

# **PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

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**Lesson 1: Self-Managed Learning & Life-  
long Learning**

**LO1 Understand how self-managed learning  
can enhance lifelong development**

# PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- LO1: Understand how self-managed learning can enhance lifelong development.
  - Evaluate approaches to self-managed learning
  - Propose ways in which lifelong learning in personal and professional contexts could be encouraged.
  - Evaluate the benefits of self-managed learning to the individual and organisation.

# What is Self-Managed Learning (SML)?

- Created by Professor Ian Cunningham in 1978
  - Drew on his experiences of action learning and independent study
  - Underpinned by Gregory Bateson's theory of levels of learning
    - brought the concept of 'learning to learn' to the behavioural sciences).
- A structured approach to learning with two main elements:
  - the Learning Agreement
  - the Learning Group.
- *The agreement is between the students, who undertakes to pursue their learning goals, and the learning group, who undertake to support them in this.*

# Definition of Self-Managed Learning

- SML is a specific learning approach derived from elements of several other methods, including self-development, self-learning, and action learning.
- It is a holistic approach to the individual and is underpinned by strong values.
- SML is a learning approach that mirrors the management process.
  - “SML focuses on individual responsibility for learning in a way that reflects the natural management process as opposed to being taught in an impassive, more traditional way.”

Valerie Garrow, 1998

# Definition of Self-Managed Learning

- Self Managed Learning is not an unstructured approach, but it allows a lot of freedom to the student.
  - Every student is required to create a Learning Agreement
  - Every learning group meeting is organized around the students' individual time slots
  - The choice of learning goals lies with the student as does the choice of how they wish to use their individual time
    - the only restriction is that they do have to have learning goals and they do have to use their individual time for something relevant to their learning.
- Self Managed Learning process operates in a different way to that found, typically, in the school context.
  - While the process supports students in pursuing their specific learning goals the aim goes beyond those goals.
    - many things we learn today will become obsolete tomorrow.
  - The main aim is to help students to become active learners.

# Definition of Self-Managed Learning

- Within most school activity, the teacher takes the initiative in terms of what is to be learnt during a particular lesson and how it is to be learnt.
- By removing the need for students to initiate the What and How of their learning, this can engender a dependence on the teacher and a general passivity in relation to learning.
- In later life, learning is rarely provided on this basis.

# Main Elements of SML

- The **Learning Agreement** comprises the student's answers to five questions which provide a robust framework for goal-setting:
  - Where have I been?
    - bringing the student's attention to past experiences which may be relevant to a present goal
  - Where am I now?
    - ask them to examine where they are now in relation to where they want to get to (something often ignored when the focus is too exclusively on the goal)
  - Where do I want to get to?
  - How will I get there?
  - How will I know I have arrived?
    - requires measures by which success will be evaluated (all too frequently missing from even corporate change initiatives)

# Main Elements of SML

- **The Learning Group**
  - This comprises six students (of roughly the same age) with an adult learning group adviser.
    - The learning group adviser is not a subject expert, their expertise is in learning.
    - Their role within the group is to ensure that the structure of the learning group meetings is adhered to and that the focus on learning is maintained.



# Main Elements of SML

- The body of the learning group meeting is where each student has their 'individual time'.
  - they are the focus of the group's attention.
  - They are able to decide how they will use their time.
  - they will be reporting activities undertaken toward one or more of their goals and the next steps they are contemplating.
  - The other members will be questioning them on what they have done, what went well, what didn't, how they might approach the matter differently and what they have learnt from their experiences.
  - In considering their next steps they could find themselves challenged by the group if it is felt they are ignoring either potential problems or potential opportunities..

# Main Elements of SML

- Self-Managed Learning encourages in a student not only independence, of both thought and action, but also interdependence:
  - The ability to work with others and to draw on their experience, knowledge, perspectives, and assistance and, in turn, to contribute this themselves to their fellow group members
  - Most students find their learning group a supportive environment, even while it is where they are most likely to be challenged
    - how they are thinking about or going about achieving their goals;
    - their behaviour in the group
  - During an SML programme a learning group may, prompted by a student's learning goals, go out to visit a workplace or higher educational establishment.
  - Alternatively, an exemplar of a particular profession or ability may be invited into the learning group meeting to be interviewed by a student wanting to gain insight into a world of experience which is unknown to them.

# Life-Long Learning Defined

- Learning that is pursued throughout life
  - Flexible
  - Diverse
  - Available at different times
  - In different places
- Crosses sectors
  - Promoting learning beyond traditional schooling
  - Throughout adult life

# Life-Long Learning Defined

## Pillars of Education

Learning  
to Know

Learning  
to Do

Learning  
to Live  
With  
Others

Learning  
to Be

# Life-Long Learning Defined

## Learning to Know

- Mastering learning tools rather than acquisition of structured knowledge.

## Learning to Do

- Equipping people for the types of work needed now and in the future including innovation and adaptation of learning to future work environments.

## Learning to Live With Others

- Peacefully resolving conflict, discovering other people and their cultures, fostering community capability, individual competence and capacity, economic resilience, and social inclusion.

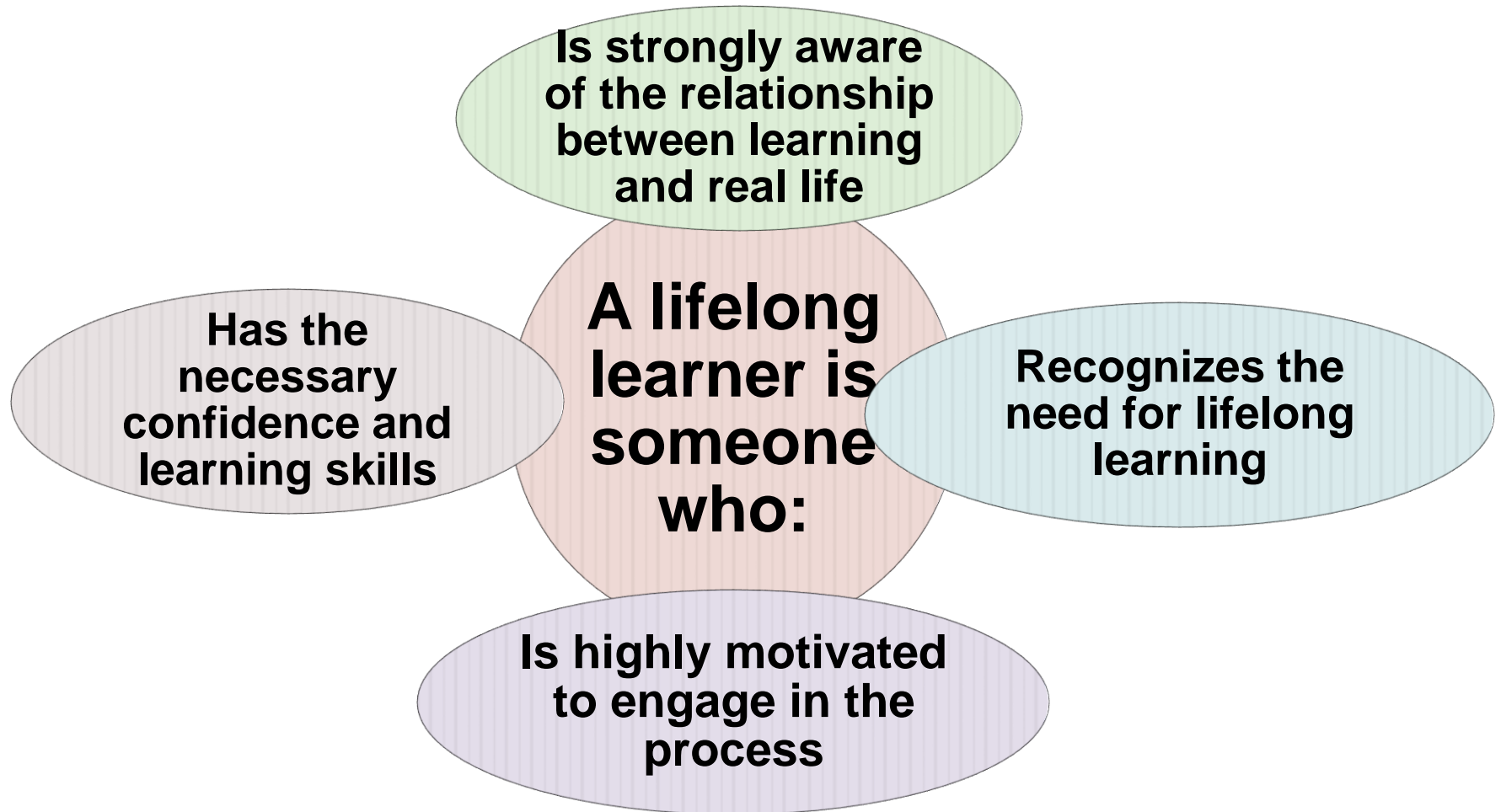
## Learning to Be

- education contributing to a person's complete development: mind and body, intelligence, sensitivity, aesthetic appreciation and spirituality.

# Why Life-Long Learning?

- Learning is too important to be left to schools and universities
- The responsibility for learning throughout life and from life lies with individuals
  - Lifelong learning is sustainable learning
  - It relies on self-directed individual initiatives rather than handing down of knowledge from experts or a central authority.
- The term lifelong learning was first used 30 years ago by Edgar Faure in his seminal work, *Learning to be*, and adopted by UNESCO as a blueprint for universal education.
- The concept was intended to embody the need for democracy, equal opportunity, and individual self-fulfilment, which would only be possible if the tools for learning were available to all, and not restricted to a privileged elite.
- Not only should learning be lifelong, it should also be “life-wide”:
  - learning cannot be confined to formal educational institutions, but rather is seen to take place in a wide variety of settings – including the workplace and in social and recreational contexts.

# Who Is A Life-Long Learner?



# Encouraging Life-Long Learning

- stress student activity and task performance
- opportunities for meaningful personal interaction
- opportunities for collaborative team learning
- assessment need to be more authentic
  - provide constructive feedback
  - include elements of peer and self-assessment
- students encouraged to reflect on the way they learn
- encourage integration of information and skills
- recognise individual differences among learners
- learning tasks should be challenging but achievable for the learners involved
- Control of educational goals and decisions needs to be shared



# References

- Skolverket (2000) Lifelong Learning and Lifewide Learning, Stockholm, The National Agency for Education
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- <http://itari.in/categories/lifelonglearning/ltrainingvslifelonglerarning.pdf>