# MOOC

## COMMONWEALTH of LEARNING

## NWU ®  |  SDL Research Unit Self-Directed Learning

# Self-directed learning for higher education MOOC

## Course description

Self-directed learning (SDL), where students take responsibility for their own learning, is an essential requirement for students within the 21st century context. This massive open online course (MOOC) provides a short introduction to SDL for faculty and facilitators in the higher education context. This MOOC covers the basic theoretical foundations of SDL. In addition, the typical characteristics of a self-directed learner and the way in which learner-centred and SDL-oriented learning environments can be created are explored. On a more practical level, the MOOC focuses on the affordances of strategies, such as cooperative learning, problem-based learning and play-based learning to foster SDL. Finally, the MOOC concludes with a section on the role of assessment in promoting SDL throughout the learning process.

## Learning Outcomes

After completion of this course, you are expected to be able to:

- Explain SDL and the theoretical foundation that underpins SDL
- Describe the characteristics of a self-directed learner
- Discuss the dimensions and models of SDL
- Create a learning context that is learner-centred and conducive to SDL
- Use strategies such as cooperative learning, problem-based learning, as well as play-based learning to foster SDL
- Plan and implement assessment tasks to support the development of SDL

## Who should participate

This MOOC is a free, four-week course offered by the Commonwealth of Learning in collaboration with the Research Unit Self-Directed Learning from North-West University, South Africa and is open to anyone, anywhere, and is mobile-friendly. The focus is specifically on faculty and facilitators in higher education institutions.

## At a glance

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| Schedule | 6 - 31 May 2024 (4 weeks) Online synchronous session: 5 June 14:00-16:00 (SAST/UTC+2) |
| Intended audience | Faculty and facilitators from higher education institutions |
| Language | English |
| Expected workload | 5-6 hours per week |
| Challenge level | Introductory |
| Prerequisites | None |
| Certification | Free certificate of completion |

## Course details

### Week 1

- Explore SDL definitions
- Apply the SDL process
- Explore the historical background of SDL
- Explain the theoretical foundations of SDL
- Identify the characteristics of a self-directed learner and evaluate your own SDL characteristics

### Week 2

- Explain the relevance of SDL for higher education
- Discuss and compare different dimensions and models of SDL
- Apply SDL models and dimensions in the design of learning environments

### Week 3

- Define the concepts of cooperative learning, problem-based learning and play-based learning
- Design a learning environment which includes an appropriate active teaching and learning strategy to promote SDL

- Discuss the role of assessment in SDL
- Discuss the components of self-directed learning-oriented assessment
- Plan and evaluate the use of cooperative learning-embedded assessment within higher education

## 👥 Meet the instructors

**Dr Byron J Bunt** is a senior lecturer in the Faculty of Education of the North-West University and is part of the research unit Self-Directed Learning. He is the subject leader for History Education. He has been working in the field of teacher education for the past eleven years. His research niche encompasses cognitive education, as well as game-based learning, specifically focusing on developing students' creative and critical thinking via gamification approaches. He has published in the fields of history education and GBL. He is the author of several book chapters in scholarly books and articles in renowned journals.

**Professor Marietjie Havenga** is a professor in the School of Mathematics, Science and Technology Education in the Faculty of Education (NWU). She currently holds a C rating from the National Research Foundation. She is involved in teaching courses in information technology to pre-service teachers at the undergraduate level as well as the supervision of postgraduate students. She has published articles in journals, papers in conference proceedings and chapters in research books. Her research interests are problem-based learning to enhance self-directed learning with specific reference to computer science education and educational robotics.

**Professor Dorothy Laubscher** is an associate professor in the Research Unit Self-Directed Learning, in the Faculty of Education at the North-West University. Her research interests include Mathematics Education, technology-enhanced learning, self-directed learning, open educational resources, and blended and multimodal learning environments to foster self-directed learning. She serves as the chairholder for the UNESCO Chair on Multimodal Learning and Open Educational Resources at the North-West University.

**Dr Marisa Verster** is a senior lecturer in Curriculum Studies at the Faculty of Education, North-West University. Her research focuses on teachers' support in implementing the curriculum, self-directed learning, and curriculum transformation. She has published at the national and international levels, she acts as a co-supervisor for postgraduate students and she is also contributing to community service projects.

**Dr Sukie van Zyl** holds a PhD degree in Computer Science Education and is a senior lecturer in Computer Science Education at the Faculty of Education at the North-West University in South Africa.

Her research focus is to develop deeper self-directed learning (knowledge transfer and self-directed learning) in a cooperative learning environment in Computer Science Education. Her research interests further include coding and robotics in education and computational thinking. She has authored several publications, presented at international conferences, and acts as co-supervisor and external examiner for postgraduate students.

**Dr Anitia Lubbe** is a senior lecturer in the Centre for Health Professions Education at the Faculty of Health Sciences of the North-West University, South Africa. Anitia has been working in the field of teacher education for the past twelve years, and her research has a distilled focus on how assessment, assessment literacy, and cooperative learning can influence the development of self-directed learning skills. As part of her PhD, she embedded the five basic principles of cooperative learning (positive interdependence, individual accountability, promotive interaction, small group/social skills, and group processing) into assessment activities. Anitia is involved in postgraduate supervision and has published at a national level. She is currently part of several research projects specifically focusing on assessment for self-directed learning. She published several publications, co-editing an SDL book on assessment, an invited keynote at an international SDL symposium, national and international conference presentations, local radio interviews, as well as workshop presentations.

**Professor Elsa Mentz** is the Research Director for the Research Unit Self-Directed Learning at the Faculty of Education of the North-West University. She is also a professor in Computer Science Education and her main research focus is the promotion of Self-Directed Learning through the implementation of cooperative learning. She has acted for extended periods as Executive Dean of the Faculty of Education at the North-West University. She is a C1 National Research Foundation (NRF) rated researcher and editor of book publications entitled "Self-directed learning research: An imperative for transforming the educational landscape" and "Self-directed Learning for the 21st Century: Implications for Higher Education". She received several research awards, including the 2020 Malcom Knowles award for significant lifelong contributions to the field of self-directed learning and the 2020 Research medal of the Education Association of South Africa. She completed several funded research projects, has published on national and international level and act as supervisor for post graduate students.

## 🎖 Certification

A Certificate of Completion will be awarded to participants who:

- Complete all quizzes, reflections and knowledge surveys
- Contribute to all forums and comment on at least 2 other contributions in all forums
- Submit the assignment as indicated in Week 4

## 👥 Registration

For registration, go to: **https://sdlmooc.colfinder.org/**

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