

DEVELOPING SELF-DIRECTED LEARNING THROUGH A STRATEGY-BASED APPROACH

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Abstract: This article examines the development of self-directed learning through a strategy-based approach in foreign language education. Self-directed learning is considered a crucial competence that enables learners to take responsibility for planning, monitoring, and evaluating their own learning process. The study aims to explore how the systematic use of learning strategies can enhance learners' autonomy and motivation. A strategy-based approach is analyzed as an instructional framework that explicitly teaches cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies to support independent learning.

Keywords: self-directed learning, strategy-based approach, learner autonomy, learning strategies, language education, metacognition

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary education, the focus has increasingly shifted toward learner-centered approaches that emphasize autonomy and lifelong learning skills. One of the key concepts supporting this shift is self-directed learning, which enables learners to take an active role in setting goals, selecting learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes. In the context of foreign language education, self-directed learning is particularly important due to the need for continuous practice and independent language exposure beyond the classroom. A strategy-based approach has gained attention as an effective pedagogical framework for fostering self-directed learning. This approach involves explicit instruction in learning strategies, including cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies, which help learners become more aware of how they learn and how they can improve their performance. By developing strategic competence, learners are better equipped to manage their learning process and adapt to various learning tasks and contexts. The relevance of this study lies in the growing demand for autonomous learners who are capable of regulating their own learning in academic and professional environments. Despite the recognized importance of self-directed learning, many learners lack the necessary skills and strategies to learn independently.

Materials and Methods

The research material for this study consists of instructional activities, learning tasks, and reflective materials designed within a strategy-based teaching framework. The participants included students studying a foreign language in a higher education setting. The selected learning strategies focused on cognitive strategies (such as summarizing and inferencing), metacognitive strategies (planning, monitoring, and self-evaluation), and socio-affective strategies (cooperation and self-motivation). A qualitative research design was employed to examine the impact of strategy-based instruction on the development of self-directed learning. The methods used included classroom observation, analysis of

learners' reflective journals, and evaluation of task performance before and after the implementation of strategy instruction. Descriptive and comparative analysis methods were applied to identify changes in learners' autonomy, strategic awareness, and engagement in the learning process. The combination of these methods allowed for a comprehensive assessment of how strategy-based instruction contributes to the development of self-directed learning skills and provides a reliable basis for further pedagogical conclusions.

Results

The results of the study indicate that the implementation of a strategy-based approach had a positive impact on the development of self-directed learning among students. After the introduction of explicit strategy instruction, learners demonstrated increased awareness of learning strategies and greater confidence in managing their own learning processes. Many students showed improvement in planning their learning activities, setting realistic goals, and monitoring their progress during language tasks. The analysis of reflective journals revealed that learners became more active in evaluating their learning outcomes and identifying their strengths and weaknesses. Task performance data also suggested higher levels of engagement and responsibility, as students increasingly relied on self-selected strategies rather than teacher guidance. Furthermore, learners demonstrated improved motivation and persistence when facing challenging learning tasks, indicating a growth in autonomous learning behavior.

Discussion

The findings of this study support the view that strategy-based instruction plays a significant role in fostering self-directed learning in language education. The observed improvement in learners' planning, monitoring, and self-evaluation skills aligns with theoretical models of self-directed learning, which emphasize metacognitive control as a key factor in learner autonomy. The increased use of cognitive and socio-affective strategies suggests that learners not only improved their academic performance but also developed greater emotional engagement and self-confidence. This confirms previous research indicating that explicit strategy instruction can empower learners to take ownership of their learning and reduce dependence on teacher-centered instruction. Moreover, the results highlight the importance of integrating strategy training into regular classroom practice rather than treating it as a separate component.

Conclusion

The study has demonstrated that implementing a strategy-based approach significantly enhances the development of self-directed learning skills among language learners. The findings indicate that learners who receive explicit instruction in cognitive, metacognitive, and socio-affective strategies show greater autonomy, improved planning and monitoring abilities, and higher motivation to engage in independent learning. Strategy-based instruction not only increases learners' awareness of effective learning techniques but also promotes sustainable self-regulation and learner-centered behavior. The results underscore the importance of incorporating strategy-based frameworks into language teaching curricula to foster learner independence and lifelong learning competencies. By equipping students with strategic tools, educators can create an environment that encourages active participation, personal responsibility, and continuous self-improvement.

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