

Title:

Doors of Opportunity: Lifelong Learning Narratives from Mindsets to Self-directed Study

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Abstract:

Each student has their (his/her) own individual learning journey throughout life that includes “doors of opportunity. These doors of opportunity represent milestones that students encounter especially as they transition from high school to university. These doors have the potential to foster their holistic development in addition to their development within their chosen major course of study. In the current global context, learners are challenged to understand, synthesize, and operationalize knowledge, skills, and attitudes in everchanging environments. Stated simply, these everchanging environments offer “Doors of opportunity” as chances for learners to develop themselves towards not only good academic grades but to also become self-directed reflective lifelong learners. Learners must develop the awareness motivation and engagement abilities to maximize their own development as a student, citizen and lifelong learner.

This presentation has three components. First, I use narrative stories as mentorship examples of learning opportunities at the post-secondary level. Second, students are actively challenged to investigate their own learning journey from high-school to university. It will encourage students to look at the current strengths and challenges that they face within their own learning identity (Biography). Third, this presentation is meant to actively engage students to consider their mindset as it pertains to learning awareness, choices, goal-setting, motivation and reflection. Overall, the learners should leave the presentation motivated to understand, synthesize, and apply their learning potential.

Definitions:

Lifelong learning will be defined as “the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process, which stimulates and empowers individuals to **acquire** all of the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values towards the understanding they will require throughout their lifetimes, and to **apply** them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances and environments”. (Adapted from Longworth, 2006 p. 62) The learner will enter into learning environments in elementary, secondary

Self-directed learning is a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help from others, in **DIAGNOSING** their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying human and material resources, and implementing appropriate learning strategies. Berk, Mann & Ogan (2006) state that “self-regulation is central to our conception of what it means to be human-the foundation for choice and decision making, for mastery of higher cognitive processes (p.74).

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Kevin M. Watson Short Bio:

Kevin M. Watson is a Learning Scientist at the University of Calgary. He holds two master's degrees from the UK. He holds an MSc. in Applied Professional Studies in Lifelong Learning and an MSc. in the Psychology and Neuroscience for Mental Health. He holds bachelor's degrees in Education (ESL, English Literature, Drama) and Human Kinetics from the University of British Columbia (UBC) and a minor in English literature. Further, he holds a Graduate Diploma in Systemic Functional Linguistics from UBC. He is Teacher Regulation Board (TRB) certified in Canada and holds a TESOL Certificate with a Practicum. For the past three years, Kevin has been working as learning specialist and advisor in medical education. Previously Kevin has taught English, Japanese Studies and Sport Marketing in Japan. Kevin has taught several subjects around the globe in Abu Dhabi, the USA, Japan, Thailand, and Barbados as well as in his home in Canada. These subjects include ESL and ESL, English, Literature and Poetry, Global Studies, Lifelong Learning, Cultural Studies, Personal and Professional Development and Employability, among others.

Kevin is interested in phenomenological hermeneutic research and IPA methodology that is committed to exploring the interpretive lived experiences of students. He is committed to student development, curriculum design, leadership, and enjoys investigating student learning, stress, mentorship and self-care. Kevin was most recently the course director for Essentials of Lifelong Learning Courses for struggling medical students and the coordinator of the mindsets for medicine workshops and cognitive skills workshops. He also teaches employability and conducts faculty development workshops in professionalism and professional communication. His roots are in recreation, leadership, community service, and youth work.

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