# Chapter 3
# Assessing Self-Directed Learning at School Level

## ABSTRACT

*Chapter 3 describes the development of an inventory to assess primary school support for inquiry. First, there is a discussion of the role played by the school environment in primary students' learning, and its importance in SDL in particular. Next, there is a description of a framework of a primary school inquiry environment on which is based the assessment instrument, the Primary School Characteristics Inventory (PSCI). This assessment is based on the external (other) influences shown in the model of effective learning in primary students (Chapter 2 Figure 1). The process of pre-testing and trialing the inventory is outlined before the revised version of the inventory was sent to 100 schools across the state of South Australia. Following this, there is an outline of the Primary School Characteristics Inventory used in an intervention study on self-directed learning.*

## INTRODUCTION

The development of primary students as self-directed learners represents a change in curriculum emphasis in South Australian schools where this research was conducted. When such a change is being implemented, the school context is an important consideration because of the influence it exerts on students' learning behavior. Studies that explore classroom-school relations and school-level factors at the elementary (primary) school level

(Perry & Weinstein, 1998) have been advocated because most studies have focused on the effects of the amount of schooling received by children, rather than effects attributable to the quality of their schooling (Rutter & Maughan, 2002). Lombaerts et al., (2007) designed and validated an assessment, the Self-Regulated Learning Inventory for Teachers (SRLIT), that looked at an aspect of SDL. This instrument was developed with the intention that teachers would assess their classrooms in terms of SRL forethought, performance control, and self-reflection. At the time Lombaerts et al., cautioned that there could be other contextual variables that might interfere with teachers' introducing SRL into their classroom practice.

The influence of school level factors on student learning was the focus of Sternberg's (2000) *School Characteristics Inventory* (SCI), which was constructed to develop a profile of a school that would reveal patterns about its structure and functioning that might impede or progress the school moving towards desired goals. Sternberg's inventory was designed to be used by any educational staff to assess the modifiability of their school context prior to carrying out interventions to improve student or teacher performance. Rather than assess school modifiability, or classroom support for student understanding, consideration of effective SDL in primary students means that an assessment is required of support for inquiry at school level because inquiry provides the stimulus for SDL.

## DESCRIBING AND ASSESSING LEARNING IN CONSTRUCTIVIST AND INQUIRY CLASSROOM CONTEXTS

The constructivist approach emphasizes that learner beliefs and attitudes have an important influence on their learning. In constructivist classrooms learning is depicted as a process in which experience plays an important role. In this context the role of the teacher is to encourage higher level thinking, engage with students in dialogue about their learning, and encourage them to participate in dialogue with each other. Instructional practices, such as these, work to sustain the motivation of students for classroom learning. Pintrich (2003) urged that these processes should be examined in constructivist and inquiry classrooms.

15 more pages are available in the full version of this document, which may be purchased using the "Add to Cart" button on the publisher's webpage: [www.igi-global.com/chapter/assessing-self-directed-learning-at-school-level/183258](www.igi-global.com/chapter/assessing-self-directed-learning-at-school-level/183258)

## Related Content

Efficiency of Indigenous and Intercultural Higher Education and Research Programs: The Case of the Autonomous Indigenous University of Mexico
José G. Vargas-Hernándezand Ernesto Guerra-García (2021). *International Journal of Curriculum Development and Learning Measurement (pp. 29-44).*
[www.irma-international.org/article/efficiency-of-indigenous-and-intercultural-higher-education-and-research-programs/285979](www.irma-international.org/article/efficiency-of-indigenous-and-intercultural-higher-education-and-research-programs/285979)

Pastoral Care and Counseling in Early Childhood Years: Implication for Intervention
Joyce Mathwasa (2019). *Cultivating a Culture of Nonviolence in Early Childhood Development Centers and Schools (pp. 192-216).*
[www.irma-international.org/chapter/pastoral-care-and-counseling-in-early-childhood-years/221666](www.irma-international.org/chapter/pastoral-care-and-counseling-in-early-childhood-years/221666)

It Is All in the Name of Good: The Motives for Homeschooling of Israeli Mothers
Avishag Edriand Henriette Dahan Kalev (2021). *Global Perspectives on Home Education in the 21st Century (pp. 109-122).*
[www.irma-international.org/chapter/it-is-all-in-the-name-of-good/266753](www.irma-international.org/chapter/it-is-all-in-the-name-of-good/266753)

Aligning Information Systems Programs With the New ABET-CAC Criteria: The Case of the American University of Kuwait
Ahmad A. Rabaa'iand Aaron Rasheed Rababaah (2020). *International Journal of Curriculum Development and Learning Measurement (pp. 79-107).*
[www.irma-international.org/article/aligning-information-systems-programs-with-the-new-abet-cac-criteria/260749](www.irma-international.org/article/aligning-information-systems-programs-with-the-new-abet-cac-criteria/260749)

Response to Intervention in Middle and High School Mathematics
Lynn Gannon Pattersonand Meagan Musselman (2015). *Examining Response to Intervention (RTI) Models in Secondary Education (pp. 129-155).*
[www.irma-international.org/chapter/response-to-intervention-in-middle-and-high-school-mathematics/134228](www.irma-international.org/chapter/response-to-intervention-in-middle-and-high-school-mathematics/134228)