

Planning for Success: Sustaining Learner Commitment in a Work- based Learning Context

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‘Responding to Employers: Moving into the
Mainstream’

De Montfort University

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Aims of workshop

- To consider the nature of independent learning in the context of WBL
- To introduce 'Planning for Success' and to report on initial evaluation findings
- To consider how PFS might be used in your own context

High stakes for
newly enrolled
learners

'I've no fear of
work- just a
realisation that I am
nearly working at
full capacity'

'Key challenges are managing my
study time and my job whilst
maintaining a house and
supporting 2 children as a single
parent.'

'Have been ambitious
and chosen to study at
PG level although I
haven't got a degree. '

'It 's 28 years since I
finished my HND and I
have found the
experience of
embarking on a new
course quite daunting. '

'5 years ago I'd left full time
work and taken up child
minding. My brain was
turning to mush so I
enrolled on this course'

PFS and links to independent learning

Reflection

Developing
academic
confidence

Evaluating use of
time

Awareness of own
academic voice

Self-evaluation

Consider preferred
way of learning

Setting goals

Organising self and
work

Making decisions
about learning

Focus on own
individual learning
needs

Questioning

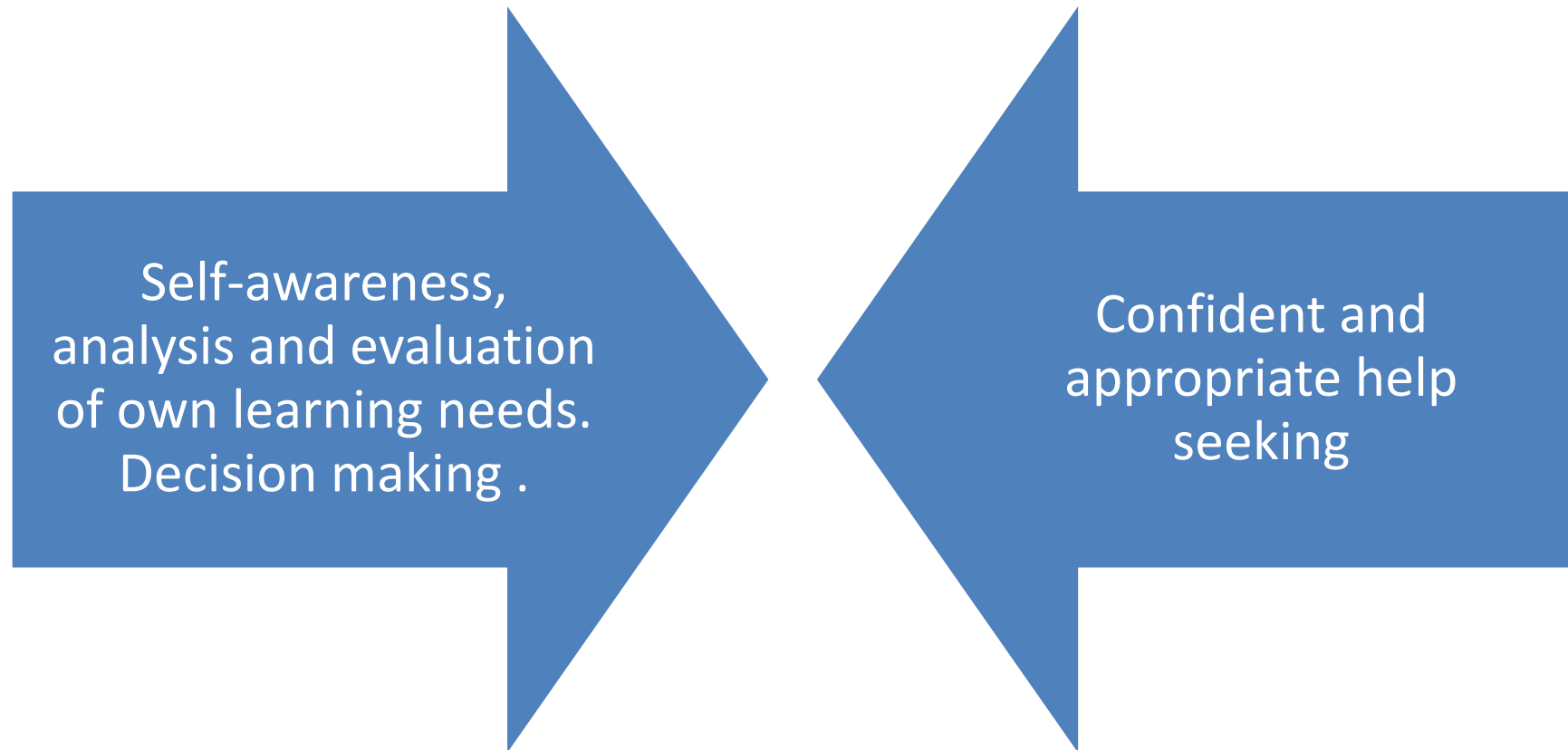
Recognising
achievement and
need for
development

Can we teach independent learning?

- David Boud describes how autonomous learning is 'acquired' and concludes that all we can do as teachers is to create situations in which autonomy in learning may develop.

BOUD, D (1988) *Developing student autonomy in learning* New York, Kogan Press

Conditions in which independent learning may develop...



‘Planning for Success’

historical context 1

- 10+ years experience of new undergraduates self-assessing skills at point of entry to HE
- Judgement of levels of confidence, measured against criteria
- Provides university, faculties and programmes with a snapshot of students’ confidence
- Informed provision of support available to **ALL** students

‘Planning for Success’

historical context 2

- Self-assessment exercise (SAE) workbook generic and paper-based
- Primarily aimed at full-time undergraduates
- With adaptations in delivery, also used with postgraduates and students studying in different modes
- SAE adapted and customised as stand-alone unit for University Certificate in Professional Development

‘Planning for Success’

- Small pilot with 27 mature students in a work-based learning context (U/g and P/g)
- Introduced in a workshop looking at learning preferences
- Opportunity for students to share their concerns
- Access to on-line version of ‘Planning for Success’ plus evaluation questionnaire
- 9 completed questionnaires

Emerging themes

- Stakes are high - high personal investment + high expectations
- Academic writing and managing study are areas of concern for almost all
- Most respondents (7/9) felt that
 - PFS had helped 'a lot' and was effective in identifying the academic skills they may need to develop further.
 - It was probably too early to develop a learning plan or to make a decision about using available resources
 - Completing PFS had increased their confidence about studying at DMU

Student comments

'Still concerned about my ability but I know there is help available'

'I remembered I can do it!'

'I have identified or rather formalised those skills I know I will find more challenging and I feel more able to prepare for this'

'On reading this I knew what the skills were and it was helpful to see them laid out in the document'

'It has reminded me what I am capable of and reassured me that I am not on my own feeling inadequate'

'I am becoming more confident the more time I spend thinking about what I need to undertake'