

Research in PLA



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Four Areas of Research



- Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) and Prior Learning Assessment (PLA)
- Evaluator Training for PLA
- Examining the Student's Essays/ Evaluator Reports
- Faculty's Perceptions of College-Level Learning

Self-Regulated Learning and PLA

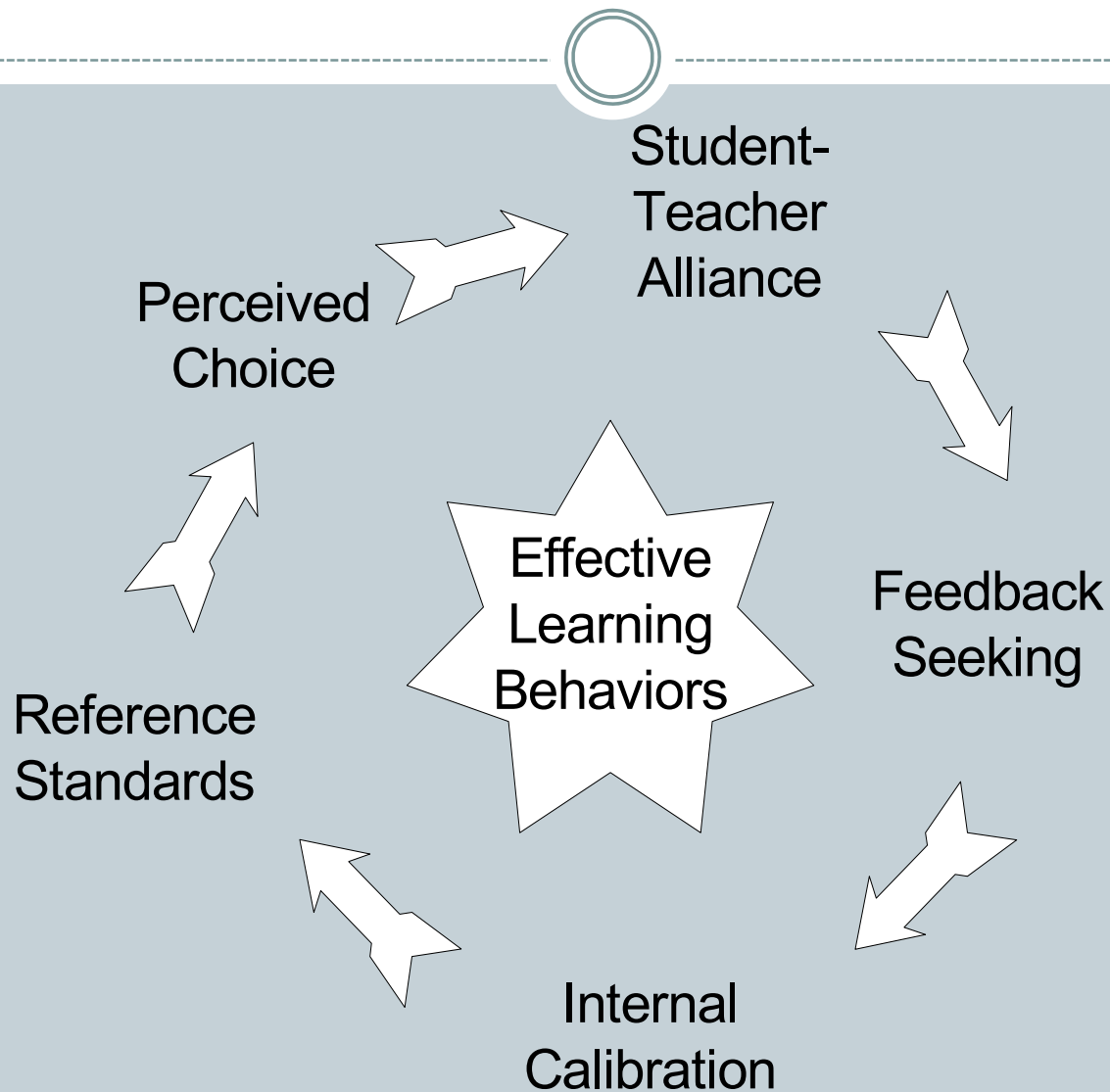


- Definition of SRL - the learner's ability to process actively and control information, affect, and behavior to acquire knowledge and skills.
- Hallmarks of a high self-regulated learner:
 - ❖ Persistence
 - ❖ Time management
 - ❖ Self-reliance
 - ❖ Use of strategic methods
 - ❖ Strong sense of self-efficacy
 - ❖ Goal –Directness
 - ❖ Repeated practice
 - ❖ Resourcefulness

* Travers, N.L., Sheckley, B.G., & Bell, A., (2003). *Enhancing Self-regulated learning: A comparison of instructional techniques*. *Journal of Continuing Higher Education*, Vol. 51, n0.3.

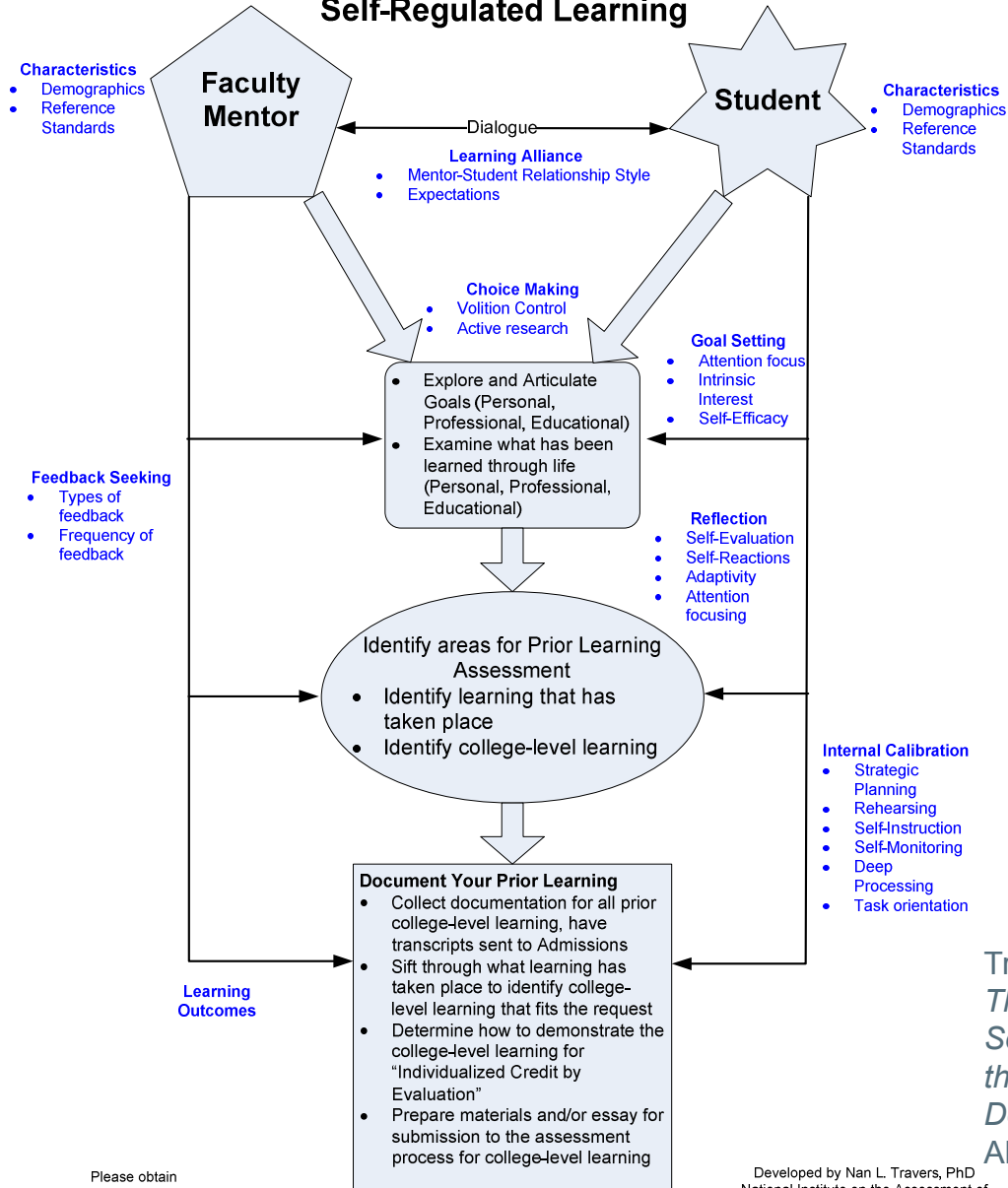
* Travers, N.L., (2008). *Some thoughts on adult learning, self-regulated learning, and the Empire State College degree planning process*. *All About Mentoring*, Vol. 33.

Components of SRL



Travers, 2008

Prior Learning Assessment & Self-Regulated Learning



Travers, N.L., (2008). *Some Thoughts on Adult Learning, Self-Regulated Learning, and the Empire State College Degree Planning Process. All About Mentoring, Vol. 33.*

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Developed by Nan L. Travers, PhD
National Institute on the Assessment of
Experiential Learning
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SRL Research



- Experts develop higher levels of self-regulatory and monitoring abilities than novices.
- When students perceived choices, they performed at higher standards, set more challenging goals and higher efficacy toward making decisions.
- Goal commitment is highly related to metacognitive functioning.
- Improving SRL is clearly related to broader-based instruction (e.g., genuine problems, case-based instruction) rather than specific task focus.

Travers, N.L., Sheckley, B.G., & Bell, A., (2003). *Enhancing Self-regulated learning: A comparison of instructional techniques*. Journal of Continuing Higher Education, Vol. 51, n0.3.

SRL Research (cont.)



- When students were encouraged to connect new experiences with previous experiences, SRL improved.
- Students in classes primarily taught by lecture decreased in SRL and became more “teacher-regulated” while students taught in classes based on adult learning principles increased their SRL.
- Deliberate practice engages the self-regulated learning process.

Travers, N.L., Sheckley, B.G., & Bell, A., (2003). *Enhancing Self-regulated learning: A comparison of instructional techniques*. Journal of Continuing Higher Education, Vol. 51, n0.3.

Research Design – Begins Fall 2009



- At the beginning of the semester, students create a concept map of “Me as a Learner” – this is before they learn how to develop PLA requests.
- At the end of the semester, students use the same concept map and extend their thinking of “Me as a Learner.”
- Analysis will compare Pre- and Post-concept maps for concepts students have of themselves as learners and the complexity of linkages among these concepts.

PLA Faculty/Specialists Evaluator Training A Multi-Institutional Study

● ***Study Process***

- Electronic survey sent to 190 Institutions, 34 (18%) responded to date (3 from Canada, 31 from USA)
- Evaluator training experience ranged 0 – 15 years, mean – 5.5 years

● ***Institutional Support for PLA and Evaluator Training***

- 75% had Institutional Mission, 74% had Core Values and 67% had Policy support
- 57% had Administration and 48% had Faculty support
- 39% had Financial support

● ***Characteristics of PLA Programs***

- 64% assess across all academic disciplines
- 74% use course match, 44% use non-course match PLA
- 96% use individualized learning portfolios

Hoffman, T., Travers, N. L., Evans, M., & Treadwell, A. (2009) *PLA Faculty/Specialist Evaluator Training Part I and Part II: Research Results From A Multi-Institutional Study Of Applied Methods*. The National Institute On The Assessment Of Adult Learning 2009: The Next Generation. Princeton, NJ.

Evaluator Training Programs



- Evaluation process:
 - 58% use portfolio only, 38% use portfolio and interview
 - 88% use individual evaluators, 23% use a panel
- Training process:
 - 67% train one-on-one, 48% train in groups, 19% use on-line training
 - 65% delivered information verbally, 46% had a handbook
 - 72% identified some form of written materials most useful
- Topics covered:
 - Top three topics covered in training: Overview of process (92%), Expectations of evaluator (92%) and Expectations of the student (85%)
 - Top three topics identified as critical: Overview of process (100%), Expectations of evaluator (96%), How to evaluate college-level learning (92%)
 - 65% included National Standards in training, 81% identified this as critical
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Training Delivery Modes



Format

- In person, one-on-one
- In person, in a group
- By phone
- By e-mail
- Online
- Peer Mentoring (experienced evaluators work with new evaluators)
- ACE training

Delivery Mode

- Verbal Information
- Written Handbook
- Written Resource Materials
- On-line Handbook
- On-line Resource Materials
- Samples of Evaluations
- Rubrics
- **Best Practices are still being analyzed**

PLA Planner – Electronic tool & Research agenda



- PLA Planner – Electronic tool collects student essays and evaluator reports.
- Evaluator Reports (2009)
 - Currently, reviewing 50-60 evaluator reports based on a rubric. Pilot is completed. In July, group is meeting to analyze data and norming exercise to begin next round.
- Student Essays – analysis planned to examine the ways in which students describe their learning (2009-2011).
- Comparative study – students' essays and evaluator reports (2010-2012).

Faculty Perceptions



- Faculty approaches to mentoring students with PLA
 - Travers, N.L., et. al., 2009, *Faculty Voices: A Cinderella Story at the PLA Ball*. All About Mentoring, Vol. 35.
 - Conducted two focus groups with faculty (>40) to determine their philosophical approaches to PLA. Found continuum from convergent philosophy (match to existing learning in the academy) to divergent philosophy (learning is co-created in the dialogue and discussion).
- “What is College-Level Learning?”
 - Anticipated to begin Fall 2009
 - On-line survey with faculty at two institutions that use PLA (Empire State College and Thomas Edison)
 - Ask faculty to define “college-level” learning.