The Relationship between Resourcefulness and Persistence in Adult Autonomous Learning:

An Article Critique

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The motivation behind this quantitative study was to “foster a better understanding of the causal relationship between individual resourcefulness subscales and persistence” (118). The goal was to help educators integrate instructional strategies that would assist in developing autonomous lifelong learners. Michael Ponton, Gail Derrick, and Paul Carr are all professors in the areas of education and leadership studies at Regent University in Virginia. In the literature review, the authors began by defining *learning, self-directed learning,* and *learner autonomy.* The authors built on some of their own previous studies, citing their own works extensively.

In the method section, two instruments are described. The Inventory of Learner Resourcefulness (ILR) was developed by Paul Carr, while Gail Derrick developed the Inventory of Learner Persistence (ILP). Both instruments have been argued as being construct and content valid and externally and internally reliable by independent researchers. The present study is based on data collected from 492 adults who were participants in several smaller previous investigations. The authors state that the generalizability of the study may be limited because the participants do not represent a random sample of the U.S. adult population.

In the results section, the authors first perform descriptive statistics for the ILR subscales and the ILP. They then looked for intercorrelations and found a statistically significant (p<.001) linear relationship exists between all five of the variables. All the correlations ranged from moderate to high. The researchers hypothesized that performing these four subscales leads to persistence in the following causal path:
Anticipate future rewards → Prioritize learning over nonlearning → Choose learning over nonlearning → Solve problems that interfere with learning → Persistence

In the research findings, path coefficients were determined using the coefficients from standardized linear regression equations. Contrary to the research hypotheses, the indirect path was not the largest path to persistence and the direct path was not small. The largest path was: Anticipate future rewards → Prioritize learning over nonlearning → Persistence.

In the discussion of findings, the authors make some interesting observations. They discuss the nature of adulthood, with its multiple life roles and responsibilities. Although an adult may anticipate the future rewards of learning and prioritize learning activities, emergencies occur, as do the daily interruptions of life. The authors suggest self-monitoring strategies that may be useful, including journaling the time spent in learning and non-learning activities. An important role for educators is to help learners move beyond an intention to learn and actually choose learning over non-learning activities.