Self-Directed Learning: A Personal Assessment

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A self-directed learner is someone who chooses to take charge of and be actively involved in their learning and takes the opportunities available to them to improve their understanding and personal experience of education. Accounting for their strengths and weaknesses, a self-directed learner takes a personal inventory of goals and creates a roadmap to achievement based on careful observation and awareness of what learning methods work best for them. Taking interest in one’s education through active listening, interacting with peers, seeking guidance and direction from both peers and instructors, reading the material presented, note-taking, taking interest in the topics presented and personally relating them to real-world experience, and asking questions for clarification are all essential aspects of being a self-directed learner. Additionally, learning how to prioritize obligations and responsibilities promotes good time management skills related to stress management and success with learning.

My biggest weaknesses as a student are figuring out how to effectively manage my time across all my responsibilities and commitments and my perfectionism. While working a full-time job and being a full-time mother of four children (and all that comes with it) were considered before I decided to continue my education, I did not realize how stressful it would prove to be at times. There are always distractions and I find that I stress more than I should when I feel pressured for time. I know things always work out because the option of failure does exist for me. My perfectionism can be considered either positive or negative. I tend to hyper-focus on my writing, as I have high expectations regarding my written work, and I expect nothing less than the best from myself.

In the past, my perfectionism and being so scattered through my obligations have been an obstacle problem for me. However, nearly two decades have passed since I first began my college education, and the experiences, knowledge, and understanding I have gained from life during that time, have ignited a fire of determination within me. I knew what I was getting into when I decided to continue my education and achieving the educational goals laid out years ago is something I must do for my well-being. The awareness and understanding of what I must do to succeed in times of adversity have made me more than ready to accomplish my goals. Actively involving myself as a self-directed learner is the only way to make it happen.

My two biggest strengths are my determination and my understanding of what I want. When I first started college right out of high school, I was young and had no idea what I wanted in life, nor did I understand anything about life. My childhood was very sheltered, and life choices opened me up to a world I did not know existed and had no clue how to survive and thrive in. I have been through a lot, but those experiences have molded the person I am today into a go-getter that does not quit and does not believe in failure. I know who I am and what I want regarding the place I want to make for myself in this world. These strengths have laid a solid foundation for becoming a self-directed learner.

I hold myself accountable for my thoughts, beliefs, and resulting actions every day, inclusive of my learning responsibilities. I know what I need to do, and I do it. When issues arise or adversity strikes, I use the coping strategies I have learned throughout life to review the situation and decide on the next steps. Continuing to utilize critical thinking skills and open-mindedness concerning peer assessment and collaborative learning, asking clarifying questions of my peers and instructors, and find ways to apply newly acquired knowledge to real-world applications for greater retention of information are methods I will use to hold myself accountable for my growth as a learner. Allowing myself to comprehend the thoughts, ideas, and perspectives of others having different experiences and understanding than me provide an opportunity for mutual, respectful growth, and promotes interaction and collaboration with peers that are necessary for the achievement of my goals.

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