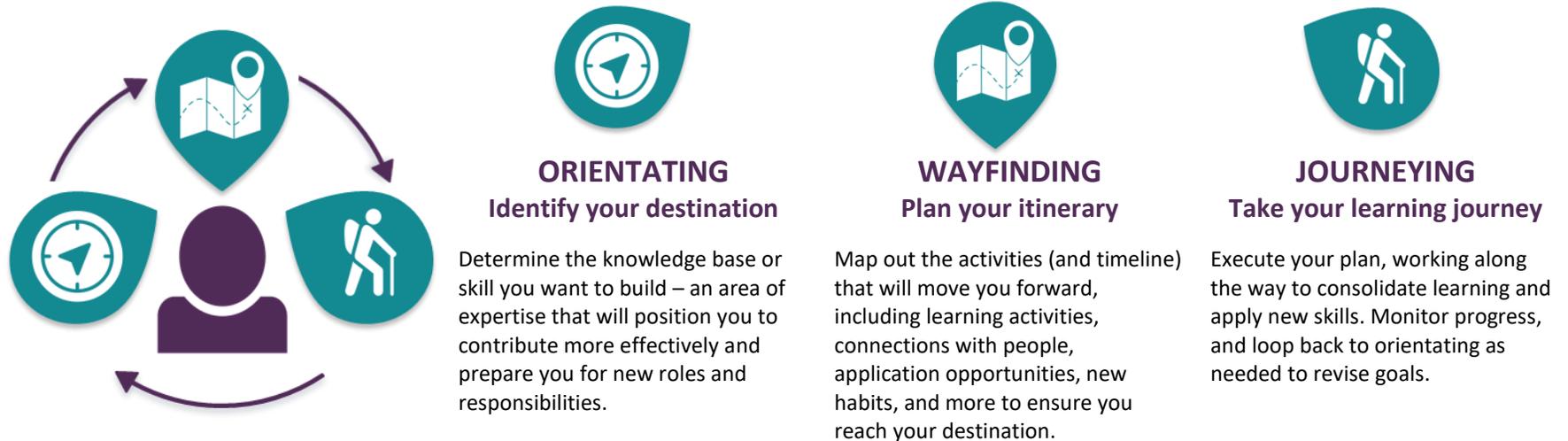




Charting Your Course for Self-Directed Learning
Your professional development journey starts here.

Welcome to a bold new learning expedition!

The process outlined in these pages will help you to make a real plan to develop the knowledge and skills you need to feel effective in your role and advance your career. There are three milestones in charting your course:



ORIENTATING: IDENTIFY YOUR DESTINATION



Your Destination

Name the topic or skill on which you want to focus. For the level of effort that requires charting a course, focus on an area of expertise that requires depth, thought, and action. Advice on defining a destination is found in the Detailed Guidance section.

Your Compass Point

Write a paragraph explaining **why** this knowledge or skill is important to you. Include comments on the context in which you hope to apply the knowledge and skill. You'll need a strong "why" to maintain focus and persist through any obstacles you encounter on your learning journey.

Your Measure of Success

Picture a continuum from novice to expert in the topic or skill that is the focus of your self-directed learning project. Mark where you are now with a circle. Mark where you want to be at the end of the journey with a flag. You'll come back to this at each waypoint to self-assess your progress (and perhaps move your goal marker as well).



Explain your thinking in marking these two points so you'll remember it when you reevaluate at your waypoints.

WAYFINDING: PLAN YOUR ITINERARY



Planning your itinerary is a two-step process. You want to first spend time identifying Options for learning resources and activities. The potential options chart will give you a sense of what might be included. Once you've investigated options, then you can put together a curated Itinerary by picking and choosing exactly what you want to do at each stage of your journey.

Note that each segment of your journey should have a variety of activities for learning, for processing your learning, and for applying it. I recommend you have at least one element in each row so that you take advantage of a wide range of learning strategies (informal, social, experiential – and formal if needed).

These are the stopovers for a successful learning journey:

Exploration: Curate resources and formal learning activities. These are the resources that you use as study materials to enrich your understanding of your topic or skill.

Interpersonal connections: Social learning strategies should be included in any plan. Connections can range from following people on social media to deliberately engaging with a peer or mentor to discuss what you are learning and how you plan to apply it. You should consider recruiting some of your social connections as co-learners; traveling this journey with others who are committed to similar development goals can be very powerful.

Learning activities: While study can make a big impact, you should also plan to do something that transforms the learning into guidance for future action. In this row, assign yourself "homework" that takes your learning further. Ideas include: creating a job aid, writing a reflective journal, synthesizing notes from various sources, practicing key behaviors, or sharing your learning with others in some way. Be creative. Some of these activities should be effortful, as thinking hard has more impact long term.

Application: Commit to specific ideas that will allow you to learn by doing *and* to apply your learning (experiential learning). List specific projects and deliverables and your roles and responsibilities related to them. Note exactly what learning you hope to extract from the experience.

Habituation: Two kinds of activities are useful habits for the journey. First, note habits that support your ongoing commitment to learning (e.g. read every day, bookmark resources in one place (Diigo, Padlet), write a blog post weekly). Also determine the routine practices you want to put into play to solidify your learning in this particular area of study – a specific way you will routinely apply the skills, for example.

Waypoint target date: Fill in the date by which you plan to complete the segment.

Self-assessment of progress: At each waypoint, you should pause to reflect on what you are learning and consider what adjustments you want to make for the segments ahead.

Quality-check the plan

You will know you have a workable and well-planned itinerary if you have...

- ✓ A clear destination or vision
- ✓ High quality learning materials
- ✓ Dynamic companions
- ✓ Deep reflection and consolidation activities
- ✓ Challenging, authentic practice and application opportunities
- ✓ A planned but flexible itinerary (waypoints, schedule)

Potential Learning Options

Use this chart to prompt your thinking in developing options for your itinerary. The component list is adapted from the Learning Environment Design framework, described in **Learning Environments by Design** (Catherine Lombardozi, 2015). It captures a good range of possible resources and activities you can include in your learning journey.

 <p>Learning Resources</p>	 <p>Formal Training & Education</p>	 <p>Interpersonal Connections</p>	 <p>Learning & Development Activities</p>	 <p>Experiential Learning</p>
<p><i>What are the specific resources you could use to increase your knowledge of this subject?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Books, articles, internet resources • Podcasts, vodcasts • Educational videos • Microlearning and resource feeds (e.g. Degreed, Anders Pink, Axonify, thought leader blog feeds, etc.) • RSS feeds and other filtered information feeds from news sources and relevant web sites • Job aids and performance support resources • Online databases and knowledge management systems • Internal resources from your organization (e.g. shared documents and handbooks) • Briefings and communications • Procedure manuals and technical manuals 	<p><i>What courses, webinars or learning modules might be available that could provide foundation or accelerate your development?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courseware and seminars, internal or external, in any delivery format • On-the-job training • Academic courses and degree programs • Certificate, certification, and licensing programs • MOOCs (massive open online courses, from Coursera for example) • Conferences and professional meetings 	<p><i>Who are the specific people who can serve as guides, mentors, or sounding boards as you develop? What organizations or conferences might bring you close to others who have knowledge and skill in this area?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Peers and co-learners • Social media connections (blogs, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, other social media, social bookmarking, etc.) • Group forums or discussion boards • Known experts and go-to people inside and outside your organization • Communities of practice • Mentor relationships and developmental networks • Coaches • Professional networks (live and online), e.g. professional organizations, user groups 	<p><i>What activities can you assign yourself that will help to generate and solidify learning and performance in this area? What development activities are available to you?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journaling / blogging • Note-taking • Deliberate studying • Making and using job aids • Purposefully observing • Engaging in regular reflection • Asking for and acting on feedback • Practicing • Performing simulations • Planning how to integrate behaviors into routine practices 	<p><i>What opportunities do you have (or can you create) to practice and apply your learning?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learning by doing • Engaging in critical reflection • Experimenting • Collaborating • Engaging in stretch assignments • Taking on relevant side projects or part-time gigs • Engaging in after-action reviews • Using self-assessment tools to monitor progress • Self-monitoring and analysis of outcomes and feedback

Itinerary >>

Map out your itinerary by selecting options from the list above and filling in additional activities as needed. Fill in your initial foray first. If you can already see the next phase of the journey, fill that in as well. Otherwise, come back to it at your first Waypoint. See complete directions in Detailed Guidance.

Learn through:	Learning Journey Segment 1	Learning Journey Segment 2
Exploration	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Interpersonal connections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Learning activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Application	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Habituation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Waypoint target date	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Self-Assessment of Progress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

JOURNEYING: TAKE YOUR LEARNING JOURNEY

While journeying, follow your itinerary but keep an eye out for interesting side journeys. Allow yourself to dally when you find yourself in an interesting place. (Don't be a slave to the calendar; but at the same time, don't forget your ultimate destination, time allocation, and budget.)



Learning Process

Learning requires more than consuming information. Be sure to engage in the activities you outlined in your itinerary, and add additional ones as needed on the journey. Study with intention. Nurture the connections you are making. Work on developing the habits you have outlined, and find as many ways as possible to apply the knowledge and skills you are developing.

Tracking Progress

On your journey, be sure to keep a record of your progress, whether it's a Captain's Log (learning journal) or some other strategy. That will ensure that you are processing and capturing your learning and your accomplishments in applying the knowledge and skill. There are many possibilities for your captain's log: work out loud, write a journal or blog, or document your status at your waypoints.

Waypoint

When you get to your waypoint, that's your opportunity to reflect and reassess. Consider whether your activities thus far should prompt any additions or changes to the segments of your journey that lie ahead. Perhaps you want to dig deeply into a particular concept you've encountered. Or perhaps some part of your plan has become less relevant or interesting and your itinerary needs to be revised. Evaluate your progress against your goals and note the ways you have (or have not) advanced your knowledge and skills.

**We don't receive wisdom; we must discover it for ourselves
after a journey that no one can take for us or spare us.**

~ Marcel Proust