THE CONSTRUCT OF ADULT LEARNING TO LEARN

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Summary. Learning to learn remains important in the context of lifelong learning in personal, professional, and civic aspects: in the early, middle, and late adulthood. In the early adulthood, learning to learn is relevant to young adults when looking for a job; in the middle adulthood, learning to learn is relevant to adults maintaining the position in the workplace; and in the late adulthood, learning to learn for elderly is more associated with their social activities (Staniulevičienė, 2014). It means that learning to learn is important during all life, the process of learning to learn and the construction of it is the problematic field.

Keywords: learning to learn construct, competence, adults.

INTRODUCTION

Learning to learn is the ability to pursue and persist in learning, to organise one’s own learning, including via the effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. This competence includes awareness of one’s learning process and needs identifying available opportunities, and the ability to overcome obstacles in order to learn successfully. This competence means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skills as well as seeking and making use of guidance. Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts: at home, at work, in education and training. Motivation and confidence
are crucial to individual’s competence. Hofmann (2009) describes the term learning to learn as the most important and vital for people trying to deal with the world that is changing rapidly. He sees this competence as a method-in-action and claims that people have to engage the method itself. On the other hand, Candy (Hofmann, 2009) describes learning to learn as a competence that allows people to become more effective, flexible and self-organized learners in a variety of contexts. Learning to learn can be seen in basic skills such as literacy, numeracy and ICT skills that are necessary for further learning. An individual should, therefore, be able to gain, access, profess and assimilate new knowledge and new skills. Individuals should also be able to learn autonomously, be self-disciplined, work collaboratively, share what they have learnt, organise their own learning, evaluate their own work, seek advice, information and support when appropriate (Staniulevičienė, 2014).

“Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experience, to use and apply knowledge and abilities in various situations – at home, at work, in education and training” (Key competencies for lifelong learning, Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council, 2006).

In this article, the construct of learning to learn is discussed. The object of this research is the conception of adult learning to learn construct. The goal is to reveal the concept of learning to learn construct identifying learning to learn in different activities. Two main tasks are as follows: to define one of the key competences – learning to learn; to highlight the learning to learn competence – finding a job; keeping the workplace; seeking for professional career; in public activities.

The study involved 3302 adults. The learning to learn questionnaires were answered by 667 adults. It is important to mention that a higher proportion of women participated in this quantitative study, 63.4 percent of respondents were women and 36.6 percent were men. Respondents were aged 18 to 92 years. Seniors (from 61 years of age in women group and from 63 years – in men group) composed 8.3 percent of respondents (Gedvilienė G. et al., 2015).

In this article, the general competencies, such as communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical and science and natural science skills, digital literacy, learning to learn, social and civic engagement, initiative and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression, are described according to the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council (Key competences for lifelong learning, Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council, 2006).

The analysis of adult learning to learn competence is important for the following findings as components: the ability to plan and organize learning activities; the ability to solve problems; the ability to reflect on own learning and performance; the ability to learn and work independently; the ability to learn from each other. Separately analysing each of these skills, dimensions demonstrating learning to learn as a complex combination were distinguished.

**General competencies relevant for the application of activities in different areas**

The following four application fields were mentioned by the participants of the research:

- Professional activities and work challenges;
- Career aspiration;
- Performing public duties;
- Personal development.
General competencies relevant for the application of activities in different areas

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application fields</th>
<th>Very important (%)</th>
<th>Important (%)</th>
<th>Not so important (%)</th>
<th>Not important (%)</th>
<th>Number of answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional activities and work challenges</td>
<td>47,4</td>
<td>42,5</td>
<td>6,8</td>
<td>3,3</td>
<td>3217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Career aspirations</td>
<td>40,7</td>
<td>39,2</td>
<td>13,8</td>
<td>6,3</td>
<td>3169</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performing public duties</td>
<td>28,3</td>
<td>47,1</td>
<td>18,5</td>
<td>6,1</td>
<td>3159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal development</td>
<td>59,8</td>
<td>34,2</td>
<td>4,3</td>
<td>1,7</td>
<td>3189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Answers show the general competencies relevant for the application of activity in different areas. Number of replies show the importance of professional activities and work challenges, career aspirations, performance of public duties and personal development.

The importance of learning to learn competence

The participants stressed the importance of learning to learn competence.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Application field</th>
<th>Very important (%)</th>
<th>Important (%)</th>
<th>Not so important (%)</th>
<th>Not important (%)</th>
<th>Number of answers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The importance of learning to learn competence</td>
<td>35,0</td>
<td>46,7</td>
<td>13,9</td>
<td>4,5</td>
<td>3188</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most of the study participants, respectively employed, unemployed and seniors, identified the following learning to learn components:

- Processing their planning and organization;
- Solving problems connected with learning solution;
- Discussing the learning experience;
- Using their personal characteristics;
- Learning to learn independently;
- Learning to learn in collaboration with the others;
- Using one's values;
- Knowing how to apply knowledge;
- Advantages of own skill.
Learning to learn competence in finding job

The participants stressed the importance of learning to learn in finding job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affirmations</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Helps to find information about job places</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Helps to prepare the necessary documents for employment (CV, cover letter, etc.)</td>
<td>.503**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Helps to cooperate with the employers or their representatives to find work</td>
<td>.472**, .616**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Helps to present themselves to employers during the selection process</td>
<td>.522**, .633**, .580**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The different affirmations were given for the participants to compare. It is seen that there are meaningful correlations between affirmations, what show the importance and link between different affirmations such as:

- Helping to find information on jobs;
- Helping to prepare the necessary documents for employment (CV, cover letter, etc.);
- Helping to cooperate with the employers or their representatives to find work;
- Helping to present themselves to employers during the selection process.

The statement that learning to learn competence helps in finding work, helps to find information about jobs is associated with the statement “helps to assist in preparing the necessary documents for employment”, Kendal tau_b = 0.503; p < 0.01. Adoption helps to find information on jobs and is associated with the following statements: helps to cooperate with the employers or their representatives to find work; helps employers to present themselves during the selection process. “It helps prepare the necessary documents for employment” is fairly strongly associated with the “helps employers during the selection process”; Kendal tau_b = 0.633, p < 0.01. All of these are statistically significant relationships between the statements showing that the competence of learning to learn plays an important role in finding a job.

Learning to learn competence in maintaining the workplace

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affirmations</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Helps to achieve greater results over time</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Helps to save time and efforts</td>
<td>.437**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Helps to improve communication and collaboration with colleagues</td>
<td>.514**, .397**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Helps to deal with work-related issues and concerns</td>
<td>.515**, .375**, .449**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5. Helps to comply with the quality requirements  

6. Helps to create new solutions and ideas in the workplace  

7. Helps to defend their rights  

The correlations between affirmations were seen. Participants mentioned the importance of the propositions compared like follows:

- Helps to achieve greater results over time;
- Helps save time and effort;
- Helps to improve communication and collaboration with colleagues;
- Helps to deal with work-related issues and concerns;
- Helps to comply with the quality requirements;
- Helps to create new solutions and ideas in the workplace;
- Helps to defend their rights.

Significant results during the working day help to achieve new ideas and utilization of solutions in the workplace, Kendal tau_b = 0.533, p < 0.01. Work-related issues and problems help to achieve significant results during the working day, Kendal tau_b = 0.515, p < 0.01. Communication and collaboration with colleagues helps to achieve better results over time as well, Kendal tau_b = 0.514, p < 0.01. Quality compliance also helps in maintaining a workplace that helps achieve significant results during the working day, Kendal tau_b = 0.394, p < 0.01. Defending own rights at work also provides access to new solutions and ideas in the workplace, Kendal tau_b = 0.488; p < 0.01; facilitates compliance with quality requirements, Kendal tau_b = 0.545, p < 0.01. Achieving better results during the working day in the future helps to save time and effort, Kendal tau_b = 0.437, p < 0.01. It helps to create new solutions and ideas in the workplace, what helps to deal with work-related issues and problems, Kendal tau_b = 0.557, p < 0.01.

Learning to learn competence in professional career

**Table 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affirmations</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Helps to plan career</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Helps to find information about career opportunities</td>
<td>,492**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Helps to interact with human resources specialists in connection with career questions</td>
<td>,418**</td>
<td>,470**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Helps to assess proposals on career advancement</td>
<td>,502**</td>
<td>,510**</td>
<td>,457**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Helps employers to provide their own advantages</td>
<td>,439**</td>
<td>,604**</td>
<td>,492**</td>
<td>,556**</td>
<td>–</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Helps to create and develop their own businesses</td>
<td>,547**</td>
<td>,409**</td>
<td>,444**</td>
<td>,485**</td>
<td>,487**</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The below mentioned affirmations are stressed by the participants:

- Helps to plan career;
- Helps to find information about career opportunities;
- Helps to interact with human resources specialists about career;
- Helps to assess proposals on career advancement;
- Helps employers to provide their own advantages;
- Helps to create and develop their own businesses.

There is a connection between self-career planning and information about career opportunities, Kendal tau_\_b = 0.492, p < 0.01. There is also a correlation between the statements “helps to find information about career opportunities” and “helps to communicate with human resources specialists about career”, Kendal tau_\_b = 0.470, p < 0.01. Talking to human resources professionals in career guidance helps employers to provide their own advantages, Kendal tau_\_b = 0.457, p < 0.01. Upon their employers, the advantages of an opportunity to seek information about career opportunities, Kendal tau_\_b = 0.604, p < 0.01. Upon their employers, an opportunity to assess the benefits of the proposals to be promoted, Kendal tau_\_b = 0.556, p < 0.01. Upon their employers, the advantages of an opportunity to create and develop their own business, Kendal tau_\_b = 0.487, p < 0.01.

**Participation in community activities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Affirmations</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Helps to participate in the events of municipal initiatives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Helps on voluntary basis (voluntary) provide assistance to municipalities on various issues</td>
<td>0.559**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Helps to establish and maintain contacts with the local community or communities</td>
<td>0.533**</td>
<td>0.546**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Helps to take responsibility for the local community(ies) development</td>
<td>0.579**</td>
<td>0.603**</td>
<td>0.567**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Helps to collect and disseminate information about the local community(ies) and their activities</td>
<td>0.522**</td>
<td>0.581**</td>
<td>0.633**</td>
<td>0.585**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Helps to find oneself in the local community(ies)</td>
<td>0.466**</td>
<td>0.525**</td>
<td>0.609**</td>
<td>0.533**</td>
<td>0.588**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Helps to promote local community(ies)</td>
<td>0.629**</td>
<td>0.577**</td>
<td>0.575**</td>
<td>0.677**</td>
<td>0.652**</td>
<td>0.595**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following propositions were stressed and the important correlations mentioned:

- Helps to participate in the events of municipal initiatives;
- Helps on voluntary basis (voluntary) provide assistance to municipalities on various issues;
• Helps to establish and maintain contacts with the local community or communities;
• Helps to take responsibility for the local community(ies) development;
• Helps to collect and disseminate information about the local community(ies) and their activities;
• Helps to find oneself in the local community(ies);
• Helps to promote local community(ies).

It helps to take responsibility for the local community(ies) and the development of voluntary assistance to municipalities on various issues, Kendal tau_ b = 0.603, p < 0.01; in addition to this, helps to participate in municipal events and initiatives, which helps to promote new local community(ies), Kendal tau_ b = 0.629, p < 0.01. It helps to participate in municipal events and initiatives, which helps on voluntary basis (voluntary) to provide assistance to municipalities on various issues as well, Kendal tau_ b = 0.559, p <0.01. Participation in municipal events and initiatives helps to take responsibility in the development of the local community(ies), Kendal tau_ b = 0.533, p < 0.01. Responsibility of the local community(ies) to participate in the development of the assumption helps municipal events and various initiatives, Kendal tau_ b = 0.579, p < 0.01. It helps to collect and disseminate information about the local community(ies) and their activities and helps promote new local community(ies), Kendal tau_ b = 0.652, p < 0.01. It helps establish and maintain contacts with the local community or communities, which helps to find oneself in the local community(ies), Kendal tau_ b = 0.609, p < 0.01. It helps to promote local community(ies), which helps to take responsibility in the development of the local community(ies), Kendal tau_ b = 0.677, p < 0.01. It helps to collect and disseminate information about the local community(ies) and their activities, and helps on a voluntary basis (voluntary) provide assistance to municipalities on various issues, Kendal tau_ b = 0.581, p < 0.01.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the concept of learning to learn, according the respondents’ point of view, revealed that learning to learn skills play an important role in finding a job, keeping the job, in professional career, and participating in professional activities. The survey revealed significant correlations comparing statements associated with the acquisition methods in learning to learn competence. Respondents stressed the importance of taking responsibility in learning. Responsibility in learning and the feeling associated with identification of needs, and the importance of learning as well as assessment of their learning. Respondents linked their ability to develop new ideas, to assume long-term commitments and pay self-study, showing a high level of understanding. This was confirmed by the answers of study participants of all groups: adults-workers, the unemployed, and seniors.

The group activities are related to learning to learn skills, its improvement and education. Respondents emphasized the importance of learning to solve problems under the influence of the group. Emphasized was the importance of learning organization, learning to act individually, learning and working in group. Respondents learning in group linked to individual learning and meaningful improvement in learning to learn skills.
REFERENCES


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