

# Learning Environment Design Tactics for Scaffolding Self-Direction

## Pillars of Self-Directed Learning

**Motivation.** Learners value the development of this particular knowledge base or skill and are willing to invest in learning more.

**Self-Awareness.** Learners have wherewithal to assess their own strengths and opportunities in this knowledge base or skill. (That is, they know what they need to learn and will be able to tell if they have learned it.)

**Attention.** Learners know specifically what is important to learn in this knowledge base or skill and know what to look for when they engage with learning resources.

**Intention.** Learners will know where they will be applying this knowledge base or skill.



**Reflective Practices.** Learners have capacity to make meaning from the resources and activities they encounter.

**Persistence.** Learners will likely push through any barriers and continue developing themselves over time if needed.

**Resourcefulness.** Learners have the capability and savvy to locate and vet resources that are relevant and useful.

**Relationship Strength.** Learners know who they can go to for assistance, and those people are willing to help.

**Engagement.** Learners have access to materials that are relevant, interesting, interactive, and memorable.

**Time.** Learners have time to pursue learning during the workday.

Source: [Challenges of learning in the flow of work: Scaffolding self-directed learning](#). By Catherine Lombardo (2016) *International Journal of HRD Practice, Policy, and Research* 1(2).

## Tactics for Scaffolding Self-Directed Learning

### To strengthen:

### Try these tactics:

Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Drawing connections between knowledge, skills, work tasks, and success.</li><li>▪ Enlisting support of formal and informal leaders to actively promote importance.</li></ul>
Self-Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Providing self-assessment tools with recommended next steps</li><li>▪ Supporting learners in articulating goals for learning and application</li><li>▪ Documenting an activity guide for new-to-role learners</li><li>▪ Creating a checklist for on-the-job training and coaching</li></ul>
Attention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Pointing out what can be learned from specific activities and resources</li><li>▪ Advising learners on specific formal learning events for a given stage in their development</li><li>▪ Suggesting reflection questions for readings and activities</li><li>▪ Seeking out resources in learners' preferred formats (e.g. video, podcast, books, articles)</li><li>▪ Providing different views of materials depending on role or level of experience</li></ul>

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To strengthen:	Try these tactics:
Intention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Categorizing resources by what people might be trying to do</li><li>▪ Selecting resources that are specifically relevant to learners' role or industry</li><li>▪ Suggesting next steps when an activity is concluded</li><li>▪ Providing application suggestions and exercises.</li><li>▪ Using contextualized examples, role plays, and simulations.</li></ul>
Reflective Practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Providing reflective questions to accompany learning materials</li><li>▪ Setting expectation to discuss learning with peers or managers</li></ul>
Persistence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Setting expectation that promotes longer term development goals</li><li>▪ Promoting the use of interim learning goals (core, intermediate, advanced skills)</li><li>▪ Recognizing skill development (e.g. informally, through badging, in reviews)</li></ul>
Resourcefulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Providing learning environments or ecosystems that are robust and easy to use</li><li>▪ Promoting use of tools and techniques already being utilized</li><li>▪ Teaching internet search skills</li></ul>
Relationship Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Introducing learners to subject matter experts or to each other</li><li>▪ Identifying people to follow on social media and suggesting specific social media tools, shared repositories, and hashtags</li><li>▪ Recommending professional organizations and conferences</li><li>▪ Providing an expert directory</li><li>▪ Enabling profile pages that give learners the chance to share both facts and personality</li><li>▪ Offering guidance to ensure developer-learner pairs have effective interactions with one another</li></ul>
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Selecting resources and activities based on level of engagement</li><li>▪ Ensuring at least a subset of resources and activities provide deep interaction and interpersonal communication</li><li>▪ Taking an active role to generate discussion online</li></ul>
Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Incorporating resources into systems employees need to do the work (integrated performance support)</li><li>▪ Creating a resource portal to make searching for resources more efficient</li><li>▪ Allocating sufficient time for learning when needed.</li></ul>

Adopted from: **Learning Environments by Design** (chapter 3). By Catherine Lombardozzi (2015) ATD Press.

**Learning is not attained by chance;  
it must be sought for with ardor and attended to with diligence.**  
*~ Abigail Adams*

**For more, see [www.L4LP.com/learning-environments](http://www.L4LP.com/learning-environments)**