

## Chapter 13

# Self-Sustaining Ecosystem for Learning and Communication: Self-Directed Professional Development as a Desired Learning Outcome

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### ABSTRACT

*The global society faces a number of challenges and risks. In order to adapt, it is important to have liquid learning and communication skills in order to be flexible and adaptive to new knowledge. Therefore, there is a growing demand for smart individuals demonstrating a deep desire for self-directed professional and life development. Scientific research into self-directed professional development strategies is of crucial importance. A person who aims at self-directed professional development is the one who knows and uses certain mechanisms, methods, and techniques to build and update work-related knowledge, qualities, and skills, thus planning and tracking his own career growth to become competitive in the global market and to keep the static and dynamic equilibrium of the global society in balance. In real life, students seldom recognize the importance of self-directed development as a learning skill for their personal independence, and for the static and dynamic equilibrium of the global society as a whole; thus, they do it spontaneously, inconsistently, and inefficiently.*

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The global society faces a number of challenges and risks. In order to adjust to new realities it is important to have liquid learning and communication skills in order to be flexible and adaptive to new knowledge so as to demonstrate your professional competence in the workplace. Therefore, there is a growing demand for smart individuals demonstrating a deep desire for self-directed professional life-long development. Scientific research into self-directed professional development strategies is of crucial importance. A person who aims at self-directed professional development is the one who knows and uses certain mechanisms, methods and techniques to build and update work-related knowledge, qualities, and skills thus planning and tracking his own career growth to become competitive in the global market and to keep the static and dynamic equilibrium of the global society in balance. In real life, students seldom recognize the importance of self-directed development as a learning skill for their personal independence, and to the benefit of the global society as a whole; thus, they do it spontaneously, inconsistently and inefficiently.

Thus, the research objective is to design an ecosystem-based theoretical model of self-directed professional development competence formation for future specialists using the training of social workers as a research environment.

The problems to be solved within this research are as follows:

- To reveal the background for self-directed development strategies based on literature review;
- To make a distinction between self-directed development and self-directed learning;
- To define the concept of self-directed professional development competence;
- To develop an ecosystem-based model of self-directed professional development competence formation for the students;
- To test the designed model by implementing it for a group of students doing a bachelor's degree in social work;
- To conduct a survey for the students to reveal their levels of self-directed development competence before and after implementing the model;
- To prove the efficiency of the model proposed.

## **BACKGROUND: SELF-DIRECTED DEVELOPMENT – LITERATURE REVIEW**

This research methodology is based on the didactical and educational psychology statements, including:

- The didactical approaches developed by a number of Russian and international scientists including V.I. Andreev, N.Sh. Valeeva, I.A. Zimnyaya, M.I. Makhmutov, V.A. Slastenin, A.V. Khutorskoy, M.J. Gremmo, A.L. Wenden, R. Ulseth, G.R. Norman, H.G. Schmidt, and etc.;
- Content selection theory, educational methods and technologies developed by E. Choi, R. Lindquist, Y. Song, S.B. Malan, M. Ndlovu, P. Engelbrecht, L.N. Makarova, L.N. Babina, S.V. Vachkov, C.J. Bonk, M.M. Lee, X. Kou, S. Xu, F.-R. Sheu, M.F. Ali, L.M. Tahir, M.N. Said, J. Junaidi, N.A. Atan, A. Hahsan, Featherstone, H.M. Holec, and etc.

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