

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN – LA CROSSE

Graduate Studies

THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION
OF AN INDIVIDUALIZED SELF-ASSESSMENT
PROCESS FOR LIFE-LONG LEARNING

A Graduate Project Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree
of Master of Science in Community Health Education

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THE DEVELOPMENT, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION
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FOR LIFE-LONG LEARNING

By Carrol D. Hunder

We recommend acceptance of this Graduate Project in partial fulfillment of the candidate's requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Community Health Education.

The candidate has completed the oral defense of the Graduate Project.



September 20, 2017

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September 20, 2017

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ABSTRACT

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This Capstone graduate project details the development of an individualized self-assessment process for life-long learning, its implementation, and evaluation. The goal was to enable the author to identify and engage in areas for self-growth at the time of the project development, and potentially prepare that process for use by others. The process included an exploration of literature relative to life-long learning; discovery of an appropriate self-assessment instrument that would assess learning dimensions; development of a model to provide a visual presentation of prioritized self-growth areas; and development of activities to strengthen self-growth areas along with outputs and potential outcomes for those activities. It was the intent of the author to document the entire process in order to move forward in the author's personal life-long learning journey, as well as to prepare this process for potential use by others in their life-long learning journeys. The discoveries along the way in this process are documented in the conclusions and recommendations, as well as through the self-reflections of the author.

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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

Overview

Life-long Learning is a concept that the author wanted to learn more about going back to graduate school for her Master's degree as a septuagenarian. The author's advisor, Dr. Gary Gilmore, strongly suggested this may be an area of interest to the author. The author realized she is a life-long learner, however, was uncertain where she might be along the continuum of life-long learning. The author focused her graduate project on the self-aligned exploration of learning in general, relative to life-long learning with the intention of developing a process that would move her into the future with next steps along her journey of life-long learning.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this project was the development, implementation, and evaluation of an individualized self-assessment process for life-long learning. This assessment process would enable the author to identify areas for self-growth during the Graduate Project period of time, and beyond for herself, and potentially prepare that process for use by others.

Rationale

The author undertook this graduate project in life-long learning to complete her Master's degree Capstone project. The project was a personal growth endeavor in which

the author gained knowledge of what she has learned about herself through this process. The author integrated that knowledge into her own life, as well as shared the process with others, including family, friends, and community members. In addition, the author gained a greater understanding of how she learns and might be able to contribute as a more authentic learner to the learning community in general.

Literature Review

Historical Perspective

Life-long learning became a key concept in the 1970's because of initiatives particularly from three international organizations: The Council of Europe advocated *permanent education*; The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) called for *recurrent education*; and a United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) report had the broadest influence and used the term *lifelong education*. Educational and political leaders from the United States usually adopted the term *life-long learning* and applied it to adult education (StateUniversity.com., 2017).

Life-long learning is a generic term that is difficult to define. Life-long learning includes learning from childhood and early schooling for some, while others treat it in terms of adult learning. A statement resulting from a collaboration of the European Life-long learning Initiative and the American Council on Education provides an expression of broader acceptance (StateUniversity.com., 2017).

Life-long learning is the development of human potential through a continuously supportive process which stimulates and empowers individuals to acquire all the knowledge, values, skills, and understanding they will require throughout their

lifetimes and to apply them with confidence, creativity and enjoyment in all roles, circumstances, and environments (Longworth and Davies, p. 22)

This definition includes basic elements of life-long learning: a belief in the idea of lifetime human potential and realization; efforts to facilitate achievement of the skills, knowledge, and aptitudes necessary for a successful life; recognition that learning takes place in many ways and places, including formal educational systems and non-formal experiences (employment, military service, civic participation, self-initiated activity), along with the need to provide supportive systems which will adapt to individual differences that encourage and facilitate individuals to achieve self-direction (StateUniversity.com., 2017).

Even though learning takes place in many ways and places, including formal and non-formal experiences, Manual London (2011) believes that learning is all about change, with change driving learning. Change uncovers and discovers gaps between what is going to be, or between what was, and what is now. Change creates opportunities and imposes demands. Learning can bring about change by creating new capabilities and opening the door to new and unexpected opportunities. As such, learning is risky. It upsets the status quo, raising questions and uncertainties. London (2011) describes a traditional definition of life-long learning as “all learning undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills, and competencies within a personal perspective.” London suggests that there are no limits as to how far we can grow as individuals and societies. Theories of development indicate that many people do not reach their peak of growth, let alone reach their full potential. A key message from London (2011) is that there is value in people taking responsibility for their own learning

and what they learn through their everyday experiences, as well as the learning experiences as they face major challenges and transitions in their lives. People will make continuous learning a habit, and become generative learners who are open and actively seek new knowledge, ideas, and experiences.

Life-long Learning for the Aging Adult

In the article *The Role of Aging in Adult Learning: Implications for Instructors in Higher Education*, David Crawford (2004) cites that humans begin learning at birth and generally continue throughout life, but the question is how much is welcomed, learned, or valued varies from one individual to the next (Shepard, 2002). In the past, people may have considered formal education and learning beyond age fifty of little value to society given the limited life span to utilize the knowledge. Some have even considered pursuing additional knowledge as self-centered and viewed work beyond retirement at sixty-two or sixty-five as unwarranted except for financial consideration. Crawford (2004) also supports the idea that adults are very capable of learning well into their seventies, and it will take effort on the part of instructors to understand and implement strategies appropriate to the ways of the adult learner.

Nancy Merz Nordstrom (2008) in her article *Top 10 Benefits of Life-long Learning* (2008), characterizes life-long learning as a health club for your brain. Even at the age of fifty, Nordstrom (2008) offers the Top Ten Benefits of Life-long learning as helping to: “enrich self-fulfilled lives; make new friends and relationships; involve us as active contributors to society; find meaning in our lives; adapt to change; make the world a better place; increase our wisdom; create a curious, hungry mind; open the mind; and develop natural abilities.”

Future of Life-Long Learning

“We live in a time when political, economic, and human issues confront us as serious as we have ever faced in the history of human life on our planet” according to Bosco (2007, p. 7) in his article *Life-Long Learning: What? Why? How?* Bosco (2007) believes we will only move forward to a better future if we succeed in making learning over the entire lifespan for everyone a reality. Life-long learning has become a popular topic, and a Google search of the term life-long learning results in a great deal of literature devoted to life-long learning indicating a high level of interest in life-long learning. Key aspects deemed important to the author are summarized in the subsequent commentary.

Life-Long Learning Assessment

Within formal education, Keston H. Fulcher (2008) in the article *Curiosity: A Link to Assessing Life-long learning* questions how well higher education is fostering life-long learning. Fulcher believes the questions are largely unknown because life-long learning is assessed either poorly, or more commonly, not at all. In this article, Fulcher discusses an approach for assessing life-long learning via students' self-reported curiosity, and concludes that further research should be done to explore the strong relationship between curiosity and life-long learning. Fulcher (2008) also referred to an article *Taking a Look at the Effective Life-long learning Inventory* by Maryellen Weimer (2008) which the author of this project felt warranted more attention.

In the article, *Taking a Look at the Effective Life-long learning Inventory*, Weimer (2008), described The Effective Life-long learning Inventory (ELLI), developed by a research group at the University of Bristol in the United Kingdom (U.K.) in 2002 as a self-assessment tool that helps learners develop an awareness of how they learn and

encourages them to take responsibility for their learning. This tool contains seven scales profiling an individual's capacity for life-long learning. The high and low ends of the scales identify two very different approaches to learning. The seven components of the assessment tool are: Growth orientation; Creative curiosity; Meaning-making; Dependence and fragility; Creativity; Relationship/Interdependence; and Strategic awareness.

The authors of the original model of ELLI (Crick, Broadfoot, Claxton, 2004) felt that the history of educational assessment largely was concerned with attempts to develop either instruments to assess intelligence or instruments to assess educational achievement. Others gave very little attention to designing an instrument that could assess a person's learning orientation – the mixture of experience, motivation, intelligence, and dispositions that any learning opportunity contains. And yet, Crick, et al. (2004) felt it is our characteristics as learners and what we bring to any learning situation that will be the most important quality to be able to measure in the unpredictable and ever-changing dimensions of learning. If the capacity and the desire to learn and to go on learning throughout life is recognized as a central ambition in the concept of “life-long learning,” it is important to develop the means to access the developing qualities that make up an individual's capacity for life-long learning. What makes an individual want to engage in learning and to be effective at it?

According to Crick, et al. (2004), existing research indicated that there are at least four broad categories that can be identified as making a substantial contribution to learning. They are: learning capacity (disposition, awareness, and skill); learning identifiers (beliefs, values, and attitudes about learning, self, and knowledge held by the

learners); learning story (the socio-cultural formation of learners over time); and learning relationships (the quality and substance of learning relationships). The aim of the research was to construct an assessment instrument both to identify the components of life-long learning and for use as an assessment instrument. This research was done during 2000-2001 (Crick, et al., 2004).

The draft instrument ELLI with seven components: Growth Orientation; Critical curiosity; Meaning-making; Dependence and fragility; Creativity; Relationship/interdependence; and Strategic awareness was administered to a cohort of 1064 students, aged between 6 and 18 years in Southwest England. The analysis emphasis was on identifying the dimensions themselves, rather than the capacity of the scales to characterize individuals. Following the initial analysis of these data, the seven dimensions were narrowed down to five after realizing that the first three: Growth orientation; Critical curiosity; and Meaning-making were basically components within Learning commitment and engagement. As a result, the five dimensions were: Learner commitment and engagement; Fragility and dependence; Creativity; Learning Relationships; and Strategic Awareness (Crick, et al., 2004).

Re-examination of The Effective Life-Long Learning (ELLI) Inventory

In learning more about this assessment tool, the project author contacted the lead author Ruth Deaken Crick residing in the United Kingdom to inquire about the ELLI assessment tool, and was led to an article titled *Developing Resilient Agency in Learning: The Internal Structure of Learning Power* (Crick, Huang, Goldspink, Shafi & Chris, 2015). This article describes a three-year research phase, in which the authors re-examined the data collected since 2002 via the ELLI. The factors that led to this re-

examination were questions that emerged about the internal structure of learning power through its ongoing application and data collection, and the need for an integrated approach to research-led practice which generates more value for stakeholders.

The ELLI was a self-report questionnaire in which respondents indicated their approach to various aspects of learning through completion of an on-line 4-point Likert-type questionnaire (Likert, 1932). The items included information relative to what the individual thinks, feels, and tends to do in relation to everyday learning. The respondents' judgments were based on their own experiences, past and present, including the circumstances in which they found themselves at the time they completed the questionnaire. The scales for the seven dimensions of learning power were calculated on-line and used to produce feedback for the individual regarding his or her perception of his or her own learning power on these dimensions. The scores were produced as a percentage of the total score for that dimension. The instrument was designed to find a balance between its use for development intervention and for research (Crick, et al., 2015).

The re-examination of the data collected since 2002 enabled a more rigorous picture of the concept of learning power and its role in the process of inquiry than was originally developed. The reliability of the model was tested systematically through the randomized splitting of the data set, and then calculating test-retest reliability. Where previously learning power was described through seven dimensions, the relationships between the dimensions of learning power and their contribution to learning as a journey was not fully understood. The re-examination revealed more than one layer of learning power, and a more distinct model. The new model developed included the following

scales: Mindful Agency; Creativity; Sense Making; Curiosity; Hope and Optimism; Collaboration; Belonging; and Openness to Learning (Crick, et al., 2015).

This analysis represented a greater understanding of learning power and moved the field forward by insights generated about the internal structure and repeated relationships between the dimensions of learning power, and their contribution to learning as a journey. This work revealed more than one hidden layer of learning power and a more precise model of it, placing mindful agency at the center of the active learning power dimensions as the way in which we regulate the flow of energy and information over time in pursuit of a purpose (Crick, et al., 2015).

Development of the Crick Learning for Resilient Agency (CLARA) Self-Assessment

The authors of the *Developing Resilient Agency in Learning: The Internal Structure of Learning Power* (Crick, et al., 2015) are all members of the Learning Emergency Network and created the new model Crick Learning for Resilient Agency (CLARA) Self-Assessment. CLARA included the new dimension, Mindful Agency, which was found to be a key element of learning power and predicts Creativity, Sense-making, Curiosity, and Hope and Optimism. Learning Relationship, has two distinct aspects: Collaboration and Belonging. An eighth measure, Open Readiness, reflects an emotional state toward learning, whose most favorable point varies according to context and lies somewhere between the two extremes of Rigid Persistence on the one hand and Dependent Fragility on the other. Both extremes may be appropriate in some contexts, however, it is more productive, in learning, to maintain a healthy tension between fragility and persistence and remain open and ready to respond to challenge and change. CLARA measures the ways in which individuals regulate the flow of energy and

information over time to achieve a purpose – their learning power. CLARA dimensions are personal qualities that can be developed and which reflect how people view themselves (Learning Emergence, 2015).

Summary

The literature review for life-long learning is an overview of the historical perspective of the concept of life-long learning, beginning in the 1970's, as well as the progression of the concept up to the present. The literature review by the author also uncovered the need to be able to assess life-long learning to enable individuals to continue this quest for learning throughout their lifetime.

The author, in developing this personal growth project, searched for a valid and reliable assessment tool that would assess her personal learning style, as well as giving her a process for evaluating where she is at this point in time to be able to identify self-growth areas for herself as a life-long learner to take her into her future. In addition, in identifying this process for herself, the process might be beneficial for others.

Definition of Important Terminology

Assessment Instrument: wide variety of methods or tools that educators use to evaluate, measure or document skill acquisitions, educational needs, readiness, learning, or progress (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2015).

Belonging: know there is someone to turn to because I am part of a supportive learning community; the opposite feeling 'alone' (My Learning Power, 2016).

Collaboration: learning with others and able to learn by themselves; opposite being isolated or 'over dependent' (My Learning Power, 2016).

Continuous learning: at the individual level, continuous learning is about expanding a person's ability to learn by regularly upgrading skills and increasing knowledge (My Learning Power, 2016).

Creativity: risk taking, playfulness, using my imagination and intuition in my learning; the opposite is 'rule-bound' (My Learning Power, 2016).

Criteria: a standard of judgement or criticism – a rule or principle for evaluating or testing something (Dictionary.com criteria).

Curiosity: the desire to 'get beneath the surface'; check things out – find out more about them, ask why? Opposite feeling 'alone' (My Learning Power, 2016).

Dispositions: the prominent or prevailing tendency of one's spirit. (Dictionary.com)

Extrinsic: being outside a thing; outward or external; operating or coming from within (Dictionary.com extrinsic).

Formal education: the hierarchically structured, chronologically graded 'education system' running from primary school through the university and including a variety of specialized programs and institutions for full-time technical and professional training (In-fed. YMCA).

Generative learners: style of learning that incorporates existing knowledge with new ideas based on experimentation and team creativity resulting in new way of thinking (Business Dictionary).

Holistic: encompassing the whole of something – not just the parts (Dictionary.com holistic).

Hope and Optimism: a sense of myself as someone who learns and changes over time; the opposite is being 'stuck and static' (My Learning Power, 2016).

Informal Education: lifelong process whereby every individual acquires attitude, values, skills, and knowledge from daily experience and the educative influences and resources in his or her environment (In-fed. YMCA).

Intrinsic: belonging naturally, essential (English Oxford Living Dictionaries).

Learning relationships: the quality and substance of learning relationships (Crick, The Glossary, 2004).

Learning story: the socio-cultural formation of learners over time (Crick, 2004).

Mindful Agency: being aware of my thoughts, feelings, and actions as a learner and able to use that awareness to take responsibility to plan and manage learning processes; the opposite is being ‘robotic’ (My Learning Power, 2016).

Orientation to Learning: being open to new ideas and challenge and having the inner strength to cope with it (My Learning Power, 2016).

Recurrent education: is named by Swedish educator Olof Palme. First presented in 1969, the meaning is “returning to school for education at intervals” (Dung-Lang, 1990).

Reliability: refers to the extent to which an assessment tool is consistent in measuring what it sets out to measure (Ministry of Education).

Rigid Persistence: determined to stay where one is; to do things their way; tending to blame things they can’t control; less inclined to listen to others (My Learning Power, 2016).

Resilience: the process of adapting well in face of adversity – bounce back (American Psychological Association).

Sense-making: making meaning by making connections so that learning ‘matters to me’; the opposite is being ‘stuck and static’ (My Learning Power, 2016).

Validity: refers to the extent to which an assessment tool actually measures what it sets out to measure (Ministry of Education).

SECTION II

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this project focused on the development of a self-assessment process for life-long learning which may enable the author to identify areas for self-growth, and to prepare that process for use by others. In this Section, the author will describe the process for identifying a self-assessment instrument for life-long learning. The possibility of a ladder model for life-long learning was discussed in numerous meetings with the author's advisor, Dr. Gary Gilmore. The ladder model for life-long learning would be a visual tool to portray personal areas of self-growth for the author based on the results from a self-assessment tool.

Self-Assessment Tool Criteria

In the search for an assessment tool, the author identified the following criteria for an assessment tool: What is the purpose of the assessment? Is the assessment instrument available as an on-line tool? Is the content already developed? Is it reliable? Is assessment valid? How are results provided? How long does it take? How are results given? Is follow up provided? Is there a cost? Where is assessment available (Ministry of Education)?

Key Informants

The author received suggestions regarding assessment and self-growth possibilities from several individuals in her consideration for what an assessment and self-growth might look like: Dr. Gary Gilmore, University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (UW-L) (advisor), Professor Erica Srinivasan (UW-L Psychology Department faculty), Karen McGarvey (UW-L Extension), Dr. Robert Jecklin (UW-L faculty), Dr. Michele Pettit (UW-L faculty), Mark Michel (friend), Ina-Jo and Steve Brosinski family (daughter & son-in-law), Leda Anne Schwertfeger (daughter), Ray Hunder (brother), and support from many others.

Identification of Assessment Tool

During the literature review phase of this project, the author's Advisor, Dr. Gary Gilmore encouraged the author to continually search on-line for self-assessment tools for life-long learning, and possibilities were discussed at the next weekly meeting. Dr. Gilmore contacted Professor Erica Srinivasan from the UW-La Crosse Psychology Department and Professor Srinivasan recommended an article titled *Curiosity: A Link to Assessing Lifelong Learning* by Keston H. Fulcher. In this article, the author learned of an assessment tool called the Effective Life-long Learning Instrument (ELLI). In researching this article, the author felt the ELLI incorporated learning style and thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and behaviors including life experiences that resonated with her. The author felt that her life experiences incorporated these areas in her life-long learning experiences, and was elated to think there may be such a self-assessment tool.

As a result, more in-depth research followed relative to two assessment tools: The Life-Long Learning Inventory (ELLI) and the Crick Learning for Resilient Agency profile (CLARA). Further research included the following information.

In 2002, a team of researchers identified seven dimensions of ‘learning power’ which enable people to become aware of the way they learn and to take responsibility for their own learning journey. This team created and validated a survey tool that measured learning power called the Effective Life-long learning Inventory (ELLI) which gave people feedback on their strengths and weaknesses as learners. Over the next decade the feedback from the use of ELLI provided feedback for a deeper understanding of the nature of learning and the relationships between them. The assessment tool was re-designed into Crick Learning for Resilient Agency profile (CLARA) which would stimulate awareness, ownership, and responsibility in learning. The research team became the Learning Emergence Partnership (Learning Emergence, 2015).

The author believed that the description of the CLARA assessment tool incorporated the criteria set forth for an assessment tool. Overall, the CLARA assessment tool appeared to have the following qualities:

- It was an assessment tool for life-long learning;
- The assessment tool was available on-line;
- The content of the assessment tool was already developed;
- Research had proven that the assessment tool was both reliable and valid;
- The measures were given in a self-assessment delivered on-line as a graphic that was readily understandable;
- The assessment tool would take 15-20 minutes on-line;

- The results would be given as an on-line visual to the author in a very short time frame immediately following the completion of the assessment tool;
- The assessment research team provided possible next strategies, more descriptive information on the assessment process, as well as the possibility of up to one hour with a coach; and,
- The cost of completing the assessment tool was very reasonable, and there was a coaching session to assist with interpretation of the data.

The author contacted the primary author of the CLARA learning power assessment tool, Ruth Deakin Clark, and received permission to participate in the on-line CLARA assessment on June 16, 2017. After completion of the on-line assessment tool and looking over the results via a visual provided by *The Learning Emergence* research team, the author set up an appointment with a coach from Learning Emergence to assist with interpretation of the results of the CLARA assessment tool. This coaching session was held on June 18, 2017 via on-line *Face Time* with Tim Small from the United Kingdom and the author at her home. This coaching session along with regular meetings with Dr. Gilmore set into motion the discovery for the author about her own life-long learning self-growth process.

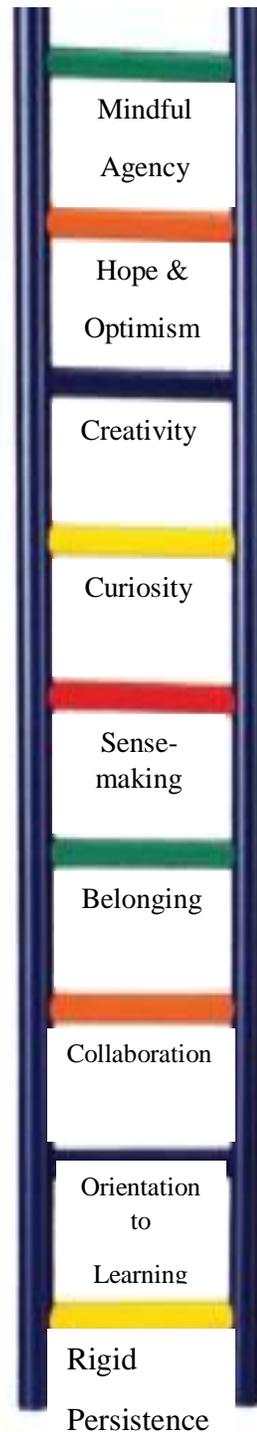
Development of Ladder Model for Life-Long Learning

In discussion with Dr. Gilmore relative to a visual to present the author's priorities from the CLARA self-assessment, Dr. Gilmore considered the visual of a ladder to present the results of the assessment (**Figure 1**). The reasoning behind the development of the ladder model for life-long learning was that a reasonable number of self-growth areas could be represented via the rungs on the ladder. The areas of self-

growth would also be ranked according to value to the author, along with the previously-mentioned criteria. At the same time, there was the possibility of additional areas of self-growth as they are discovered. Any additional rungs would always allow room for more self-growth as a continuation into the future of life-long learning experiences for the author.

CLARA Dimensions

1. Mindful Agency: awareness of own thoughts, feelings & actions as a learner; plan, and manage my own learning;
2. Hope & Optimism: sense of self as learner that changes overtime;
3. Creativity: risk-taking; playfulness; imagination; utilizing intuition;
4. Curiosity: dig deeper; ask why? Close to ‘Sense-making’;
5. Sense-making: learning matters to me must “make sense” with my experiences;
6. Belonging: knowing there is someone to turn to as a support system for My learning;
7. Collaboration: learn with or without others – draw on resources;
8. Orientation to Learning: Being open to new ideas, challenges, and inner strength;
9. Rigid Persistence-Fragile Dependence: Even though a continuum in Orientation to Learning, I am aware I move between wanting to move forward and holding back from moving forward.



Activities

Outputs and Outcomes

Figure 1. Ladder Model for Life-Long Learning

Eight of the rungs on this ladder represent the dimensions of the self-assessment tool called Crick Learning for Resilient Agency (CLARA) in order of value to the author. The additional of the ninth rung was left open to perhaps accommodate any new area discovered by the author relative to her learning style because of the weekly discussions with her advisor.

Left Side of the Ladder Model for Life-Long Learning: Prioritized

Dimensions. The left side of the ladder represents the prioritized areas in the CLARA assessment tool. Based on the author's Learning Profile, the strengths on the assessment tool interpretation were: Sense-making; Collaboration; and Belonging. The area of Mindful Agency incorporates the dimensions of Sense-making; Hope and Optimism; and Creativity. The area of Orientation to Learning incorporates Collaboration, Belonging, and Curiosity.

After discussion with the *My Learning Power* Coach Tim Small, and reaffirming the areas of strength, as well as discussions with her advisor, the author could identify the areas in which she would like to grow. As a result, the author's priority areas for self-growth are as follows:

Priority Number One - Mindful Agency (rung one): The first priority for the author is mindful agency which is the desire to take charge and manage her own life-long learning experiences which is very important at this time in the author's life. In addition, mindful agency has several of the other dimensions within, namely, Curiosity; Hope and Optimism; and Sense-making. Sense-making was a strength for the author, however, to continue to move forward with taking charge and managing her own life-long learning,

she believes that she needs to strengthen the three areas of Creativity, Curiosity, and Hope and Optimism. The opposite of mindful agency is being ‘robotic’.

Priority Number Two - Hope and Optimism (rung two): Since this dimension comes within the dimension of Mindful Agency the author believes that she needs to strengthen this area to further strengthen her continued desire to control and manage her own experiences in life-long learning. The opposite of Hope and Optimism is being ‘stuck and static’ which would not contribute to life-long learning for the author.

Priority Number Three – Creativity (rung three): This dimension is thought to come under the dimension of Mindful Agency, and since this wasn’t felt to be a stronger dimension, the author believes she has a need to strengthen this dimension to continue to move forward for her own life-long learning. The opposite of creativity is ‘passive’.

Priority Number Four – Curiosity (rung four): If the author is to continue to build on Orientation to Learning or termed Open Readiness, to strengthen her willingness to be ready to continue the path of life-long learning, she believes she needs to create opportunities that will strengthen her curiosity dimension. This dimension is also close to Sense-making which appears to be a strength for the author. The opposite of Curiosity is being ‘passive’.

Priority Number Five – Sense-making (rung five): This dimension of Sense-making is indicated as a strength for the author and is connected to mindful agency. As a strength, the author will choose activities that will continue to strengthen this dimension as a way of continuing to support her desire to take ownership and manager her own life-long learning. The opposite of this is ‘simply accumulating data’.

Priority Number Six – Belonging (rung six): This dimension is indicated as a strength on the CLARA assessment tool. The author will want to continue being strong in this dimension as it will connect her with learning opportunities to support her focus on future life-long learning experiences. Described as a strength, the author does not want to lose sight of the importance of this dimension, and will continue to build on the strength of this dimension. The opposite is feeling alone.

Priority Number Seven – Collaboration (rung seven): This dimension is indicated as a strength for the author and draws on resources that are both intrinsic and extrinsic. Even though this is a strength for the author at this time, it is necessary for the author to continue to build on Collaboration and discover her own learning community to enhance her life-long learning experiences.

Priority Number Eight – Orientation to Learning (rung eight): The author is directly in the middle of the continuum between Rigid Persistence and Fragility and Dependence. The author recognizes that for herself there is always a fine line between being open to new ideas, challenges, and inner strength and will continue to move forward on what is also termed as Open Readiness to learning.

Priority Number Nine – Rigid Persistence and Fragile Dependence (rung nine): With encouragement from Dr. Gilmore, the ninth rung on the ladder model for life-long learning was left open for discovery of what could be another dimension growing out of weekly discussions with her advisor. There was a time during the weekly meetings with her advisor that the author believed she did not have the skills within herself to finish the task of this personal growth project for her graduate project. The author recognizes that she has been at this place before in her life-long learning, and it is a fearful place to not

be able to draw on her intrinsic strength to move forward. Without the support and encouragement from her advisor and his unwillingness to concede to the author's reasoning behind the desire to just give up, the author became very aware of being caught between the two dimensions of Rigid Persistence and Fragile Dependence. In having the extrinsic support of her advisor, the author has gained the faith that her advisor will not allow her to fail nor abandon her in this process. This author gives a tremendous amount of credit to her advisor for having faith in himself and the author that they would be able to bring this graduate project to fruition.

Middle Rungs on the Ladder Model for Life-Long Learning. The rungs in the middle of the ladder are a prioritized listing of the dimensions of the CLARA assessment instrument. They are listed in priority order based on the results of the on-line assessment by the author and the ranking of the dimensions (See Figure 1).

Rung 1: Mindful Agency: being aware of my thoughts, feelings, and actions as a learner and able to use that awareness to take responsibility to plan and manage learning processes; the opposite is being 'robotic'.

Rung 2: Hope and Optimism: a sense of myself as someone who learns and changes over time; the opposite is being 'stuck and static';

Rung 3: Creativity: risk-taking, playfulness, using my imagination and intuition in my learning; the opposite is being 'rule-bound';

Rung 4: Curiosity: the desire to 'get beneath the surface', check things out find out more about them, ask why? The opposite is being 'passive';

Rung 5: Sense-making: making meaning by making connections so that learning 'matters to me'; the opposite is simply 'accumulating data';

Rung 6: Belonging: knowing there is someone to turn to because I am part of a supportive learning community; the opposite is feeling ‘alone’;

Rung 7: Collaboration: learning with others and be able to learn if they’re not there; the opposite is either being ‘isolated’ or ‘over-dependent’;

Rung 8: Orientation to Learning: being open to new ideas and challenge and having the inner strength to cope with it; the opposite is either being too ‘tough’ and rigidly persistent to learn well, or too ‘fragile and dependent’ to go on learning when things get difficult;

Rung 9: Rigid Persistence – Fragile Dependence: Even though this is the continuum for Orientation to Learning, the author is aware of her tendency to vacillate between wanting to help herself move forward and holding back from moving forward.

The right side of the Ladder Model for Life-Long Learning will list the activities chosen for the priority areas, the outputs from each of the activities, the potential outcomes, and the actual outcomes.

Summary

In Section II, the author reviewed in more depth the literature relative to self-assessment tools for life-long learning. The author also described the process for identifying a self-assessment tool that would help her identify self-growth areas for her future life-long learning. The development of a visual aid (Ladder Model for Life-Long Learning) that will assist in visually documenting prioritized self-growth areas was discussed. The dimensions of the CLARA assessment tool are on the left-hand side with a brief description, and on the rungs of the ladders the dimensions are again named.

SECTION III

FINDINGS

Introduction

The purpose of this project was to address the development of a self-assessment process for life-long learning that would enable the author to identify areas for self-growth, and to prepare that process for use by others. It was meant to be a journey of discovery and self-growth.

In this section, the author will describe the findings in terms of activities that would strengthen her self-growth areas. Outputs (i.e., a noticeable change) and outcomes (i.e., a result) relative to describing the learning activities and/or events for each of the prioritized areas of the Crick Learning for Resilient Agency profile (CLARA) listed within the Ladder Model for Life-Long Learning in Methodology (Figure 1.).

The author would like to note that the *Learning Emergence* LLP from the United Kingdom provided a handbook titled *My Learning Power* (2015) which gave suggestions for each area that the learner chose as self-growth areas. Many of the author's activities are drawn from this helpful resource.

Findings

In this section, the author will review the background of the self-assessment instrument the author chose as her self-assessment instrument: Crick Learning

Resilient Agency (CLARA). The author will also describe the results of the completion of the self-assessment as well as prioritizing the self-growth areas.

Background on the Crick Learning for Resilient Agency – CLARA

In 2002, researchers identified seven dimensions of ‘learning power’ which enable people to learn. These dimensions were holistic qualities or dispositions involving ‘thinking, feeling, and doing’. The research team developed and validated a survey tool that measured Learning Power called the Effective Life-long Learning Inventory (ELLI) which gave people feedback on strengths and weaknesses. This was used around the world for the next decade (Learning Emergency, 2015).

In 2014, the *Learning Emergence* Research team began to re-analyze all the data over 15 years to explore what had surfaced from research relative to learning power over that period. Some of the findings of the *Learning Emergence* research team were as follows (Learning Emergence, 2015):

- Resilience which enables people to respond positively to challenge, risk and uncertainty was found to be a complex process not measured by a single scale. Resilience requires learners to be self-aware to take responsibility for their learning journey. The combination of awareness, ownership and responsibility is termed Agency. Thus, the new instrument became *Learning for Resilient Agency Self-Assessment*. With these concepts, along with the name of the lead researcher, Ruth Crick, the instrument was titled, the *Crick Learning Assessment for Resilient Agency or CLARA* (Learning Emergency, 2015).

- Mindful Agency, was found to be a key element of learning power and predicts: creativity, Sense-making, curiosity, and hope and optimism. Learning relationships had two distinct aspects: Collaboration and Belonging. The eighth dimension, Open to Readiness, reflected an emotional state towards learning and was somewhere between the two extremes of Rigid Persistence and Dependent Fragility (Learning Emergency, 2015).
- CLARA measures the way individuals regulate the flow of energy and information over time to achieve a purpose: learning power (Learning Emergency, 2015).
- CLARA's dimensions are personal qualities that can be developed and reflect how people view themselves. Their view of themselves may be positive or negative. The Open to Readiness dimension is an emotional orientation towards new learning that reflects the degree of trust and readiness a person experiences in a learning journey from purpose to performance (Learning Emergency, 2015).
- CLARA is:
 - emancipation and empowerment;
 - holistic and relational;
 - about the 'whole person';
 - about balance; the person as a learner and the knowledge constructed;
 - about dimensions being inter-related; strengths help to strengthen other people and the world;
 - about seeing learners as 'on a learning journey,' and

- draws from research amongst learners, practitioners, experts, and research literature (Learning Emergence, 2015).

The Author's CLARA's My Learning Power Profile

After contacting the lead researcher of CLARA, Ruth Deakin Crick, on June 13, 2017, the author completed the CLARA instrument on-line, and received the results of her on-line assessment in the form of *My Learning Power Profile*, along with more information relative to the Learning Emergence team that is instrumental in conducting and analyzing an individual's learning profile. In further discussions with her advisor, the decision was made to seek permission to contact a coach from the *Learning Emergence* team to determine the specifics of a coaching session to learn more about the results of the self-assessment.

On June 19, 2017, the author communicated with Coach Tim Small from the United Kingdom (UK) for an hour interview via a computer on *FACE Time*. Tim Small reaffirmed what the author and advisor felt were the author's strengths of the self-assessment: Sense-making; Collaboration; and Belonging. With these strengths in mind, the author determined the areas of possible self-growth would be within the dimension of Mindful Agency: Hope and Optimism, Creativity, and Curiosity, as well as within the dimension of Orientation to Learning: Curiosity.

The author communicated with her coach relative to other areas that she felt might have shown more strength. The author's coach Tim Small explained that if there was an indication of above average strength in one dimension, this may show up as a decrease in another dimension that was close to the area of strength. Example: Above average increase in strength in the dimension of Collaboration may show a decrease in

the dimension of Hope and Optimism which is relatively close in proximity to the dimension of Collaboration. Coach Tim Small felt that the strong areas were strengths that would help the author with areas of self-growth. Tim also sent to the author several more important and valuable resources titled: *My Learning Power* (A Guide to Understanding Learning Power with the Crick Learning for Resilient Agency profile CLARA), along with *My Enquiry* (A Practical Guide to Authentic Enquiry). Learning Emergence LLP developed both documents to assist individuals with the interpretation of the CLARA self-assessment tool and to provide descriptions of each one of the learning dimensions. The documents provide assistance in strengthening dimensions that the author determined to be areas of self-growth.

Characteristics and Possible Improvement Suggestions for the Eight Dimensions

- **Sense-making (Strength):** Making connections between new information and what is known already, and seeing that learning matters;
 - Making connections between everything known - ideas, memories, knowledge, skills, facts, and experience - and, making sense of them in relation to each new learning and performance;
 - Being able to create a map of what is being learned so one can see how it all fits together;
 - Realizing how learning matters and connecting new insights with one's own story and considerations that already matter in one's life. This strengthens the sense of purpose in learning (My Learning Power, 2016).
 - Suggestion for growth:

- For every new piece of learning, think about how it relates or could relate to something one has already experienced;
 - For every new project, complete the sentence: what matters to me about this is - write three ways it will make a difference (My Learning Power, 2016).
- **Collaboration (strength):** Learning with and from others and being able to apply that learning when alone;
 - How one learns through relationships with others; knowing who to turn to for help or advice and how to offer such things to others too;
 - Solving problems by talking them through with others, generating new ideas through listening, making suggestions and responding positively to feedback.
 - Suggestions for growth:
 - Keep a notebook to write down questions to ask;
 - Think of those you learn with as part of a learning team;
 - Look for opportunities to discuss and share ideas;
 - See all recognition rewards as belonging to the team (My Learning Power, 2016).
- **Belonging (strength):** trusting that one will be understood and find support from others when one needs it;
 - Confidence in the supportiveness and collective interest found with people one learns and collaborates with; acknowledges other important people (family, colleagues, friends, teachers);

- Forms relational trust and makes use of others as resources;
- Effective learning may require times of studying or dreaming on their own and feeling safe doing this.
- Suggestions for growth:
 - List people who can help with learning;
 - Build quiet time to think into your schedule;
 - Develop a collective identity – make a learning community real and tangible (My Learning Power, 2016).
- **Mindful Agency (self-growth area):** aware of thoughts, feelings, and actions as a learner and able to use awareness to take responsibility to plan/manage learning;
 - Know more about one’s own learning;
 - Becoming more knowledgeable and aware of self as a learner;
 - Trying out different approaches to learning to see what happens;
 - Being reflective and better at self-evaluation; able to talk about oneself as a learner;
 - Know how to repair one’s own emotional mood when frustrated or disappointed;
 - Accept responsibility for planning and organizing own learning.
 - Suggestions for Growth:
 - Assess and plot progress with the dimensions;
 - Make planning charts (weekly, quarterly, yearly); daily to-do lists;
 - Step back to refocus; ask what has been learned;

- Decide when and how to use other learning power dimensions to be creative and when to follow rules; when to question and when to accept (My Learning Power, 2016).
- **Hope and Optimism (self-growth area):** seeing myself as someone who learns, changes, and makes progress over time;
 - Knowing that learning itself is learnable;
 - Believe, through effort, mind can get bigger and stronger;
 - Having energy to learn;
 - See learning as life-long process;
 - Gain pleasure and self-esteem from expanding capacity;
 - Trying hard as a positive experience;
 - Sense of getting better at learning over time;
 - Changing and adapting as a learner throughout life.
 - Suggestions for Growth:
 - Keep learning journal;
 - Think of progress on Curiosity learning journey;
 - Ask for help in noticing new things about your learning;
 - Compare what one was doing a year ago;

Ask others about my journey (My Learning Power,2016).
- **Curiosity (self-growth):** wanting to get beneath surface and dig deeper;
 - Desire to investigate;
 - Challenge what others say rather than take it at face value;
 - Have energy and desire to find things out;

- Like to get below the surface to understand;
- Less likely to accept what is being said;
- Like to come up with own conclusions;
- Take ownership of own learning and enjoy a challenge.
- Suggestions for growth:
 - Ask questions; continue to ask why until you are satisfied with the answer;
 - Ask to create open climate;
 - Try out new ideas;
 - Think of questions – think of answers;
 - Welcome challenges;
 - Play with ‘what if’ scenarios (My Learning Power, 2016).
- **Creativity (self-growth area):** risk-taking, playfulness, imagination, and intuition;
 - Learning often is about surprise, wonder and inspiration;
 - Able to look at things in different ways; imagine new possibilities;
 - Play with ideas and take different perspectives;
 - More receptive to hunches and inklings;
 - Understand learning needs and playfulness;
 - Believe in possibility of dreaming.
 - Suggestions for growth:
 - Practice ‘thinking outside the box’ and guess at solutions;
 - Break away from usualness;

- Let mind ‘free float:’
- Trust subconscious mind as much as thinking ability (My Learning Power, 2016).

Right side of the Ladder Model for Life-Long Learning

Mindful Agency. This project, itself, has made the author more aware of her thoughts, feelings, and actions as a life-long learner. In the many meetings with her advisor Dr. Gary Gilmore, he has helped tremendously in identifying feelings, thoughts, and actions not only as a learner, but also in identifying what the author has brought to the table in terms of her personal experiences that affect her learning style and abilities.

Personal experiences have influenced her in her quest as a life-long learner both in her informal and formal educational experiences. Going back for her Master’s degree is an example of an awareness of her own desire to manage and plan her own learning, and to again become part of a learning community.

The experience of this graduate project has been a real-life learning experience that has reaffirmed how her personal experiences (thoughts, feelings, emotions, and attitude) have, indeed, influenced her life-long learning experiences.

Future learning experiences will include workshops regarding a continual focus on wellness going forward which may include nutrition, physical fitness (*Strong Seniors*), and beginning yoga for the older adult.

Hope and Optimism. The author has created a learning journal for new learning; hopes; plans; successes; and, will ask others about her learning to gain another perspective.

This personal growth project for self-assessment in life-long learning has certainly been an experience of hope and optimism for the author. The author had given up hope in even having the skills necessary to complete this project, and at the same time, has gained a great deal of optimism in the faith that the author's advisor has given her in her ability to complete the project.

The author intends to bring more hope and optimism into her life for future, and face less fear of abandonment.

Creativity. Breaking away from usualness; being playful, trusting her own intuition and subconscious is a need for this author. The author's desire is to bring a piano back into her life to bring music back into her home and enjoy as she has done in the past; and to allow herself to have fun without 'all the work being done first'.

The author has learned to be creative even in this project, needing to be creative in how to work full time, spend time with family, and still do what is necessary to complete this project.

The author has learned to do more with technology than the author ever even wanted to, as well as drawing on others to support her in these efforts, and the decision to continue with the project.

Curiosity. Curiosity is close to Sense-making and as such, the author needs to trust what surfaces from her subconscious, and trust herself. She will listen closely and ask herself why she does what she does and listen for answers from herself as well as to welcome new challenges.

In listening to herself even in the work with this project, the author has been able to move herself forward with the support of her advisor, and out of curiosity wonders why she does what she does in undertaking learning that seems to be out of her reach.

Sense-making. For each new learning event, the author will journal how it relates to her own experiences, what matters to her about this experience, and what difference does it make in her life.

The journal idea is significant to the author, as the author has always journaled, and the thought of journaling how new experiences make sense with her personal experiences will be a new process.

The author experienced an awareness during this project that has been difficult to describe. Participating in a self-assessment process which included dimensions of feelings, thoughts, and attitude as well as how an individual learns, along with weekly meetings with her advisor involving new learning, the author believes this process has integrated her subjective self (i.e., feelings, thoughts, attitudes) and her objective self (i.e., learning) to make sense of her style of learning.

Belonging. The author will take time to list people who can help her learn; create a learning space in her home to enhance her learning; build quiet time alone; and share learning experiences with others to create a learning community for herself and others.

The author needed to learn that meeting with her advisor weekly created a very safe learning environment to blend her own personal learning experiences with new learning, and completion of this project.

Collaboration. The author will keep a section in a journal for questions to ask others; look for opportunities to share and discuss ideas with others; and create a learning

community where the author and others can share new learning.

This process was to give the author an opportunity to make notes of many questions on a ‘parking lot’ that could be discussed in weekly meetings with her advisor, along with continuing to collaborate with others for her own learning.

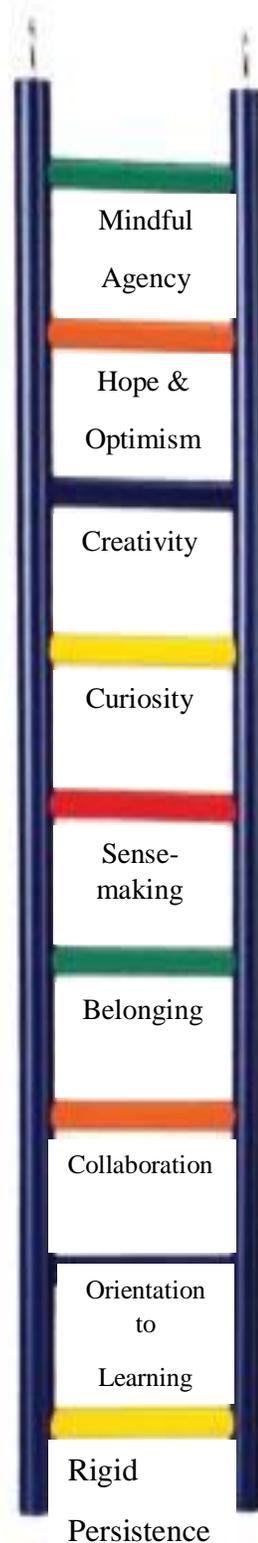
Orientation to Learning: Learn to accept and manage negative emotions; be willing to wrestle with changes; and consider re-doing this current assessment or locate another useful tool for self-growth. This project, itself, has been a learning experience in struggling with negative emotions and wrestling with the author questioning her ability to complete what she has started.

Rigid Persistence – Fragile Orientation. The author continues to recognize this as an area for self-growth, and needs to recognize when rigid persistence is an acceptable decision and when it is holding her back from moving forward to more of an orientation to learning.

The left, middle, and right side of the Ladder Model for Life-Long Learning is in Figure 2. The left side of the ladder includes the 8 dimensions of the CLARA self-assessment with a short description of the dimension. The middle section includes the name of the model and the names of the dimensions of the CLARA self-assessment. Findings related to activities, outputs, and outcomes of each dimension are cited to the right of the ladder.

CLARA Dimensions

1. Mindful Agency: awareness of my own thoughts, feelings & actions as a learner; plan, and manage my own learning;
2. Hope & Optimism: sense of self as learner that changes overtime;
3. Creativity: risk-taking; playfulness; imagination; utilizing intuition;
4. Curiosity: dig deeper; ask why? Close to “Sense-making”;
5. Sense-making: learning matters to me must “make sense” with my experiences;
6. Belonging: knowing there is someone to turn to as a support system for My learning;
7. Collaboration: learn with or without others – draw on resources;
8. Orientation to Learning: Being open to new ideas, challenges, and inner strength;
9. Rigid Persistence-Fragile Dependence: Even thou in the continuum for Orientation to Learning, author vacillates between wanting to move forward and holding back.



Activities, Outputs, Outcomes

1. Going back to school for Master’s Degree; finding an assessment tool for self-growth areas; face time for assessment interpretation; create planning chart; attend workshops;
2. Create learning journal for new learning; hopes; plans; success; and ask others about my learning;
3. Break away from usualness; be playful; trust intuition and subconscious find used piano to bring music back into my home;
4. Listen more to my subconscious and trust what surfaces; listen closely to why do I do what I do and listen for my own answers; welcome challenges;
5. For each new learning event, answer how it related to my experience; what matters to me about this; what difference in my life;
6. List people who can help me learn; create private learning environment; build quiet time alone; create a learning community for myself;
7. Keep a lace in journal for questions to ask others; look for opportunities to share and discuss ideas with others;
8. Accept and manage negative emotions; be willing to wrestle with changes; and consider reducing current assessment or locate another useful tool for self-growth;
9. Recognize my own rigid persistence and consciously move forward to orientation to learning.

Support: Children, Grandchildren, Dr. Gilmore, UW-La Crosse (UWL) Faculty Staff, UWL Extension, UWL Psychology, Graduate students, former graduate students, and friends.

Figure 2. Ladder Model for Life-Long Learning

Prioritized areas of Self-Growth using the Ladder Model for Life-Long Learning

Using the ladder model for life-long learning as a visual for prioritizing the areas for self-growth, the author is outlining the prioritized dimensions. During this process, the author's advisor Dr. Gilmore focused his efforts on the author experiencing the dimensions of this CLARA self-assessment tool.

Mindful Agency (#1)

- During this process, the author's advisor gave the author many suggestions for articles to read and discussed at the next weekly meeting, and what learning events may be helpful such as:
 - Output: Enroll in *Practical Approaches to Healthy Living* in October of 2017, and checking with UW-Extension to learn of future events.
 - Output: Planning and managing my own learning feels like I am moving into the future;
 - Outcome: With each weekly discussion with advisor Dr. Gilmore going over literature relative to the review on life-long learning, and possible self-assessment instruments, the author had new learning which was added to her journal.

Hope & Optimism (#2)

- Created a learning journal which included:
 - Outcome: Journaling after each weekly meeting with advisor Dr. Gilmore, and having reviewed those notes prior to the next meeting, has been helpful in locating articles on life-long learning;

- Output: Learning journal also includes a section on hopes and successes, such as completing the classes prior to this project.
- Output/Outcome: This journal also includes a section on questions I need to ask others, including my advisor Dr. Gary Gilmore, input from key persons on self-assessment, a ‘parking lot’ to allow for future concerns to allow more freedom to complete projects in the moment.

Creativity (#3)

- The author’s advisor continually prompted the author to stretch her knowledge in the areas of technology through creating charts and other items for this project.
- Break away from usualness:
 - Outcome: Successful in creating a ladder to illustrate the dimensions of the CLARA assessment tool; and creating a chart for activities, outputs, and outcomes;
 - Outcome: Learning how to do an on-line self-assessment; receiving on-line self-assessment results; learning how to participate in *FACE time* with a coach from the United Kingdom; and wire compensation to the coach in the United Kingdom through a local bank;
 - Output/Outcome: Being playful by integrating more fun times into everyday life – taking time to just ‘be’ rather than always be on a mission;
 - Output: Bringing music back into the author’s home by way of a piano.

Curiosity (#4)

- Listen more to my subconscious and trust what surfaces is a difficult one for the author – if the author was listening to her subconscious she would not be finishing this project. So, this one must be tempered by a realistic relationship with an advisor or coach who can see beyond the fear and skepticism of the author;
 - Output: The author will continue to ask why the author does what she does, then listen for answers, be willing to process her feeling, and trust her coach/advisor;
 - Outcome: The author will ask for support and advice from trusted others when questioning her subconscious thoughts to enable her to make an informed decision.

Sense-making (#5)

Sense-making was a strength for the author in the self-assessment, however, it is still an attribute that the author knows she will continue with in self-growth.

- Learning Events (weekly meetings with advisor):
 - Outcome: For each weekly meeting with the author's advisor, the author journaled what she had learned from the meeting, and what was expected prior to the next meeting;
 - Output: With each weekly meeting, the author continued to process new learning with her own experiences to make sense of this project.

Belonging (#6)

Belonging was a strength for the author in the self-assessment, and the author will continue to include this as a focus.

- **Support for Learning:**
 - **Outcome:** The author's advisor created a safe environment for learning during this process to enable the author to get a deeper sense of her own learning style;
 - **Output/Outcome:** The author created a quiet learning place in her own home, and will continue to add a learning community for herself.

Collaboration (#7)

Collaboration was a strength for the author in the self-assessment, and the author will continue to include this as a focus area.

- **Learning Journal Section:**
 - **Outcome:** The author's journaling was a way for her to understand how she learns, and the challenges she experienced with this project;
 - **Output:** The author could process learning difficulties with the advisor which gave her insight into her process.

Orientation to Learning (#8)

Orientation to Learning was midway between Rigid Persistence and Fragility and Dependence in the author's self-assessment and the author want to keep this as a focus to continue to be aware of growing in this dimension.

- Manage Thoughts, Emotions, Attitudes:
 - Outcome: With the author's advisor's support, the author gained insight into how she could realistically deal with challenges in managing her thoughts, feelings, and emotions while stretching her abilities in learning;
 - Outcome: With the continual support of the author's advisor in this project, the author has been able to move forward with this project, and be willing to wrestle with the challenge of completing the project. The author also considered redoing the current assessment after several months and/or locating another useful tool for self-growth.

Rigid Persistence-Fragile Orientation (#9)

There are two sides of the Orientation to Learning Dimension - Rigid Persistence and Fragility and Dependence - the author was in middle of this continuum on the self-assessment, and it is important for the author to continue to move forward with her awareness of her struggle between the two ends of this dimension:

- Self-Awareness:
 - Outcome: Wrestling with the challenge of these two dimensions has been a major awareness in addressing this project as a learning experience. The support of the author's advisor in creating a safe environment to express, either in meetings or in journaling, the negative feelings and struggle with this project has been tremendously helpful. This will be a continual journey for the author as she continues to discover her dimensions of learning in her desire to move forward with self-growth. Dealing with Rigid Persistence, at times, has been an output and an outcome. The

author needs to be willing to share in a safe environment her own thoughts, feelings, and attitudes and how that aspect of herself influences her learning. The author will continue to recognize new learning about her own learning dimensions.

Table 1. Prioritized Outputs and Outcomes for Self-growth in Life-Long Learning

COMPONENT	OUTPUTS (ACTIVITEIS)	OUTCOME (POTENTIAL)	CHANGE RELATED (ACTUAL)
Mindful Agency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Master’s Degree; *Self-Assessment Process; *Register for Practical Approaches to Healthy Living Now More Than Ever; *Spirituality Center for retreat and/or conferences on spirituality and healing; *Discussions with adviser Dr. Gary Gilmore; *Research where Strong Seniors Exercise classes are. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *I will take charge of own learning; *I will be aware of self-growth areas; *I will move forward in both physical fitness and nutrition; *I will grow in spirituality; *I will appreciate my own learning style and how personal experiences have contributed to my learning. *I will support my desire to take care of myself into my future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> * I have taken charge of my own learning; *I will complete Master’s Degree; *I will be more self confident; *I will connect with a learning community; *I will connect with others on spirituality awareness; *It validates myself and my own learning abilities; I will acknowledge my own personal experiences as part of my self-growth; *I will exercise to keep myself physically fit for moving into the future.
Hope & Optimism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Create a learning journal to document my own new learning and successes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *I will become aware of each new learning and how it connects with me; I will recognize hope for the future. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *I will acknowledge and appreciate changes within myself for my willingness to continue with life-long learning.
Sense Making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Have a section in learning journal for each learning event. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *I will note how new learning makes sense and document changes in myself. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *I will ask others about changes they observe in me, and I will share my experiences with others.

Table 1. (continued) Prioritized Outputs and Outcomes for Self-Growth in Life-Long Learning

COMPONENT	OUTPUTS (ACTIVITIES)	OUTPUTS (POTENTIAL)	OUTCOMES (ACTUAL)
Curiosity	*Continually ask myself questions and listen for answers from within and trust subconscious.	*I will ask myself “why” and listen for subconscious answer; I will value my own search for answers.	*I will not be afraid to ask questions and learn from others as well as share my gifts and talents with a learning community.
Collaboration	*Journal section on questions I want to ask others; look for opportunities to share ideas with others including this self-assessment process.	*I will continue to collaborate with a community of learners and look for ways to encourage others in their journey of life-long learning.	I feel more confident about sharing and collaborating with others relative in a self-assessment process for life-long learning.
Belonging	*Become more aware of others that I can turn to as a support system for learning; build quiet time alone for my own learning.	*I will allow myself to feel a sense of belonging within a support system where I can learn and share my gifts and talents as well as appreciating others.	*I will build on my sense of belonging since I am alone and I will locate social events where I am comfortable.
Orientation To Learning	*Accept and manage negative emotions; be willing to wrestle with changes; and consider re-doing a self-assessment later – this one or another.	*I have learned a great deal in this process with dealing with negative feelings and being okay with wrestling with difficult issues.	*I will value myself for working on this project to completion, and give myself credit for allowing my advisor to support me while I wrestled with some negative feelings, and emotions.
Rigid Persistence	*Though this is in the continuum for Orientation to Learning, I tend to vacillate between wanting to move forward and holding back.	*I will ask for help in wrestling with difficult situations; and, allow others to give me feedback.	*I will give myself credit for struggling with challenges and for being willing to allow others to give me feedback and support my rigid persistence when it is healthy.

Summary

In Section III, the author described the findings that included:

- Reviewing the background information on the development of the self-assessment tool the author chose to utilize for her assessment of her own self-growth areas for life-long learning;
- Contacting the lead author of the self-assessment tool she chose for self-assessment in life-long learning;
- Completing the on-line self-assessment;
- Contacting and experiencing an on-line *FACE time* with a *Learning Emergence* coach;
- Reflecting on the strengths of her personal self-assessment in life-long learning;
- Discovering the priority dimensions for the author to focus on for self-growth;
- The discovery of an additional self-growth dimension;
- Choosing activities that would strengthen areas of self-growth as well as continually reflecting on areas of strength; and

Contemplating how the author's process for self-assessment may be of benefit to Others.

SECTION IV

CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND SUMMARY

Introduction

The purpose of this project was the development of an individualized self-assessment process for life-long learning, its implementation, and evaluation. This process would enable the author to identify areas of self-growth at this point in time and potentially prepare that process for use by others.

Section IV will include conclusions and recommendations of the self-assessment process including: literature review; the need for a self-assessment process for life-long learning; choosing a self-assessment tool for life-long learning; the process for completing and interpreting the results of the self-assessment; developing a visual aid for prioritized self-growth areas; activities chosen by the author for the identified self-growth areas for the author's continued life-learning experiences; and reviewing the outputs and potential outcomes for the identified self-growth areas. Section IV will also include recommendations derived from certain conclusions for potentially preparing this process for use by the author and others.

Conclusions

Priority #1: Mindful Agency

Conclusion: Have periodic opportunities to share accomplishments with a trusted mentor.

- **Outcomes:** Support for going back to school to finish the author's Master's degree; finding a life-long learning self-assessment tool; creating a planning chart for life-long learning experiences; and attending a workshop for health and wellness;
- **Outputs:** The author planned to continue the path of life-long learning with events to broaden the author's spiritual life; learning beginning Yoga; and locating a site to participate in the *Strong Seniors* program for regular physical exercise.

Priority #2: Hope and Optimism

Conclusion: As the author gains new insights into turning challenges into positive experiences, she can look to the future with hope and optimism.

- **Outcomes:** Created a journey for weekly meetings with advisor for new learnings from our weekly meetings discussions;
- **Output:** Learned new ways of interpreting negative emotions to see the positive rather than the negative side, and to be able to know there was help available.

Priority #3: Creativity

Conclusion: It is helpful for the author's learning style to sit side by side a trusted mentor for guidance while learning a new aspect of technology.

- **Outcome:** With support, the author learned more aspects of technology than she had known prior to this project; and creation of the Ladder Model for Life-Long Learning was a visual that has been helpful in displaying the priorities of the assessment tool;
- **Output:** The author is more attentive to her subconscious and has a better sense of how her thoughts, feelings, emotions, and attitude contribute to her learning experiences.

Priority #4: Rigid Persistence

Conclusion: The author gains confidence in herself when she experiences a trusted mentor that will support her through listening to her concerns when she is experiencing the rigid persistence challenge.

- **Output:** With the support of the author's advisor, the author gained confidence that she will be able to complete this project even though Rigid Persistence has been a steady companion throughout the project;
- **Outcome:** Being able to share with the author's advisor in meeting every week, her advisor has enabled the author to recognize through this project, that she has been able to integrate her thoughts, feelings, emotions, and attitudes into her learning to experience a more holistic approach with regard to learning.

Recommendations

- The author will value this experience for the rest of her life in what she learned about herself through the process, and would recommend it to anyone who wishes to understand their own style of learning and realize what they bring to their learning journey, as well as how they integrate their learnings into their experiences.
- The author recommends a longer time to go through this process, it cannot be forced, so their coach and/or advisor needs to be someone willing and able to be supportive, be a coach, and a mentor who can be with him/her through this process.
- Personally, the process would have been even more enjoyable if the author would have had the technical skills available to develop greater access to technology to avoid some stressful situations which did provide a challenge throughout the process.

Summary

The purpose of this project was the development of an individualized self-assessment process for life-long learning, its implementation, and evaluation. This assessment process enabled the author to identify areas for self-growth at this point in time, and potentially prepare that process for use by others.

This self-assessment project for life-long learning at this time in the author's life has given her the experience of being able to 'make sense' of what her subjective side (thoughts, feelings, emotions, attitudes) brings to her objective side (learning

experiences have come together with her learning experiences to become ‘one.’ The author is certain that is why she connected so well with this self-assessment tool.

The author will value this experience, as well as the support of her advisor Dr. Gilmore, for the rest of her life, and will want to share with others as a way of role modeling that life-long learning is a journey that may start at any age, and will continue to evolve for a lifetime.

The author is confident that this real-life experience in the life-long learning process will move her forward in continuation of her life-long learning journey. The author will share her experiences in this process with other potential individuals considering a life-long learning self-assessment. The author is also confident this process would be an exceptional experience to replicate for others, and would be willing to contribute whatever she could to enable others to have this experience.

The author would like to conclude with a quote from Mahatma Gandhi:

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow
Learn as if you were to live forever”.

Mahatma Gandhi (Ghandhi)

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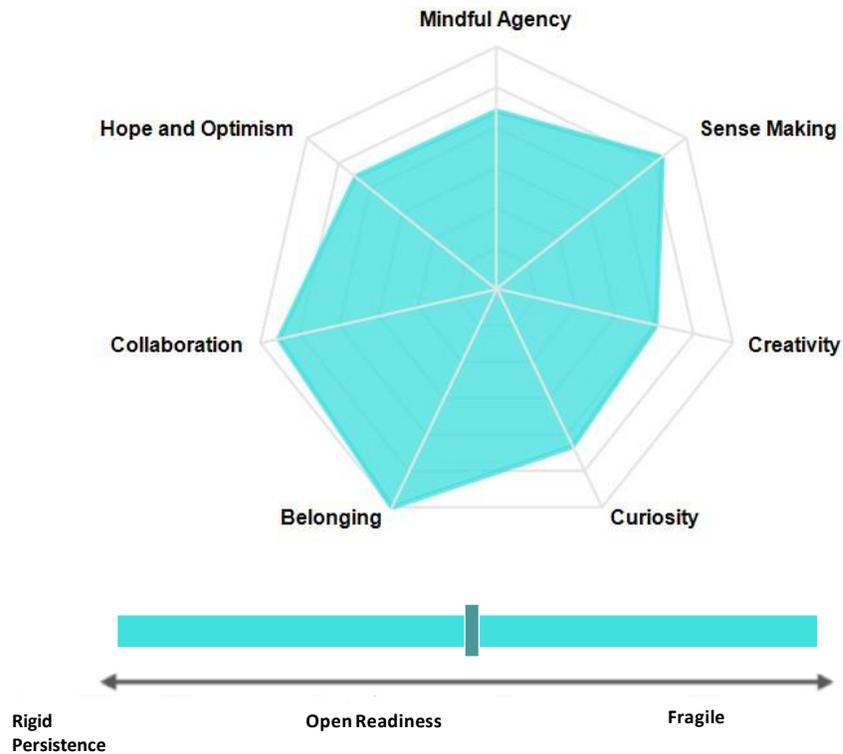
APPENDIX A
MY LEARNING POWER PROFILE



Thank you for taking the time to complete the CLARA survey.
You can see your Learning Power profile below.

Carrol Hunder

Here is your Learning Power Profile



Please talk to your CLARA Coach about how to get the best out of your profile, and find out more about its meaning by visiting <http://clara.learningemergence.com>

APPENDIX B

MY LEARNING POWER DIMENSION SCALES

My Learning Power Dimension Scales

Mindful Agency Scale

- I know that if something is important I can find a way to learn it;
- I know I can learn in my own way, even if my colleagues think it's a waste of time;
- I know I can find a way of solving a problem if I have enough time to think;
- I enjoy improving the way I go about things;
- I have ways of making myself learn if I don't feel like learning;
- If I get distressed when I'm learning, I'm pretty good at finding ways of feeling better;
- I tend to be careful and logical in my approach to learning;
- I think about everything that I will need before I begin a task;
- I can generally predict how long it will take me to learn something.

Creativity Scale

- Sometime good ideas just come into my head;
- I tend to use my imagination to help me learn;
- Sometimes if I stop and wait good ideas just arrive in my head;
- Often it is when I let my mind 'float free' that my best ideas come to me;
- I like to try out new ways of doing things even if there is very little time;
- I enjoy trying out new ways of learning;
- When my learning gets tedious I am good at finding ways to make it interesting;
- I feel it's all right to experiment with new ways of learning.

Sense Making Scale

- I make connections between what I am learning and what I have learned before;
- I often look back and think about what I have learned;
- Remembering what I already know often helps me to learn something new;
- What I learn often leads to the me doing things differently;
- I prefer learning something when I have a good reason to do so;
- I enjoy learning something new when I understand its relevance in my life;
- I enjoy learning about things I care a lot about.

Hope and Optimism Scale

- I know I am changing and growing over time;
- I am getting better at learning all the time;
- I have a sense of myself getting better at learning.

My Learning Power Dimension Scales (continued)

Curiosity Scale

- I prefer learning something when I have to try really hard to understand it;
- I am more stimulated by interesting questions than easy answers;
- I find learning more interesting if it is hard;
- I enjoy a challenge.

Collaboration Scale

- I enjoy solving problems together with other people;
- I find it helps me to learn if I can talk about it with colleagues;
- I like talking through challenging problems with friends.

Belonging

- There is at least one person close to me who has helped me to learn;
- I have a least one person close to me who I can turn to for guidance in my learning;
- I know at least one person in my community social network who I can turn to for guidance in my learning.

Openness to Learning Scale

- I find it difficult to know what to do when I get stuck;
- Because I dislike feelings of confusion and uncertainty I generally avoid learning something new;
- If I cannot learn something it's generally because I haven't figured out how to approach it;
- If I struggling to understand something I tend to give up after a while;
- If I find something really hard to learn, I usually think it's because I'm not very intelligent;
- I often get quite upset if I find learning too difficult;
- I find learning difficult when I am not told how to go about it;
- I can learn things well when other people help me;
- I need positive comments from a tutor or mentor in order to keep trying;
- I am happier learning when I have clear instructions.

[Deakin Crick, R. E.](#), Broadfoot, P. M., & Claxton, G. L. (2004). [Developing an Effective Lifelong Learning Inventory: the ELLI Project](#). *Assessment in Education, 11* (3), 247 - 272. doi: [10.1080/0969594042000304582](https://doi.org/10.1080/0969594042000304582)

APPENDIX C

JOURNALING FROM *FACE TIME* WITH COACH TIM SMALL

Journaling from *FACE Time* with Coach Tim Small from the United Kingdom

June 19, 2017

After introductions, Tim went over each of the dimension of the CLARA self-assessment instrument as follows:

Mindful Agency: This dimension is very strategic in a purposeful direction. Tom said to picture an eagle headed for a prey – this is managing your own development. He said this is tough as it includes feelings, thinking, and doing all together. The opposite is robotic – not purposeful – it is reacting and not looking ahead.

Sense-making: The function of the mind is connecting to what we know. It includes attitude and feelings to have it make sense. The opposite is fragmented – just learning – not actively using and relating to the learning.

Creativity: Using imagination, intuition, dreaming of solutions – could be considered ‘offbeat’, ‘wacky’ or ‘eccentric’. The opposite is ‘rule bound’ – sticking to one’s own way.

Curiosity: Getting beneath the surface – not accepting – looking beneath – the fuel that drives our energy to find out why. The opposite would be passivity and an ‘arms crossed’ attitude.

Belonging: Feeling supported and having someone to turn too, and feeling welcomed. The opposite is isolated and feeling alone.

(Tim Small Coaching Session – Continued)

Collaborating: Affirming – giving suggestions – team work – relating to others.

The opposite would be isolation and over dependence on others without giving or having team work.

Hope and Optimism: Overcoming obstacles – having inner confidence – anticipating moving forward and feeling concept of self. The opposite is despair and hopelessness.

Rigid Persistence: Refusing to move forward – not wanting to change. Although at times this is a positive place to be when one needs to stand firm. The opposite is Fragile Dependence in which one is vulnerable to feelings and tries to adapt to whatever is until there is a readiness to move.

Open Readiness: A willing to be open to change in either direction when and if there is a need.

Some of Tim Small's other comments were: Learning is changeable – not fixed behavior – being acceptable to change; work on areas where one wants to see change; context may change and work areas may change; if one is never given a chance to question with support, it is difficult to even understand being able to change. A person's "all" is involved – thinking, feelings, behavior – the whole person – all connected to each other.

Tim and the author talked about the dimensions where the author showed strength (strong above average): Sense Making, Belonging, and Collaboration. These were the ones the author felt were strong. When the author questioned Tim relative to ones that

(Tim Small Coaching Session – Continued)

she felt she may have been strong in (Hope and Optimism and Curiosity), Tim explained that if one of these dimensions were close to a dimension that the author was strong in, Hope and Optimism wouldn't have appeared to be as strong. The same applied to Curiosity as that dimension was close to Belonging and the author was above average strong in Belonging so Curiosity didn't appear to be as strong.

Another learning for the author was that Tim Small stressed this self-assessment instrument is about HOW WE LEARN and at the same time, it is about attitude, feelings, and behaviors. The author appreciated this perspective as often the author has felt like these were two separate issues – feelings, attitudes, and behaviors on one side and learning as a separate issue.

Tim Small and the author discussed which areas the author felt would be self-growth areas for her and they were Mindful Agency, Creativity, and Hope and Optimism. Tim showed me a booklet he would be providing me that would provide suggestions for self-growth in each of the areas.

We also spoke about the possibility of a later coaching session and what the cost would be to at some point re-take the CLARA self-assessment instrument to see if there would be any negligible differences in the strengths of the dimensions.

The coaching on the CLARA self-assessment tool was beneficial and the author appreciated the opportunity to be able to do an on-line coaching session with Tim Small from Learning Emergence LLP.