

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' INDEPENDENT LEARNING SKILLS

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ABSTRACT

In the modern education system, developing students' ability to learn independently is one of the important pedagogical tasks. This article analyzes the concept of independent learning, its role in students' academic performance and lifelong learning (life-long learning), as well as strategies for developing independent learning and the factors that influence it. Based on existing scientific literature, it has been established that independent learning fosters important competencies in students, such as self-management, critical thinking, problem-solving, and adaptability. At the same time, limitations within the education system and individual differences create certain challenges in the process of developing independent learning.

Keywords: independent learning, self-management, competency, lifelong learning, educational technologies.

INTRODUCTION

In modern society, the rapid growth of knowledge and the volatility of the labor market demand that the education system not only equip students with ready-made knowledge, but also prepare them for independent learning, adaptation, and self-development. For this reason, developing students' independent learning skills is considered one of the priority directions of current educational reforms.

Around the world, a number of scholarly studies are being conducted on student autonomy in the teaching process, creative approaches to acquiring knowledge and skills, the competency of free and critical thinking, and the effective use of information presented through wide-coverage global networks. In particular, it should be noted that several studies by Russian scholars K. D. Ushinsky, T. J. Ilina, and P. I. Pidkasisty were dedicated specifically to student autonomy and the development of independent learning skills.

In our country, a number of steps are being taken to further improve modern and continuous education. In particular, in accordance with Decree PQ-5117 dated May 19, 2021, of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, tasks have been set such as "popularizing the learning of English among the population, creating the necessary conditions for its thorough mastery, coordinating the introduction of internationally recognized curricula and textbooks for teaching foreign languages at all levels of education, and developing modern teaching skills in students." Alongside the fundamental reform and development of learners' professional knowledge and skills, the issue of developing independent learning skills also awaits its solution. Among scholars dedicated to lifelong learning research in our country, Sh.Sh. Aripova, D. M. Sarimsoqova, and Z.A. Umarova can be mentioned.

Researchers describe independent learning as a student's ability to set their own learning goals, choose suitable learning strategies, monitor their learning activities, and evaluate outcomes (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2016; Ning Li, 2023). Scientific literature emphasizes a close link between independent learning skills and academic success. Students who possess independent learning skills are more active in the learning process, acquire knowledge more deeply, and approach their own education responsibly (Pintrich & Zusho, 2002; Fautch, 2015). Furthermore, independent learning develops students' self-management, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills, which serve them not only in the educational process but also in their future professional careers (Zimmerman, 2018).

At the same time, a number of studies indicate that certain problems exist in the process of developing independent learning. An assessment-oriented approach in traditional education systems, excessive reliance on the teacher, and individual differences among students can lead to insufficient formation of independent learning skills (Ning Li, 2023; Han Lele, 2023). Therefore, it is emphasized that the teacher's role in the educational process should be reconsidered — shifting from knowledge transmitter to guide and advisor.

The development of digital technologies and online educational resources is emerging as an important factor supporting independent learning. The modern higher education system demands the training of specialists who are adapted to the changing needs of society and the labor market. From this perspective, developing independent learning competency is considered an important component of the educational process. As research indicates, an approach oriented toward independent learning serves to foster students' creative thinking, sense of responsibility, and ability to make professional decisions (Aripova, 2022).

Independent learning also develops students' time management, personal responsibility, and a conscious attitude toward the learning process. According to research findings, in environments where elements of independent learning are introduced, students acquire knowledge more deeply and can apply what they have learned effectively in practical situations. Especially in the process of foreign language teaching, independent learning competency serves as an important factor in students' conscious acquisition of language materials and in enhancing communicative activity (Aripova, 2022).

For this reason, developing independent learning competency is recognized not only as an important condition ensuring students' academic preparation, but also as a key pedagogical prerequisite for their professional and personal growth. The purpose of this article is to systematically analyze existing scholarly research on students' independent learning ability, and to highlight its significance in the educational process, development strategies, and future prospects.

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODS

This study is based on a systematic literature review. During the research process, scholarly articles related to students' independent learning ability, self-regulated learning, academic outcomes, and lifelong learning were analyzed. Primary attention was given to the definition of the concept of independent learning, development strategies, influencing factors, and its effectiveness in the educational process (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2016; Ning Li, 2023).

In the transition from the traditional "teaching" model to the "learning" paradigm, the student appears not as a passive consumer of knowledge, but as a subject who actively analyzes and applies it in practice. In the process of independent learning, students acquire skills of

planning their knowledge, goal-directed learning, and monitoring their own activities, which increases the effectiveness of their education (Aripova, 2022).

In selecting sources, theoretical articles on higher education and general education systems were used. The sources were studied through content analysis, comparison, and generalization methods. This methodology made it possible to systematize existing scholarly views on independent learning and to identify key trends.

RESULTS

The results of the literature review showed that students' independent learning ability has a significant positive effect on the learning process. First and foremost, it was found that independent learning contributes to improving students' academic outcomes. Students engaged in independent learning acquire knowledge more deeply, retain learned material over a longer period, and demonstrate higher activity during the learning process (Fautch, 2015; Ning Li, 2023).

Research also shows that independent learning develops important personal competencies in students — including self-management, time planning, independent decision-making, and critical thinking — which are formed in the process of independent study (Zimmerman, 2018). These competencies enable students to be adaptable and competitive in their future professional careers.

The results also show that digital technologies are an important factor in developing independent learning. The use of online platforms and digital resources encourages students to learn at their own pace and increases their sense of responsibility toward the learning process (Cho & Shen, 2013; Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012). At the same time, some studies have noted that rigid curricula and traditional assessment methods in the education system may limit independent learning (Han Lele, 2023).

DISCUSSION

The obtained results show that students' independent learning ability is an integral part of the modern education system. Independent learning ensures that the student participates as an active subject in the knowledge acquisition process, and helps transition from the traditional teacher-centered model to student-centered learning (Zimmerman & Schunk, 2016). However, the literature review shows that the process of developing independent learning is complex and dependent on many factors. Students' individual differences, level of motivation, and prior learning experience directly affect the effectiveness of independent learning (Pintrich & Zusho, 2002; Ning Li, 2023). For this reason, a single uniform approach may not be effective for all students.

The role of the teacher in this process is of great importance. Research shows that the teacher's activity as a guide, advisor, and motivator helps to successfully shape independent learning (Dabbagh & Kitsantas, 2012). Regular feedback from teachers and a flexible assessment system enable students to analyze and improve their own learning process.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, developing students' independent learning ability is one of the most important tasks of modern education. The literature review showed that independent learning can improve academic achievement, develop personal and professional competencies, and create a solid foundation for lifelong learning (Zimmerman, 2018; World Economic Forum, 2020).

At the same time, in order to effectively develop independent learning, it is necessary to adapt the educational environment, update teachers' pedagogical approaches, and make rational use of digital technologies. Future research should focus more deeply on the mechanisms for developing independent learning at various educational levels and on the impact of innovative educational technologies.

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