# DOD Mentoring Resource Portal

# DEVELOPING SELF LESSON

Information for Supervisors Portfolio
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*Source: DCPAS New Supervisor Course*

## LESSON: DEVELOPING SELF

"The revolutions that are currently changing the workplace are also changing the way people learn, placing increasing expectations on employees to remain current by taking advantage of new ways of learning."

-Department of the Navy

Investing in the Future Through Continuous Learning

Employee self-development is a critical pathway to mission success. Employees take responsibility to assess personal development goals, align them with agency's goals, and then direct take action to achieve those goals.

This lesson describes the importance of self-development, ways to promote continual learning, and developmental options suitable for self-development.

## OBJECTIVES

After completing this lesson, participants will be able to:

- Identify ways to promote their continual learning
- Recognize the importance of self-development
- Identify training, education, and experiential developmental options
- Identify developmental resources
- Develop an IDP based on developmental needs identified through a competency gap analysis

## CONTINUOUS LEARNING

Continuous learning focuses on the individual's development from recruitment through retirement. This concept views learning as a continuous and life-long process of training, education, and experiential learning.  The outcome is the development of employees with the right knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs) at the right time to accomplish the organization's mission.

A systematic and holistic approach is necessary to provide the right education, training, and experiences. Learning is life-long and can be driven by either organizational requirements or individual learner needs and desires. Formal and informal learning can then be tailored for the individual and delivered when, where, and how it is required.

Each employee should identify and discuss with his or her supervisor the types of continuous learning activities to pursue. Individuals should also verify records to ensure accomplishment of continuous learning requirements have been recorded.

**The DoD Civilian Leader Development Continuum**

This concept of continuous learning is consistent with the DoD Civilian Leader Development Continuum. All DoD employees, regardless of position or grade, are expected to use the continuum to plan for job- and career-related professional development.

On November 19, 2009, the Department published the DoD Instruction (DoDI) 1430.16, "Growing Civilian Leaders."

This instruction established policies and procedures for educating, training, and developing a diverse civilian leader pipeline. The instruction also incorporates and institutionalizes the DoD Civilian Leader Development Competency Model (continuum and framework) as the blueprint for DoD civilian leader development.

The DoD Civilian Leader Development Continuum lists competencies to be developed through five levels of the leader's career:

1) Lead Self
2) Lead Teams/Projects
3) Lead People
4) Lead Organizations/Programs
5) Lead the Institution

The DoD Civilian Leader Development Framework identifies the leadership competencies that Defense leaders need to meet the national security mission and applies to DoD leaders at all levels.

The core competencies in the DoD Civilian Leader Development Competency Model are:

- Leading Change
- Leading People
- Results Driven

- Business Acumen
- Building Coalitions
- Enterprise-Wide Perspective

***For more information…***

DoD's Civilian Leader Development website –
http://www.cpms.osd.mil/lpdd/cldf/Framework_and_continuum.aspx

**Assessing DoD Leadership Competencies**

All DoD employees will be able to assess their proficiency in the DoD leadership competencies through the Defense Civilian Personnel Data System (DCPDS) under the My Biz tab.

Using this tool, employees will be able to assess their proficiency in each of the 31 DoD-specific competencies required for successful performance as a DoD leader. Employees are encouraged to ask their supervisor or mentor to assess their leadership skills using the same tool to facilitate a discussion about the employee's developmental needs. The results of the assessment are confidential and are for developmental purposes only.

***For more information…***

DCPDS Self Service HR (SSHR) website – http://www.cpms.osd.mil/hrbits/selfservice.aspx

## WHAT IS SELF-DEVELOPMENT?

Self-development is an approach to training that relies on individuals to take the primary responsibility for their own training program. Another term commonly used for self-development is self-directed learning.

Malcolm Knowles describes self-directed learning as, "a process in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals,

identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes."[1]

More specifically, in self-development the individual:

- Assesses their own training needs
- Plans and develops their training
- Selects and designs their instructional program
- Evaluates their own progress

Business and industry as well as government interest in self-development has exploded, Three major factors contribute to this increased interest in self-development:

- Technological and societal changes requiring increased flexibility and continuous learning
- A trend towards self-directed teams in the workplace
- A positive relationship between performance and an individual's readiness for self-directed learning

**Importance of Self-Development**

The DoD accomplishes a wide array of missions in diverse and unusual circumstances around the world. At the same time, the DoD is engaged in a massive and accelerated transformation that will infuse new organizations, technologies, and capabilities throughout. To meet the recurring challenges, the individual must supplement institutional and organizational training and education with continuous, planned self-development.

Self-development is important to achieving both personal and professional goals. It can help the individual to qualify for an advanced level in their career or for a different career track altogether, improve skills or knowledge, or just learn what he or she has always wanted to learn.

Personal growth benefits both the individual and the organization. Due to the diversity of the DoD's missions and needs, there are many self-development topics to study — from gaining leadership skills to learning a new language. No matter what the individual chooses to focus on, he or she will become more adaptable, agile, and resilient by adding depth and variety to their expertise.

## SELF-DEVELOPMENTAL OPTIONS AND RESOURCES

Most, if not all, of the developmental options available to employees are suitable for self-development.

Additional self-development activities also include:

- Taking evening or weekend courses at local colleges
- Using online, correspondence, and other individualized courses
- Attending lunch seminars with experts
- Reading books and other publications or journals
- Attending and actively participating in professional or technical societies, civic activities, or advisory boards

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[1] As cited in Snow, J.J. (2003), <u>Self-Development: An Important Aspect of Leader Development</u>, U.S. Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Penn.

**Additional Ideas for Self-Development**

- Subscribe to publications that cover the area of interest.
- Read books, articles, and manuals.
- Take on a special assignment that will challenge you.
- Arrange a detail in another part of the organization or another agency or non-profit organization to gain experience.
- Try a new skill in a volunteer organization.
- Serve as a mentor, advisor, or trainer for new employees.
- Teach someone or a group something you just learned or in which you have expertise.
- Spend time with experts; model others who are competent at a skill you are interested in acquiring.
- Conduct research; seek information from others.
- Keep a journal of what you learn every day.
- Conduct interviews with professionals in unfamiliar disciplines to gain knowledge.
- Go out to lunch with someone different.

*For more information…*

DoD Civilian Leader Development Opportunities – available at
http://www.cpms.osd.mil/lpdd/cldf/Framework_and_continuum.aspx

## CREATING AN INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Individual Development Plan (IDP) helps employees reach their career goals within the context of organizational objectives. The IDP is a uniquely tailored personal action plan jointly agreed to by the employee and the supervisor. It identifies the employee's short- and long-term career goals and the training and other developmental experiences needed to achieve those goals for the benefit of the individual and organization.

Typical elements of an IDP include:

- Employee data
- Short-term goals (1 year)
- Long-term goals (2-3 years)
- Developmental needs
- Activities to address the developmental needs
- Target dates for completing the developmental activities
- Completion dates and outcomes achieved

The IDP process begins by defining current and future goals and development needs. Then, specific developmental activities are identified to address the needs. The IDP is used to document the entire process.

In selecting developmental activities, try to achieve a balance between formal training activities (e.g., courses, seminars) and other kinds of learning experiences (e.g., work assignments, reading books). Also, include realistic time frames for completing the actions.

## LESSON SUMMARY

Adults learn differently from children. They are more likely to remember information they get through personal experience than information they get from lectures.

This lesson covered the following topics:

- Continual learning
- Self development
- Training, education, and experiential developmental options
- Developmental resources
- Developing an IDP