

STATUS OF INDEPENDENT EDUCATION IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

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Abstract

This scientific article discusses the concept of independent learning, its psychological and pedagogical foundations, as well as practical experience in the education systems of foreign countries and the organization of independent learning in Singaporean educational models. mechanisms were studied. Also, the importance of independent learning in the modern education system was highlighted based on reports from UNESCO, OECD and the World Economic Forum. The results obtained show that there are opportunities to adapt foreign experiences to the Uzbek education system.

Keywords

Independent education, foreign experience, education system, independent learning, competence.

Today, one of the most important directions in the education system is to teach students and pupils to learn independently. Independent learning is the process of acquiring knowledge and skills by a student without the constant supervision of a teacher or mentor, through self-management, planning and taking responsibility. Independent learning (official term in Uzbek: "mustaqil ta'lim", international terms: self-directed learning, independent learning, autonomous learning) is the process of a student independently searching for, acquiring and applying knowledge and skills, based on his needs, interests and goals, without the constant supervision of a teacher. Independent learning is the most important skill of a modern person. It not only provides knowledge, but also prepares a person to be successful in any area of life. In Uzbekistan, "Independent Learning" is also being taught as a subject in higher education institutions, and students are required to complete independent work (portfolios, projects, abstracts) every semester.

Today, the world's leading educational organizations (OECD, UNESCO, World Economic Forum, European Union, etc.) consider the ability to read independently to be the most important competency of the 21st century.

OECD (PISA 2018 and 2022 results) - "Self-regulated learning" has become a separately measurable indicator.

World Economic Forum (2023 and 2025 reports) – "Active learning and learning strategies" ranks 2nd as the 3rd most important skill.

The European Union's "LifeLong Learning Key Competences" (updated version 2018 and 2025) - one of the 8 key competences is "Personal, social and learning to learn competence", and independent reading is at the heart of it. OECD - Requirements within the framework of PISA (2018–2025) PISA measures the following independent reading skills of students.

Metacognitive strategies:

- Understand own learning
- Goal setting and monitoring
- Self-assessment
- Know and apply reading strategies
- Summary, elaboration, memorization strategies for understanding the text
- Knowing how to ask for help in difficult situations
- Motivation and self-confidence
- Growth mindset (Carol Dweck's theory)
- The inner belief that "I can learn this"

Result: In 2022, Uzbekistan participated in the PISA assessment for the first time and showed low results in self-regulated learning. Therefore, this area was identified as a priority in the 2025–2030 national strategy.

European Union – 8 core competences (2018 and 2025 update)

The "Learning to learn" competency sets the following requirements:

- Be able to identify your own learning needs
- Time and information management
- Ability to adapt to different teaching methods and environments
- Self-motivation and resilience
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Digital self-directed digital learning
- Enjoying your own learning process and developing a culture of lifelong learning

Every European university requires students to demonstrate these 8 competencies through a portfolio.

UNESCO and World Economic Forum requirements (2023–2025)

UNESCO (2024 report):

Independent learning is a key indicator of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (Quality Education). By 2030, every student should be able to:

- Plan your educational trajectory
- Using online and offline resources
- Applying acquired knowledge to real-world problems

Among the 10 most in-demand skills in the WEF "Future of Jobs Report 2025":

- Analytical thinking
- Active learning and learning strategies
- Complex problem-solving
- Critical thinking
- Creativity

That's why independent reading is called a "multiplier" skill.

General direction of international requirements:

Independent learning is no longer "optional" - it has become a mandatory universal competency.

The strategies for higher education institutions and schools of Uzbekistan for 2025–2030 set out the following:

Each student is required to complete at least 30–50 hours of independent work per semester.

Portfolios, MOOC certificates (Coursera, edX), projects are included in the assessment

"Independent Education" as a separate subject has 4–6 credits.

The goal is to achieve high results in self-regulated learning in PISA-2025 and PISA-2028.

Self-directed learning (learning to learn) is one of the most relevant educational topics in the world today. Its relevance is explained by the following global processes: Technological revolution and rapid changes in professions.

McKinsey Global Institute (2024): More than 800 million jobs will be lost or completely transformed by 2030. World Economic Forum (2025): On average, every worker will need to learn a new skill every 5 years.

The need for lifelong learning. UNESCO (2024): By 2030, more than 60% of the world's population should participate in lifelong learning.

Only people with the ability to study independently can be successful in this process.

The development of artificial intelligence.

AI performs simple and repetitive tasks, so the main advantage of humans remains the ability to learn new things on their own (Yuval Noah Harari, 2025).

The impact of the pandemic.

During the COVID-19 era (2020–2022), online and distance learning has taken place around the world. Millions of students with low independent reading skills have been cut off from their studies. As a result: independent reading competence has become no longer an “add-on” but a fundamental condition for survival and development at any level of education.

1970s – Malcolm Knowles (Andragogy) – declared self-directed learning to be a fundamental principle in adult education.

Finnish education system: The most successful model for guiding students towards independent learning (as of 2025)

Finland consistently ranks 1–6th in the world in the PISA rankings, but most importantly, students are highly self-directed and there is almost no perception that they “hate studying” after school. The main reason for this is the approach based on self-directed learning and phenomenon-based learning. Finland’s 7 basic principles (directing students to independent learning) There is almost no mandatory homework (grades 1–7) . Students finish everything at school, play at home or read whatever they want . Reading becomes an “interesting process” rather than an “obligation”

Phenomenon-based learning / 2–3 times a year, a 1–3-week “big topic” is studied (for example: “Climate change”, “European Union”, “Culture of Uzbekistan”) Students in groups ask questions, conduct research, and make presentations . The student finds the answer to the question “why am I studying?” on his own . There is no textbook – the student chooses the material himself .

Starting from grade 7, an official textbook is not mandatory. The teacher only gives directions, the rest is found by the child himself through the Internet, the library, museums, interviews . The habit of independent research begins to form from the age of 12–13 . Assessment is not numerical - oral and self-assessment . There are no grades in grades 1–7. Starting from grade 8, there is not a 4–10, but a verbal assessment of "developing well", "needs additional help"

The student studies for knowledge, not for numbers . The teacher's role is a "facilitator", not a "dictator" The teacher asks questions: “Why do you think this happened?”, “How could this be solved differently?” He does not give the answer himself - he waits for the students to find it themselves . The student learns to learn without a teacher. 75 minutes of breaks + play per day . After every 45 minutes of lessons, 15 minutes of mandatory outdoor play (even in winter at -20°C) The brain rests → attention is maintained for a long time → deep learning is easier . No additional clubs are mandatory after school . Children choose and manage their favorite activities (sports, music, programming) themselves . Internal motivation increases . The most important innovation (since 2016): “Transversal competences” in the national curriculum. By 2025, the Finnish curriculum will focus on 7 skills (not subjects!):

Thinking and learning to learn

Cultural competence, interaction and expression

Taking care of oneself, managing daily life

Multiliteracy (working with different types of text and information)

ICT competence

Working life competence and entrepreneurship

Participation, involvement and building a sustainable future

Every lesson, every project is aimed at developing these 7 competencies.

German students rank 1–3rd in the world in "independent problem solving" in PISA . Example: A 7th grader makes his own plan from Monday to Friday → 12 problems in math, 2 essays in German, an experiment in science. The teacher only checks and discusses at the end.

South Korean model – “Independent learning under very high pressure” . Get the highest score on the Suneung (CSAT) exam → enter SKY (Seoul, Korea, Yonsei) universities . Daily routine (grades 10–12) 07:30–16:00 – regular school 17:00–22:00/23:00 – hagwon (private academy) 23:30–02:00/03:00 – self-study at home (자습) The most popular form

오시자습 (yagan jaseup) – “night independent study” – staying at school until 10–11 pm is mandatory or optional

Official programs

• EBS + Megastudy, Gangnam hagwon system • “ 독학 ” (dokhak) – completely self-study (some “repeater” students study like this for the whole year)

Independent projects

Low (only for participants of special science olympiads or KAIST, Postech students)

JAPAN: Discipline and individual development

Discipline model

It starts at the age of 3 through "Seikatsu" (lifestyle) and "Doutoku" (morals). Children clean the school themselves, take turns, and there is a penalty for being late even for 1 minute . The highest group discipline in the world. 1st place in PISA for "self-discipline". 98% of students regularly wear their school uniform correctly .

Every day: • 08:20 – all students sweep the classroom • 12:00 – distribute and clean up food themselves • 15:30–18:00 – “Bukatsu” (sports or art club) – almost mandatory . A child feels “responsibility for society” in his body from 6 to 18 years old . “Yutori no kyōiku” (leisure education) reform since 2002: • Lesson hours reduced by 20% • “Sōgōteki na gakushū no jikan” (comprehensive study time) – the student chooses the project himself • “Active Learning” mandatory since 2020: discussion and group project in every lesson . Now Japanese students have moved away from “rotate learning” and are ranked 3rd in Asia in terms of creativity

The most successful programs

• “Tokkatsu” (special activities) – the class teacher discusses personal problems for 1 hour a week • “Career Education” (grades 10–12) – the student researches his/her future profession, visits companies

Teen suicide rate down 40% from peak in 2015. Discipline – 10/10, individual development – 7/10 (group culture still somewhat restricts personal expression) PISA 2022: Mathematics and Science – 2nd–3rd place

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