k.a. upskilling) concept introduced in my [LinkedIn newsletter article](#) (December 9th, 2022.) As described there, it's important to develop own knowledge and skills continuously in areas where we need to rely on ourselves to achieve important performance improvement. In the previous article I suggested accessing the capabilities of others. That might be our first response to a short-term need but developing ourselves is for the long term.

Most of us are familiar with the informal self-directed learning process. We've engaged in it many times in our lives. But we aren't necessarily intentional about doing so in certain situations, like where we need to acquire technical knowledge, or develop a complex skill set. For whatever reason we've assumed we will only succeed through some more formal learning experience, and that makes us dependent on a much narrower range of sources. We need to break out of this trap, and we can do it by implementing the same informal learning process we've used to master multiple personal skills.

How This Tool Works

This tool is an updated and expanded version of the six-stage process introduced in the LinkedIn article. It's more of a strategy than a self-assessment.

The Process

You'll begin by describing a particular desired result where you feel your performance is falling short. You may decide to focus on something you identified using the previous tool. This time, however, you'll you're not looking to others to meet your need, you're searching for ways to develop your own knowledge and skill.

When you're ready to begin your self-directed learning adventure, check out the next page!

Learning Project Self-Development Plan

How to Develop a Learning Project Self-Development Plan...

Here's the six-stage learning process outlined in the related article. This is a proven learning pathway used by today's most successful adult learners...

1. **Embrace Your 'Why':** Start by describing a desired end result you've failed to achieve, and why it is important to you. What improvement do you hope to see in your performance and that result? What impact will successful achievement have on you and others, and why does that matter? How will you know you've succeeded? For this project, what will 'Done' mean?

2. **Diagnose Your Performance:** Carefully and honestly examine your performance. What's working, and not? What's blocking your success? What knowledge, skill, attitude, or other resource seems to be lacking? What examples do you have of how others perform this successfully? For this project, what will 'Doing' look like?

3. **Search for Sources:** Make a list of search topics based on step one insights or hunches and check out what's accessible online. Think of this as a learning adventure... 'The Search for the Missing Capability!' Who's writing about your topic? What books, articles, blogs, or podcasts address your area of focus? What learning material is available through popular online platforms like YouTube, LinkedIn Learning, Coursera, Udemy, Udacity, Skillshare, etc.? What workshops or courses are offered, online or through local adult education providers, and through what delivery modes? And don't hesitate to 'call a friend.' Who do you know that knows what you need to learn? Who might be willing to provide coaching and feedback?

4. **Experiment:** Try stuff! Take practical steps to test out new ideas and get feedback to help you refine your plans. What's your timeline and key milestones along the way... how quickly can you start learning? How will you monitor your learning, behavior, and results. What real-world situations will provide relevant feedback? Who do you know that will help you reflect on your motivation, performance definition, learning plan & process, practical application, and results?

5. **Reassess, Revise, & Refine:** Continue your learning process by regularly reassessing and updating your learning objectives, plans, and monitoring process. How is your performance changing... for better or worse? What new learning objectives are emerging? What new sources have your found, or do you need to find? What additional feedback and support do you need?

6. **Pay it Forward:** Keep in mind... others are also engaged in lifelong learning. You may know people in your own circle of acquaintances who would benefit from what you've learned. As you gain knowledge and skill in any area find ways to help others improve their results.

Keep on learning and "Live Well and Prosper!"