

FORMS OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES THAT ENHANCE SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING OF ADULTS

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Abstract

The research examines self-directed learning as the formation of new educational culture in the contexts of learning theories such as: constructive learning, social constructivism, experiential learning and action science. The key educational activities supporting and enabling the learning processes are distinguished and substantiated: learning by doing, learning through collaboration, learning through experience, which give new experiences to the learner as well as status, competences of educational and managerial field, and values. A qualitative approach was applied in the research and as a research strategy of a semi-structured interview was carried out, which allowed to characterize the experiences and individual meanings of research participants while they take part in non-formal educational activities that enhance their self-directed learning. The results obtained in the course of empirical research allow stating that self-directed learners broaden the variety of learning settings, shift the learning beyond the boundaries of a formal education institution and consciously learn through job-related and life activities in various groups, communicating and collaborating with colleagues. This enables the learners to reflect upon the experience gained in job-related and life activities, and shift from the formal learning to non-formal.

Key words: *educational activities enhancing self-directed learning, learning by doing, learning through collaboration, learning through experience, self-directed learning.*

Introduction

Challenges of information, knowledge and learning society encourage the specialists of in education to revise the theories of teaching/learning that seemingly had not been questioned previously and to search for more effective and innovative methods of teaching/learning. The recent approach to the learning of individuals reveals the transformation of the educational paradigm - from teaching to learning - that focuses on the individual realising his/her personal initiative, emphasizes the perception of him/herself as a learner and the self/development of attitudes and values. This kind of learning concept reflects the ideas of pluralism and postmod-

ernism, their perception and application in the current educational reality as they underline the variety of situational, social, cultural and cognitive contexts (Juodaitytė, 2011).

Based on postmodernist ideas and taking the complexity and situativity of the learning process into account, lately the learning theories (situational, socio-cultural, constructive learning) have been emphasised, which are based on different ontological and epistemological provisions than bibehaviourism and define learning as active, purpose-oriented, conscious and constructive activity of the individual encompassing the objective, action and reflection (Longworth, 1999; Jarvis, 2001; Bitinas, 2005a). These scientific ideas substantiate the concept of self-directed learning highlighting learning as the creation of meaning and the ability of the learners to manage their learning, its processes and autonomy as the right to learn their own way (Jucevičienė, 2007).

Researchers of self-directed learning (Tough, 1971; Knowles, 1975; Moore, 1986; Candy, 1991; Grow, 1991; Hiemstra, 1994; Giligan, 1994; Bolhuis, 1996) emphasise the importance of the theories of social learning, learning through experience and learning by doing, and explain the self-directed learning as a dynamic, cyclical and controlled process. In the course of this process, learning occurs identifying one's learning needs and basing upon one's own experience, acting and constructing the knowledge, whereas collaboration and self-regulating process become the learning-enabling factors that are objective-oriented and associated with the context and environment where the learner can find and consciously choose the educational activities. Self-directed learning occurs through constant observation, reflective exploration of environment, experiencing, knowing and doing as much individually as through the building of partnership relationships (Juodaitytė, Kvedaraitė, 2010).

Over the last two decades, self-directed learning has acquired a multiaspect meaning; it has become an essential component of professional and personal life and a significant concept in the context of contemporary self/development. The concept of self-directed learning allows a modern viewing the learners and perceiving them as responsible managers of their own learning, able to consciously plan and implement their life-long learning (Tough, 1967; Candy, 1991), to control and assess their learning processes occurring in formal and informal activities (Knowles, 1975, 1984; Moore, 1986; Bolhuis, 1996; Garrison, 1997; Abdullah, 2001). On the other hand, self-directed learning gives meaning to the autonomy, independence and responsibility for their learning of the learners (Houle, 1961; Moore, 1986; Brookfield, 1993), emphasises their ability to foresee and choose suitable strategies of teaching/learning and resources (Morrow, Sharkey, Firestone, 1993; Bolhuis, 1996), to learn from experience, while doing and from doing (Moore, 1986; Hiemstra, 1994) and highlights the educational activities that enable the self-directed learning – collaboration, dialogue and interaction with others.

Research focus. In Lithuania, the concept of self-directed learning has not been sufficiently examined in the contexts of education and business organisations: in practical activities of organisations, environments and activities enabling the self-directed learning are not explored; theoretical substantiation of the competence portfolio of a self-directed learner is lacking. This is determined by complex methodological approaches of the research: the concept of self-directed learning is based on the fusing of knowledge of two sciences (management and educology), which allows explaining this phenomenon that echoes the new learning paradigm and enables the cognition of self-directed learning and the understanding of its link with educational and managerial activities of the learner. Thus, the research of the expression of educational activities enabling the self-directed learning becomes *an actual scientific problem*, concretised by the following question: *which educational activities enable the self-directed learning and how?*

Aim of the research is to analyse learning by doing, learning through collaboration and learning through experience as the forms of educational activities that enhance self-directed learning of adults.

Research methods: *scientific literature analysis, semi-structured interview, phenomenological and qualitative content analysis.*

Methodology of Research

General Background

At the theoretical level the research on the forms of educational activities enhancing self-directed learning is based on the following key theories:

- *Theory of constructive learning* stating that learning is an active process in the course of which the learners, based on the knowledge and their experience acquired previously, form new concepts, ideas and meanings; as a result, individual knowledge constructions formed by subjective experience are the fundament for the cognition of reality, whereas the learning occurs when the individuals doubt their beliefs, personal theories and possessed understanding (Piaget, 1928; Dewey, 1938; Kohlberg, 1986; Vygotsky, 1986);

- *Theory of social constructivism* emphasising the significance of the previous experience of the learners when constructing knowledge and applying them in new situations, where their activities are explained as the interaction of the cognitive behaviour and environmental determinants. Based on this theory, learning as a planned improvement emphasises the ability of the learners to use various settings in life and to learn through collaboration, acting in a group, team or society (Durkheim, 1974; Bandura, 1977);

- *Theory of experiential learning* accentuating one of the richest sources of learning – experience of the learner that becomes a cognitive, social and value tool. Learning through experience occurs in the interplay of experience dissemination, communication and dialogue, while observing and reflecting upon one's experience as well as building on it to verify the meanings in new realistic situation; as a result, the perception and behaviour of the learners change (Kolb, 1984; Jarvis, 1987; Boud, Keogh, Walker, 1999);

- *Theory of action science* that brings to the fore the significance of continuous learning and reflection of the learner, when the learners in the course of learning by doing plan their learning, are able to control it, to exercise the learning feedback, to correct the learning plan, to act in line with it in terms of management, to observe and reflect, and to make this plan more specific (Argyris, Putnam, Smith, 1985; Schön, 1987).

Instrument and Procedures

In this phenomenological research, *a conversation* (Kvale, 1996; Mayring, 2000) was applied allowing to best reveal the experiences of individuals, and the *interview method* was selected enabling the approaching to the perception, meanings of the phenomenon and construction of reality by the individuals (Silverman, 2003a, 2003b; Creswell, 2007). The participants of the research were surveyed by way of *semi-structured interview*, i.e. they were asked open-ended questions. The advantage of the latter method lies in the obtaining of complete and systemised data, while the interview itself remains informal and takes place in the form of conversation. The presentation of questions in the course of each specific interview and their order of sequence were determined by the course of the conversation and opinion expressed by the research participants.

The research comprised three stages: (1) preparation stage during which an instrument of guidelines for the interview questions was compiled and target selection criteria of participants were established; (2) interview performance stage based on the principles of anonymity, voluntarism and interview ethics; (3) research data analysis and interpretation stage encompassing the transcription of the conversation material and identification and structuring of categories and sub-categories.

Sample Selection

Building the groups of interview participants that could represent different professional areas (lecturers, teachers and employees of business companies), a qualitative research was carried out in 2012. The representativity of the research sample as one of the key prerequisites for the formation of sample was taken into account (Silverman, 2003a, 2003b; Bitinas, 2005b). A sample is considered representative if it correctly reflects the proportions of the possible values of the attribute under consideration in the population. In this case, the sample of the research participants was formed based on the research aim and the criteria established for the participants, i.e. *target or criterion-based selection was applied* whereby certain settings, individuals or events are selected deliberately, in order to obtain important information that cannot be otherwise acquired (Kvale, 1996). *Maximal options selection* type of the target selection was chosen seeking to ensure that the conclusions should reflect as broad a circle of educational activities enabling the self-directed learning as possible. As a result, when organising the research the most significant parameters were established and individuals who could characterise these parameters were systemically selected.

When forming the research sample, the purpose was to cover the possibly broadest territory, i.e. institutions in different cities (Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Panevėžys, Šiauliai, Kėdainiai etc) and districts (Akmenė, Kelmės Pakruojis, Radviliškis, Šiauliai etc) of Lithuania, and to select, in a purpose-oriented manner, the subjects who can provide sufficient information about the problem in question. Three target groups of learners were involved in the research: lecturers of colleges [D.], employees of business companies [V.] and teachers from schools of general education [M.]. The sample of lecturers (20) comprised lecturers from various colleges of Lithuania; the group of the employees of business companies comprised 12 individuals with engineering education who were improving their foreign language skills, and in the group of teachers 26 educators and specialists from schools of general education were surveyed. Demographic characteristics of research participants are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of research participants.

Characteristics	Lecturers	Employees of business companies	Teachers
Sample size	n=20	n=12	n=26
Sex	20 women	2 women, 10 men	21 women, 5 men
Average experience of professional employment	10.7 years	9.4 years	12.4 years
Education	Higher (20)	Higher (12)	Higher (26)
Geographical dispersion	Kaunas, Vilnius, Panevėžys, Klaipėda counties	Kaunas county	Kaunas, Vilnius, Klaipėda, Šiauliai, Panevėžys counties
Purpose of learning	Improvement of the competencies of lecturers	(Self)improvement of foreign language skills	Improvement of teacher competences in the field of educating pupils with behavioural and emotional disorders

Data Analysis

The research data processing was conducted by applying the methods of the qualitative data analysis, i.e. *phenomenological research data analysis* (Colaizzi, 1978; Kvale, 1996;

Creswell, 2007), the key point of which is repetitive reading of data and perception of text; identification of data associated with the phenomenon under consideration; establishment of notional categories and subcategories; identification of relationships between groups and differences; construction of the meaning of the phenomenon. When analysing the data, notional units were identified reflecting the experience and attitudes of the subjects associated with the research questions. When processing the data, each participant was provided a code number including the target group, name and case number.

Results of Research

Qualitative content analysis revealed the ability of the learners to decide what is to be learned and how, to establish the learning needs and to identify the current and perspective roles in life, and showed up the educational activities reflecting the expression of self-directed learning in different research groups. During the interviews, three quality categories were distinguished, which represent the educational activities enhancing the self-directed learning: *learning by doing*, *learning through collaboration* and *learning through experience*.

The first category (*learning by doing*) revealed that in the participants groups of different professional areas (lecturers, teachers and employees of business companies) learning starts with the analysis of the situation, when the current situation is considered and a decision is made as a basis for planning of purpose-oriented learning activities, requiring initiation of changes in one's own activities, observation and assessment of activities being performed, and reflection of activities (see Table 2).

Table 2. Categorisation of statements on learning by doing.

Corroborating statements	Sub-category	Category
<p>“Specialities were being changed, I had to devise something new <...> things I knew to date had to be applied in new activities, so I started analysing” [D., Plukė, 6]; “<...> such meetings are held in the English language. We, middle-level specialists, understand what is being said to us, however <...> the lower-level production employees do not speak English; as a result, one of us is always standing next to the speaker and translating” [V., Gita, 1]; “I already knew a bit, I was making inquiries as to who will come to me and I knew well whom I was waiting for” [M., Agnė, 1].</p>	Analysis of situation	LEARNING BY DOING
<p>“Listening in the seminars as well as the communication with real business companies <...> is a sort of informal improvement of qualification that is necessary; that is why I plan how to do this” [D., Daiva, 22]; “<...> to be able to communicate in English, to be able to eventually read the literature in English <...> technical speech, from the beginning of the process to the end, technical descriptions. <...> To know where the information about one’s work can be found <...>” [V., Algis, 5]; “<...> and we have such an action plan for each pupil specifying things we have jointly decided that would be good for the child with regard to the behaviour” [M., Asta, 13].</p>	Planning of purpose-oriented activities	
<p>“You go to watch in a real company, where you have friends, acquaintances, to consult with them and listen to their comments on what is going on” [D., Irena, 17]; “English is so much necessary in my work that I intend to start attending courses or learning with a lecturer individually” [V., Deivis, 12]; “First of all, what should I change in my activities, what to do? How the teaching process should be changed, what methods I should apply – I studied this in depth. What should be done, what new measures are available, how they could be interested and involved” [M., Vaiva, 28].</p>	Initiation of changes in one’s activities	
<p>“I analysed my own work for two weeks in each division, i.e. I wrote down all the methodical material, made abstracts, compiled a kind of my own description of work, compared it with the activities in companies: how things are operating, what needs improving” [D., Aurė, 3]; “Now I started feeling the benefit of the learning – I am making sense of things being said and I can speak more bravely myself. The benefit was obvious when partners from abroad came to our company <...>” [V., Titas, 11]; “For a week or two, for a month – then we decide. Afterwards – feedback again: we meet again or I only collect the information to see if there are any substantial changes or not, then we meet with the parents” [M., Elena, 5].</p>	Observation and assessment	
<p>“I used to reflect on my activities constantly; I had someone to confer with, because there was a wonderful person beside me...” [D., Marta, 8]; “I tried to learn on my own: I got the material for listening, cassettes, disks and I listened, and tried to understand what was being said” [V., Titas, 2]; “I could not conduct the lesson normally. I kept thinking perhaps I was doing something wrong. But I had to find the way to tell Paulius that he was working unsatisfactorily” [M., Giedrė, 34].</p>	Reflection of activities	

Special attention is paid to learning, analysing things learned by each participant, considering the group activity processes and searching for effective ways to work together, promoting the guidance of one’s own learning and the learning of others, because this way new knowledge are created allowing to view the current activities anew. Learning by doing, building on the experience of the subjects, encompasses the act as well as learning from it and is closely associated with exploration of activity, when “*things I know*” and “*things I do*” are given meaning in activities: “*I just want to see how they feel, I felt curious myself to see if the situation changed, if that was the only child who caused the restiveness, if that was the latent bomb or there were other problems. <...> It sometimes happens that they say, if the child conducted him/herself*

badly, that Lukas was guilty, but nobody says that he/she started it him/herself, provoked and stood right next. Then, I deal with the problem. I tried to find out about the situation” [M., Rūta, 21].

Learning by doing helps selecting activities conducive for the solving of real problems or identification of opportunities: “*I noticed that after sitting like that when he kind of thinks, but does not know what to do next, he starts crying. I try to see this and to propel him to do one thing or another next” [M., Daina, 18];* for learning from oneself and together with others: “*we were sitting and surveying. We examined the questionnaires during the meeting, analysed and discussed them. And we adopted the resolution to start exercise books for these pupils” [M., Daiva, 16];* for learning together and one from another, constructing the knowledge as the resource for decision-making as well as the concepts that the acquired knowledge change the beliefs and the perception of world of those involved.

In the second category, the following sub-categories of the learning through collaboration showed up: *learning in a group, safe setting, commitment to joint activity and construction of confidence*, which revealed rather diverse aspects of learning through collaboration as educational activity enhancing the self-directed learning (see Table 3).

Table 3. Categorisation of statements on learning through collaboration.

Corroborating statements	Sub-category	Category
<i>“It is always simpler to work in a group: you can confer, find out how others do it, how to orient yourself in endless documents” [D., Birutė, 9]; “Another very important thing is to be heard when you speak (like by colleagues or teacher in courses) and to be corrected <...>. If you learn alone, you do not know if you will learn correctly” [V., Jonas, 10]; “We are all special. There are eight of us, so our circle is not large. <...> We discuss the methods and what to do <...>” [M., Ingrida, 30].</i>	Learning in a group	LEARNING THROUGH COLLABORATION
<i>“I had worked in a real company and this learning setting was therefore acceptable to me” [D., Aurė, 7]; “We are all from the same staff, so I feel bolder, we do not have to feel embarrassed because we know each other well” [V., Titas, 9].</i>	Safe setting	
<i>“You have to decide with others what needs to be done, counted, dispatched and when <...> the activity is collective, you are kind of committed to it” [D., Birutė, 7]; “<...> used to provide the lists of literature in the English language and we used to discuss and translate them together” [V., Mindaugas, 8]; “Everybody gather to discuss; different things suit different people, and all these ways are included, and you can choose what is better for you” [M., Jurgita, 13].</i>	Commitment to joint activity	
<i>“I learned to use different computer applications <...> uncertainty and fear to show that you do not know something disappeared” [D., Rita, 78]; “You have to conquer all complexes and fears that you do not know, you will not manage or fail” [V., Jonas, 10]; “It is helpful to hear a suggestion, if you or the social pedagogue, or my colleagues who are already working possibly found a method. We discuss this a little during meetings. Recently there was a meeting of special pedagogues organised. Especially, when a pupil comes to you, let us say, from another teacher, then we inquire a little bit” [M., Giedrė, 34].</i>	Construction of confidence	

Based on the experience of the research participants and by virtue of collaboration, equal partnership relationships and atmosphere of respect to the individuals and trust are being formed, which enable and promote the learners for common activity and form the confidence in their strength, because “*all complexes and fears that you do not know, will not succeed or fail have to be overcome” [D., Valė, 35].*

Furthermore, this form of teaching/learning provides the possibility to talk and confer more, to compare one's perception with that of others – to effectively develop the abilities of critical thinking. The experience of teaching/learning in groups, transposed into situations of life and work, may increase the abilities to work with other people, promotes motivation for learning and more favourable approach to studies and has positive influence on the beliefs and values of the learner. *“Consultations with the working lecturers were very helpful in finding the answers to the questions... in the beginning, it was one extensive consultation. Without their help, it would have been very difficult” [D., Teresė, 53].*

This reveals that favourable relationships and communication skills are essential for collaboration and all of its expression forms, whereas the collaboration competence acquires its true quality when the individuals are actively engaged, i.e. using the skills to maintain the relationships and communicate.

In the third category, based on the learning experiences of the subject groups representing different professional fields (lecturers, teachers and employees of business companies), sub-categories of learning through experience showed up: *problem solving, professional expertise, experience sharing, openness to new experiences*, which reflect the dissemination of learning through experience as educational activity enabling self-directed learning (see Table 4).

Table 4. Categorisation of statements on learning through experience.

Corroborating statements	Sub-category	Category
<i>“In this kind of work, you constantly get to solve the problems: the customer did not reply, did not pay on time <...> in each case, you have to find the solution, which is the interesting part” [D., Saulė, 27]; “At present I attend English courses. Although I know the technical terms and understand what is written, and I can pick up the dictionary and find out, I cannot yet put those words into a sentence and pronounce it” [V., Jonas, 10]; “I tried it one way and another, and I saw that I could not do it. Accidentally. The good thing was that I accidentally found out how to teach him to count” [M., Stefanija, 34].</i>	Problem solving	LEARNING THROUGH EXPERIENCE
<i>“For thirteen years I have been working with the programmes of Junior Achievement Lithuania. They have pupils starting companies <...> this professional expertise helped me a lot in becoming a lecturer” [D., Kristina, 11]; “<...> the technical vocabulary can be learned quickly <...> when you are a specialist, you can easily understand the process, because the terms <...> are international, and if you understand at least a half of the words, you understand the process as well” [V., Stanislav, 2]; “Being in the classroom, I acquire knowledge and experience” [M., Vaiva, 6].</i>	Professional expertise	
<i>“The knowledge we acquired in the course of training and particularly the interaction, experience sharing with others helped. We did so many projects here” [D., Liepa, 6-7]; “People working in international companies should be invited to the English language lectures, <...>. They will tell what is going on in their companies” [V., Vaidotas, 4]; “We open out, unburden ourselves. We also speak about things we succeeded in doing. People tell each other what needs to be done” [M., Asta, 13].</i>	Experience sharing	
<i>“I accept different innovations and experience of other lecturers and representatives of business companies: we invite people from business companies so that the students would have real examples and could interact with the managers of businesses” [D., Janina, 63]; “<...> innovations come daily; ads in the internet are in the English language and you cannot stop, you have to improve” [V., Deivis, 12]; “If I could, I would probably change nothing. Because I learn from them the same way they learn from me” [M., Lina, 10].</i>	Openness to new experiences	

The assessment of the knowledge of previous experience and the perceived previous experience, which is being accumulated for one's all life and is described as a form of thought, are among the most meaningful components of learning of a self-directed learner. The human mind perceives the world based on its experience and not directly on the objective reality, whereas this experience is individual (some of them have little experience, while others are experts). That is why all people learn differently; on the other hand, new knowledge or experiences have to be integrated in the context of teaching/learning, enabling to acquire new experience.

The sub-categorisation of interview statements revealed that the problem solving occurs following the individual experience in problem solving. As stated by the employees of business companies, *"we make efforts not to hire the interpreters, we try to make ourselves understood; we try to speak so much that even hands get tired"* [Vl., Jonas, 10]. All this leads to new experiences, openness to the new experiences and helps initiating new knowledge, improving competences and abilities (*"I believe that the teaching of other subjects in the English language would be beneficial"* [Vl., Gražvydas, 7]).

However the learning of the individual from experience is "socially opened", i.e. it cannot be dissociated from communication with the people, experience sharing and learning from their experience; as a result, self-directed learning occurs the most advantageously through collaboration, while the greatest impetus for this kind of learning is given by efforts to effectively perform the roles of employee and learner and to improve the professional abilities.

During the interviews, the employees of business companies noted that professional expertise, which reveals itself through the individual learning experience of each learner, has great importance (*"I paid much attention to the rules of grammar too"* [Vl., Donatas, 6]) as well as sharing this experience (*"The knowledge we acquired in the course of training and particularly the interaction, experience sharing with others helped. We did so many projects here..."* [D., Liepa, 6-7]). This shows that learning cannot be dissociated from professional life and expertise, because the experiencing of a conscious individual occurs in time, space, society and interrelationships, whereas learning occurs when the learners doubt their beliefs, personal theories and understanding, and create individual knowing through interaction with the environment and their experience.

Discussion

The qualitative content analysis performed invites for a discussion about self-directed learning as a constantly evolving, periodical and controlled process, during which the learning takes place by identifying individual needs, referring to personal experience as well as constructing knowledge. That type of learning process enables the learner to choose appropriate learning strategies when learning is achieved via such activities as acting, relying on one's experience and collaborating with others.

The studies and investigations carried out by a number of authors (Buysse, Sparkman, Wesley, 2003; Dick, 2004) assume that learning by doing occurs within a small group of participants having the following aims: to solve real problems, when each participant understands that "I am a part of the problem, and the problem is a part of me" while taking part in activities of their own free will and assuming the obligations voluntarily; to take the needs and alternatives to the activity of each participant into account; to share the consequences of the activity together with the group etc.

When defining the key principles of learning by doing, authors (Coghlan, Brannick, 2005) state that there can be no learning without action or action without learning; without changing one's activities and oneself, changes in the immediate setting are impossible to initiate.

The research presented revealed that self-directed learning requires social interaction and collaboration. Collaboration enables the learners to improve while learning from each other and thus enhance their professional powers (Hargreaves, 1999), whereas the studies of learn-

ing through collaboration show that this strategy is a firm alternative to traditional competitive learning models seeing that it enables all learners to experience success, to improve the emotional climate, to work in teams, to tolerate each other and to assess themselves positively (Stoll, Fink, 1998). Collaboration enhances the active communication and cooperation of each learner with other members of the group and lead to better learning results while working on study tasks together. Such a learning strategy suggests an opportunity to speak more, discuss more, compare one's own understanding with a variety of others, i.e. to beneficially develop the abilities of critical thinking, motivate the feelings of fellowship, tolerance, respect and self-esteem among members of diverse social groups (Teresevičienė, Gedvilienė, 2003).

Learning through collaboration is not possible to be separated from learning through experience as the latter enables the learner to self-organize and self-control the learning process. The process of learning through experience becomes efficient only when it is purposeful and well-organized. Nonetheless, the learning of individuals from experience closely interacts with specific (separate) contexts, which can be either conducive or non-conducive and shape the experience of the individual in different ways, while the differences between individuals and their ways of learning and emotions in particular influence the character of learning, which is being created reflecting upon experience (Boud, Keogh, Walker, 1999).

Conclusions

Based on modern teaching/learning theories (constructive and social learning, experiential learning and action science), self-directed learning acquires multiaspect meaning and correlates with the transformation of education science to educational paradigm, thus becoming a significant concept in the scientific context of andragogy, requiring new competences of learners and educators.

The conception of self-direction based learning in scientific context is a multidimensional one: it is defined as a strategic attitude towards individual and organisational learning; learning and management process based on proactive attitude; formation of psychical sciences and processes in professional and everyday activities of the learner; enabling – process of development within the time dimension; non-traditional/active way or strategy of learning; quality of learning developed by the individual; personality attributes, characteristics, traits of the learner, etc. On the other hand, this phenomenon has been so far lacking a sufficiently substantiated scientific interpretation and has been approached as a complicated scientific problem, the solution of which requires deeper scientific insights and studies based on methodological approaches to the research of two sciences (management and educology).

The research on the forms of educational activities enhancing self-directed learning revealed that a learner is a “reflecting project”, who regularly rethinks and reconstructs his/her life, work and learning strategies, for whom learning by doing helps initiating the changes in activities and acquiring an active position in life, improving the competences of meta-learning and exploration of reflexive activities; learning through collaboration enables improvement by learning from others and creates the opportunity for professional growth, forms communication skills and commitment to the activity; learning through experience provides the opportunity to understand and assess one's previous personal experience/professional expertise, share/acquire social-cognitive-value experience and to solve the problems constructively. This implies that the forms of educational activities – learning by doing, learning through collaboration and learning through experience – enables the self-directed learning and gives meaning to qualitative characteristics and traits of the self-directed learner's personality.

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Received: October 14, 2013

Accepted: November 11, 2013

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