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## Foreign experiences in developing students' independent study skills

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**Annotation** *This article analyzes the experiences of the United Kingdom, Finland, Singapore, Australia, the United States, and Uzbekistan in developing students' independent study skills. International practices demonstrate that independent learning skills are among the most essential competencies required of students in modern education systems. The article highlights the role of theories such as self-regulated learning and self-determination theory in fostering independent study, as well as the use of digital technologies in organizing students' independent learning activities.*

**Keywords** *Independent study skills, self-regulated learning, assessment for learning, flipped classroom, higher education*

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## Зарубежный опыт в развитии навыков самостоятельной учебной деятельности студентов

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**Аннотация** *В данной статье анализируется опыт Великобритании, Финляндии, Сингапура, Австралии, США и Узбекистана в развитии навыков самостоятельной учебной деятельности студентов. Международная практика показывает, что навыки самостоятельного обучения являются одними из наиболее важных компетенций, требуемых от студентов в современных образовательных системах. В статье подчеркивается роль таких теорий, как теория саморегулируемого обучения и теория самоопределения, в формировании умений самостоятельной учебной деятельности, а также рассматривается использование цифровых технологий в организации самостоятельной работы студентов.*

**Ключевые слова** *Навыки самостоятельного обучения, саморегулируемое обучение, оценивание для обучения, перевернутый класс, высшее образование*

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## Talabalarning mustaqil ta'lim ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishda xorijiy tajribalari

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**Annotatsiya** *Mazkur maqolada talabalarning mustaqil ta'lim ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishga oid Buyuk Britaniya, Finlyandiya, Singapur, Avstraliya, AQSh hamda O'zbekiston tajribalarini tahlil qilingan. Xorij tajribalari shuni ko'rsatadiki, mustaqil ta'lim ko'nikmalari zamonaviy ta'lim tizimida talabalardan talab qilinadigan eng muhim kompetensiyalardan biri hisoblanadi. Mustaqil ta'limni rivojlantirishda o'zini-o'zi*

*boshqaruvchi ta'lim (self-regulated learning) va o'zini-o'zi anglash nazariyasi (self-determination theory) kabi nazariyalar, shuningdek, talabalarning mustaqil ta'lim faoliyatini tashkil etishda raqamli texnologiyalardan foydalanish masalalari yoritilgan.*

**Kalit so'zlar** *Mustaqil ta'lim ko'nikmalari, o'zini-o'zi boshqaruvchi ta'lim, o'qitishda baholash, teskari sinf (flipped classroom), oliy ta'lim*

## Introduction

The world of education is changing very quickly. With globalization, digital technologies, and the focus on lifelong learning, students are no longer expected to learn only what their teachers directly tell them in class. Instead, they must be able to study independently, plan their own activities, and evaluate whether they are reaching their goals. Independent study skills allow students to continue learning even after formal lessons are finished, which is very important in a knowledge-based society. For this reason, many countries have placed strong emphasis on creating conditions where learners can develop these skills in both school and university contexts.

Independent study skills are often explained through the concept of self-regulated learning, where students are not passive recipients of information but active participants who set goals, select strategies, monitor their own understanding, and reflect on outcomes. Research shows that learners who can regulate their learning in this way usually achieve better results, show stronger motivation, and are more successful in higher education and professional life (Zimmerman, 2002; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2012). In the following sections, we review theoretical foundations and then turn to international experiences, showing how countries have developed systems that encourage independent learning.

## Literature review

One of the most influential theories for understanding independent study is self-

regulated learning. According to Zimmerman (2002), learning is a cycle with three stages: planning before the task, using strategies during the task, and reflecting afterwards. Teachers can help by teaching strategies explicitly and providing time for students to practice them. Similarly, Pintrich (2000) explains that independent learning also depends on motivation, self-beliefs, and the ability to monitor progress.

Another important theory is self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). It suggests that students are more likely to take responsibility for learning if they feel autonomy (freedom of choice), competence (confidence in their abilities), and relatedness (positive connection with teachers and peers). Thus, independent study is not only about discipline, but also about creating environments that support these needs.

Research reviews confirm that some learning techniques are much more effective than others. For example, Dunlosky et al. (2013) showed that strategies like spaced practice, retrieval practice, and elaboration lead to stronger long-term learning than simply rereading notes or highlighting. At the same time, studies by Hattie and Timperley (2007) emphasize that feedback plays a central role. Students need clear, timely, and constructive feedback to understand whether their independent work is effective. Without feedback, they may continue using weak strategies.

Instructional designs such as flipped classrooms and project-based learning also support independence. Flipped learning allows

students to first watch lectures or materials at home, and then spend class time practicing and reflecting (Lai & Hwang, 2016). Project-based learning, when supported with guidance, helps learners manage long-term tasks and develop time management skills (Hmelo-Silver et al., 2007). However, if students are left without enough support, such open-ended learning can create difficulties (Kirschner et al., 2006). In short, digital technology and learning analytics are becoming powerful tools. Dashboards, reminders, and digital planners can help students monitor their progress and adjust their study plans (Jivet et al., 2018). However, technology is effective only when feedback is simple, easy to understand, and connected to students' goals.

### **Foreign Experiences**

Experiences from different countries show that the development of independent study skills is a priority across the world, although each system has taken a slightly different approach depending on cultural, political, and educational traditions. By looking at these cases, we can see both variety and common ground.

In the United Kingdom, the education system has placed a strong focus on *assessment for learning*. This approach emphasizes formative assessment, peer evaluation, and regular feedback so that students are encouraged to reflect on their own learning. For example, teachers often use checklists, success criteria, and self-assessment sheets that help learners recognize what they already know and what they still need to work on. Universities in the UK also provide academic literacy and study skills courses for first-year students. These courses introduce learners to effective note-taking, reading strategies, and time management methods. The goal is to make students more independent from the beginning of their higher education journey. Over time, UK institutions have developed "feedback literacy" programs, where students learn not only to receive but also to analyze and use

feedback effectively to improve their own work.

The case of Finland is also widely recognized. Finnish schools encourage autonomy and reflective practices from early childhood education. Learners are guided to set their own goals, keep learning portfolios, and reflect on progress. For instance, students in Finnish secondary schools often prepare individual study plans that they update during the school year, with teachers acting more like mentors or coaches than strict instructors. The national curriculum also stresses transversal competencies, which means that independent study is not taught as a separate subject but is integrated into all learning areas. This systematic support continues into higher education, where students are expected to engage in independent projects and inquiry-based learning. Finland's success is often linked to the trust placed in teachers and the low-stress learning environment, which gives students space to explore and regulate their own learning.

In Singapore, independent study skills have been promoted through the well-known initiative called *Teach Less, Learn More*. The main idea behind this reform is that teaching should not focus only on covering a large amount of content, but on creating meaningful learning experiences that help students think critically and work independently. Teachers are encouraged to design inquiry-based lessons, group projects, and reflective journals. For example, in science education, students are asked to design their own small-scale experiments, keep research logs, and present their findings. In English classes, they might prepare independent reading projects or carry out interviews outside of school. To support these practices, Singapore also invests heavily in teacher professional development, ensuring that teachers have the skills to guide students in becoming independent learners.

Australia has also taken important steps, particularly in higher education. Many universities have introduced the idea of a

“transition pedagogy,” which focuses on the needs of first-year students. One of the main goals is to help them learn how to manage their studies independently when moving from school to university. Universities organize orientation weeks, workshops on study skills, and online modules on time management and academic writing. Low-stakes assessments, such as short quizzes or reflective journals, are also used in the first semester to provide early feedback without putting too much pressure on students. In this way, Australian universities combine support and challenge, guiding learners to become self-directed gradually while reducing the risk of dropout.

In the United States, universities have developed strong support systems to help students become independent learners. Writing centers, academic skills centers, and peer tutoring programs are widely available. For example, supplemental instruction (SI) is a model where trained student leaders run study sessions for difficult courses. These sessions are not just about reviewing content but also about modeling effective study strategies such as retrieval practice, summarization, and self-questioning. In addition, many American universities now use learning analytics systems. These provide students with dashboards showing their progress, attendance, and engagement with online materials. Advisors can also use this data to give personalized advice. In some cases, students receive automated “nudges” or reminders to complete assignments or review materials, which helps them organize their independent study time.

In Uzbekistan, the issue of developing students’ independent study skills has gained increasing attention as part of ongoing education reforms. The National Curriculum Framework and recent higher education standards emphasize learner-centered approaches and competency development. In many universities, students are now encouraged to complete project work, reflective journals, and portfolio-based assignments that require them to take

responsibility for their learning beyond the classroom. For example, English language teaching programs have introduced independent reading tasks, research-based assignments, and digital tools such as Google Classroom and Moodle to promote self-directed study. In academic lyceums and vocational colleges, teachers often use blended learning models that combine classroom teaching with guided independent tasks, allowing students to learn at their own pace. At the policy level, Uzbekistan’s Ministry of Higher Education promotes the idea of academic mobility and lifelong learning, which also requires students to develop strong independent study habits. While challenges remain, such as the need for teacher training and adequate digital resources, there is a clear movement toward integrating international best practices into the local context to strengthen students’ ability to study independently.

Other countries also provide interesting insights. For example, Germany has introduced project-based and research-oriented learning in many universities, where students are required to take part in inquiry projects from the first year. Japan has focused on study habits in secondary schools, where teachers encourage students to set daily learning goals and reflect on them in learning diaries. In Canada, universities emphasize experiential learning, such as internships and service learning, which require students to take responsibility for applying knowledge outside the classroom. These experiences all support the development of independence, responsibility, and self-regulation.

While the approaches vary across the United Kingdom, Finland, Singapore, Australia, the United States, Uzbekistan, and other countries, a number of similarities can be observed. All countries recognize that independent study skills are essential for preparing young people for the demands of the modern world. Successful systems combine explicit strategy instruction with opportunities

for practice, provide feedback and assessment that guide reflection, and build institutional support structures. At the same time, cultural and policy contexts influence the exact form these practices take. For Uzbekistan, the challenge is to adapt global best practices to local conditions while building on national priorities such as digitalization, language learning, and lifelong education.

When we compare international experiences, including the recent reforms in Uzbekistan, it becomes clear that developing students' independent study skills requires a combination of several important elements rather than one single method. The first element is explicit strategy instruction. Research consistently shows that students do not automatically know how to study effectively. For this reason, teachers in countries such as the United Kingdom, Finland, and the United States introduce learners to specific study strategies like retrieval practice, spaced repetition, and self-monitoring. In Uzbekistan too, universities have started to include research tasks, reflective writing, and independent reading in the curriculum. These activities encourage students to learn how to plan and evaluate their own learning, but they are most effective when teachers explicitly explain the purpose of each task and demonstrate how to use strategies.

The second element is assessment and feedback. Independent study cannot be successful unless students know whether they are making progress. In Finland and the UK, feedback is not limited to final grades but is given continuously in the form of checklists, self-assessments, and peer evaluations. Similarly, in Australia, low-stakes assessments are used in the first year of university to give students the confidence and information they need to improve before facing high-stakes exams. In Uzbekistan, this principle is gradually being adopted as teachers move from purely summative exams toward more formative assessment, such as progress tests, portfolio assessments, and peer review. These methods

encourage reflection and help students become responsible for monitoring their own learning.

Another key factor is the balance between autonomy and structure. Students benefit from having freedom of choice in selecting topics or organizing study time, but this autonomy needs to be supported with clear structures (Black, 1998). For example, Singaporean schools allow students to explore inquiry-based projects but provide rubrics and milestones to guide their work. In the United States, writing centers and supplemental instruction programs ensure that students who struggle with autonomy receive extra guidance. Successful approaches include blended learning, where digital platforms like Moodle or Google Classroom provide both flexibility and structure by setting deadlines, tracking progress, and giving reminders.

A fourth element is the role of technology and learning environments. Digital tools and analytics are widely used in the United States, Australia, and parts of Europe to help students organize their independent study. Dashboards, reminders, and online quizzes make it easier for learners to monitor their progress. Uzbekistan is also moving in this direction with the integration of online learning platforms, particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic accelerated digitalization in education. However, for these tools to truly support independent study, they must be combined with teacher guidance so that students do not simply complete tasks mechanically but actually reflect on their learning. All successful systems emphasize the importance of institutional and cultural support. Independent study cannot be left as the responsibility of individual students or teachers alone. In Finland and Singapore, national curriculum frameworks directly include goals for self-regulation and independence. In the UK and Australia, universities have entire departments or centers dedicated to student learning support. In Uzbekistan, the Ministry of Higher Education and Science has prioritized learner-centered

approaches and competency development as part of national reforms, which shows that the policy environment is becoming supportive of these goals. Nevertheless, challenges such as limited teacher training in self-regulated learning strategies and unequal access to digital resources still need to be addressed.

The synthesis of foreign experiences and Uzbekistan's current reforms shows that independent study skills are best developed when explicit strategy instruction is combined with formative assessment, when autonomy is supported by structure, when technology is integrated meaningfully, and when institutions provide systemic support. The message is clear: students will not automatically become independent learners unless schools and universities deliberately design opportunities for them to practice, reflect, and take responsibility. Uzbekistan's efforts to adapt these global principles to its local context mark an important step toward preparing students not only for academic success but also for lifelong learning in a rapidly changing world.

### **Conclusion**

Foreign experiences clearly show that independent study skills are a foundation for academic and lifelong success. They include planning, time management, strategic learning, and reflection. Countries like the UK, Finland, Singapore, Australia, and the United States demonstrate that these skills can be supported in many different ways: through explicit teaching of strategies, through formative assessment and feedback, through project-based learning, and through the careful use of digital technologies. The lesson for other education systems is that students should not be left to develop these skills on their own. Teachers, schools, and universities must take responsibility for designing learning environments that support autonomy while also providing guidance. By combining strategy instruction, strong feedback systems, and institutional support, education systems can prepare students not only to succeed in their current studies but also to continue learning independently throughout their lives.

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