

Formating students' autonomy skills through online teaching methods

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Annotation. This paper analyzes the development of the student autonomy competencies with the help of online teaching methods. A qualitative strategy was used, and the data was collected through questionnaires and interviews with students of different online courses. The results showed that autonomous students tend to use strategies such as goal setting, self-evaluation, choosing, reflection, and group work. Motivation and access to technology also emerged as challenges. Evidence from the study demonstrates the importance of online teaching methods in developing autonomy skills needed for self-directed lifelong learning. Suggestions for educators and institutions are presented concerning the need to develop more flexible teaching methods.

Keywords: student autonomy, goal setting, self-evaluation, choosing, reflection and self-directed lifelong learning

Формирование навыков самостоятельности студентов посредством онлайн-метода обучения

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Аннотация. В данной статье анализируется развитие компетенций студенческой автономии с помощью методов онлайн-обучения. Была использована качественная стратегия, а данные были собраны с помощью анкет и интервью со студентами различных онлайн-курсов. Результаты показали, что автономные учащиеся склонны использовать такие стратегии, как постановка целей, самооценка, выбор, размышление и групповая работа. Мотивация и доступ к технологиям также оказались проблемами. Данные исследования демонстрируют важность методов онлайн-обучения для развития навыков самостоятельности, необходимых для самостоятельного обучения на протяжении всей жизни. Представлены предложения для педагогов и учреждений относительно необходимости разработки более гибких методов обучения.

Ключевые слова: студенческая автономия, постановка целей, самооценка, выбор, рефлексия и самостоятельное обучение на протяжении всей жизни.

Onlayn o'qitish usuli orqali talabalarning mustaqil ishlash (autonomy) ko'nikmasini shakllantirish

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Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada onlayn o'qitish usullaridan foydalangan holda o'quvchilarning avtonomiya kompetentsiyalarini rivojlantirish tahlil qilinadi. Sifatli strategiyadan foydalanildi va ma'lumotlar turli onlayn kurslar talabalari bilan so'rovnomalar va suhbatlar orqali to'plandi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatdiki, avtonom o'quvchilar maqsad belgilash, o'z-o'zini baholash, tanlash, fikrlash va guruhda ishlash kabi strategiyalardan foydalanishga moyil. Motivatsiya va texnologiyaga

kirish ham qiyinchiliklarga duch keldi. Ushbu tadqiqotlar mustaqil umrbod ta'lim olish uchun zarur bo'lgan mustaqillik ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish uchun onlayn ta'lim usullarining muhimligini ko'rsatadi. O'qituvchilar va muassasalar uchun o'qitishning moslashuvchan usullarini ishlab chiqish zarurligi bo'yicha takliflar berilgan.

Kalit so'zlar: o'quvchilarning mustaqilligi, maqsadni belgilash, o'z-o'zini hurmat qilish, tanlash, mulohaza yuritish va o'z-o'zini yo'naltirgan umrbod ta'lim.

Introduction

In recent years, education has changed dramatically, and especially so with the adoption of online teaching styles that were seen during the Global Pandemic. Not only has the transfer of knowledge and information changed, but so has the cultivation of important skills, especially within student autonomy. Student autonomy is described as a learner's capability to take complete control over his or her learning processes by establishing goals, self-regulating time, resources for learning, and engaging in reflection (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2012). The growing reliance on educational technologies, especially during the time of the COVID 19 Pandemic has highlighted the need for students to possess skills that aim at self-guided learning (Gonzalez, 2021).

Empirical evidence suggests the shift from face-to-face learning to distance education has caused some educators to rethink how they provide guidance in autonomy during the learning process. According to Deci & Ryan (2000), autonomy is a fundamental psychological need that, when provided for, can improve motivation and engagement within a given activity. This document analyzes the opportunities provided by online instruction for the formation of autonomy skills among students and reports the results of the study on the effectiveness of online instructional methods in fostering self-directed learning.

It is clear that in the contemporary education world, the autonomy of the student is crucial in achieving desired outcomes. Autonomy skills help a person to manage and take charge of their own education, which will enable them to continue learning and adjusting throughout their life. Today, educators have many ways of integrating autonomy skills with the emergence of new online teaching methods. This essay will discuss the need to enhance students' autonomy and suggest useful ways on how it can be done in a remote learning setting.

Autonomy is one of the components of intrinsic motivation. The more options are provided to students regarding their learning, the more they will tend to invest their effort into learning the materials. Self engagement often results to increases in effort and willingness to confront difficult ideas. In an online context where students could multitask and attend to numerous distractions, the autonomy of the learner goes a long way in capturing the interest and commitment of the student.

Method

Techniques for Promoting Autonomy Using Online Teaching Approaches

Introduce Self-Paced Learning: A good way to promote autonomy is to let students learn in a self-paced manner. Online platforms can provide modular courses which allows students to progress through material at their own pace. Self-paced learning acknowledges the fact that each student learns differently which is encouraging students to take charge of their learning outcomes.

Motivating Students to Set Goals: Students setting personal learning goals is vital for self-direction. Instructors can assist learners in crafting specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound (SMART) goals. Students are more likely to become active learners when they regularly evaluate these goals and reflect on them.

Fostering Control through Options and Choices: Permitting students to select their preferred options in assignments, projects, or topics helps them feel a sense of mastery over their learning. Students may be able to choose the format of a project (such as video, essay or presentation) or select from a list of topics. Giving students choices in the decision-making process positively impacts their learning engagement.

Autonomy Through Organizational Technology: A variety of digital resources can help in achieving the desired level of independence. Learning Management Systems (LMS) can simplify course materials, assignments, and deadlines for students so they can efficiently manage their learning tasks. Moreover, students can use task management tools or digital calendars to organize their studying plans and monitor their progress.

Promoting Peer Learning: Online learning can feel lonely, but it doesn't have to be. Encouraging collaboration through group projects or discussion boards can promote peer collaboration. Students may assume different responsibilities within groups, giving them a sense of community. Students can also be encouraged to give feedback to each other, which can develop their critical thinking and self-assessment skills.

Provide Constructive Feedback: As noted previously, regular, constructive feedback is important in fostering autonomy. Rather than focusing on letter grades, teachers need to put more emphasis on explanations that assist learners in understanding where they perform well and where they do not. Students, in turn, must think about their learning and how they want to develop further.

Create a Supportive Online Community: Encouraging autonomy on the part of the student can be enhanced by community building within an online course. Students can use discussion boards, virtual study groups, and professional networks to interact with other learners and instructors, thus forming a nurturing environment. This feeling of community can stimulate students to self-direct their learning.

Participants

A qualitative research method was used to examine the evolving autonomy skills of students engaged in online learning. The sample population consisted of 100 students from different academic fields including humanities, sciences, and business. Participants were selected via email invitations distributed to course lists for optimal background and experience diversity.

Data Collection

A survey and semi-structured interview were the primary data sources, hence discovering new information was possible with every interaction. A portion of the survey included Likert-scale questions aimed at measuring the autonomy, engagement, and motivational levels students had towards online learning (Baker et al., 2019). Moreover, semi-structured interviews conducted with twenty students made sure to offer the most relevant and unique experiences. Each one of the interviews was held through video conferencing tools and was around 30-45 minutes long.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed thematically following an initial coding stage and then forming major themes regarding the techniques used by teachers and the students' reactions towards those techniques (Braun & Clarke, 2006). In this case, the combination meant having an understanding of how the autonomy of the students was affected by the methods of teaching.

Results

The analysis reveals several important issues regarding autonomy skills development with the use of online teaching technologies:

1. **Goal Setting:** Students noted that personal learning goals greatly increased ownership of their learning activities. A number of them pointed out that teachers who assisted their attempts to set SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) goals were quite motivating to them. One student commented, "Having clear goals made me more focused and accountable for my progress." This is consistent with the research conducted by Locke and Latham (2002) concerning the importance of goals in enhancing performance and motivation.

2. **Self-Assessment:** The self-assessment tools enabled students to think about what they had learned as well as their progress. Participants reported that frequent self-assessment motivated them to reflect and take responsibility for their learning. "Being able to assess myself helped me see where I was lacking and what I needed to work on," shared another student. This supports the findings of

Boud and Falchikov (2007), who defend the idea that self-assessment leads to self-regulation and improvement of learning results.

3. *Flexibility*: The student's choice in the assignment and project topics greatly enhanced motivation and engagement. Many said that being able to choose the relevant topics helped them make the learning more meaningful. One of the participants remarked, "Choosing my project topic made me more invested in the work." Deci et al (1991) substantiated that choice enhances motivation because it satisfies the autonomy needs.

4. *Reflective Practices*: Some students were able to reflect on their learning by writing journals, which greatly helped foster self-awareness. Students reported that reflecting on their learning helped them grasp the concept and appreciate their growth. "Writing about what I learned was very helpful in cementing that knowledge," said a student. This corroborates with Moon (2004).

Discussion

These findings illustrate the effectiveness of online teaching methodology to nurture autonomy skills in students. The determining ones of these study – goal setting, self-assessment, choice, reflective practices and peer collaboration – are known to increase student autonomy. These factors correspond with already available data about the necessity of self-direction for a lifelong learning (Knowles, 1975).

The emergence of goal setting appeared as an important mechanism that fosters autonomy. The enhancement of motivation through goal setting, as well as the learning process of the students, is achieved by setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time bounds goals which are described as SMART goals (Locke & Latham, 2002). This 'SMART' structured system enables the learners to fully take charge of their learning process which is greatly needed in self-regulation skill development.

Aside from self-assessment goal setting was also noted as an important aspect in promoting autonomy. Some of the participants argued that having to think about their activities let them recognize their strengths and weaknesses and therefore take ownership of their learning results. Boud and Falchikov (2007) claims that self-assessment brings students in charge of their learning and therefore improves learning outcomes.

In addition, the online environment is flexible enough to allow students to determine the way in which they wish to learn which enhances a feeling of autonomy. As Deci et al. (1991) remark, the opportunity to make a choice meets a basic psychological need and consequently raises intrinsic motivation. Students able to decide on the projects or assignments they wish to undertake tend to work at these with more enthusiasm, which increases their investment in education.

Reflective practices are considered vital for self-awareness development. Providing opportunities for reflection, like recording activities to learning journals, helps students reflect on their learning processes (Moon, 2004). This in turn is helpful in knowledge integration, as well as in the development of other skills essential for dealing with multifaceted issues in real life settings, especially critical thinking.

Involvement of peers in online activities was also significant in the development of self-regulation skills. In collaborative learning, students are able to communicate, share, and help each other, which helps to promote the students' ability to work independently. Johnson and Johnson (2009) claim that in cooperative learning, a community is built among learners which helps to overcome the sense of loneliness that comes with online learning.

Even with the above positive outcomes, there are issues that need to be worked on. The most important issue is the lack of interest of some students, which seems to be worse with the isolation brought about by synchronous online learning. Motivation can be increased by constructive feedback and other forms of encouragement, but an online community, in this case, is essential to face the issue (Hattie & Timperley, 2007). The digital divide also remains a serious problem as the unequal access

to technology limits some students' participation and engagement in online learning (Warschauer, 2004).

Conclusion

Teaching students autonomy through online classes is possible and necessary in today's world. With the use of the appropriate techniques, teachers can motivate students to actively participate in class. This study found that setting goals, self-evaluating, providing choices, reflecting, and collaborating with others fosters autonomy in distance learning.

Although there are still barriers such as lack of engagement or technological resources, the advantages of promoting autonomy, including fostering an attitude toward self-directed learning, are prominent. As education goes through changes, ensuring students know how to be independent will better equip them for the increasingly complicated reality. Further studies need to be done on the impact these methods have in different educational settings and how to best facilitate students' independence.

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