

Independent Learning Techniques

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Learning without thought is labour lost, thought without learning is perilous – Confucius.

To become good independent learners we need to be motivated, resilient, to overcome challenges an excellent time manager, Independent learning enables one to transfer his knowledge for many more jobs an independent learner becomes conceptual learners highly motivated, independent and confident.

This transition may be difficult for students who may be used to more support and direction and even “parent-like” relationship their teacher at university. It will be useful for them to know precisely how they are responsible for their learning in their new setting. This will require them to understand that they need to play a more active role in their own learning and will require greater self-motivation and organization and greater self-awareness of their learning needs and behaviors. Therefore, it is important to know both students and teachers perception of independent learning and their expectations from each other. Doing so will determine whether they both have the same perceptions and expectations or not and if teachers are aware of the effects of independent learning on students.

The paper provides an analysis of students’ experience of independent learning. It presents the potential to improve the context in which independent learning is implemented. How this can be achieved depends on how students perceive and assimilate this learning system. The objective is to clarify key concepts and different aspects of independent learning in order to foster students’ involvement in the system.

The main issues: Getting started- what is independent learning?

As is the case with many terms commonly used in higher education learning, such as ‘critical thinking’ independent learning’ can mean different things to different people, in different disciplines and in different cultures. Therefore , it is important that this pivotal concept is explained to students so that they know what is required of them within their new context and discipline.

- 1.Independent study is a process’ a method and a philosophy of education in which a student acquires knowledge by his or her own efforts and develops the ability for inquiry and critical evaluation;
- 2.It includes freedom of choice in determining those objectives, within the limits of a given project or program and with the aid of a faculty adviser;
- 3.It requires freedom of process to carry out the objectives;
- 4.It places increased educational responsibility on the student for the achieving of objectives and for the value of the goals.

The definition clearly places the responsibility for learning in higher education in students, aided by teaching staff and defined by the limits and objectives of the programmer.

Differences across disciplines:

Many students may be surprised at how much work they are required to do on their own outside the class and, in the absence of specific direction, they may not be aware of their own responsibilities. They sometimes complain about the lack of direction, generally in the courses. They may be surprised by the low contact hours in May courses, especially in the humanities and social science. They may even interpret this as a lack of value for money or a lack of interest and support from teachers or their department. It can be useful to spell out in course documents how many hours of works outside of the classroom are expected for each module or unit, and what precisely students are expected to do during this time.

Contact hours and the level of autonomy required or possible vary considerably across discipline areas.

In the humanities and social sciences there can be much more autonomy in choosing learning and assignment tasks and topics even from the first year of study.

Differences across cultures;

The extent to which independent learning is culturally situated has been hotly debated in the literature some describe learners from particular cultures as passive and dependent learners. Conversely others are more positive, such as in a study on self directed learning the current system wide reform of education in china has as its top priority the development of “autonomous” learners (which is perhaps a more accurate term to use) and is clearly an indication of the importance placed on this attribute for effective learning.

It is important, however to avoid making assumptions about individual students especially where their home contexts are diverse and undergoing rapid change students are likely to be unsure about what is required in their new learning contexts and may at least initially seem to want to know the correct methods and answers during this period of uncertainty, but they may be perfectly capable of “independence” and autonomy.

Independent learning includes-

Motivation , Independent ,initiative ,time management ,organization and multitasking , strong reading and writing skills .The present paper throws light on different strategies to learn independently .They are self management ,knowing the essentials ,taking control ,personal planning resources and support .

Self management :Generally a university student is different from a collegiate .There will be very fewer teaching sessions .One has to work by managing one’s own study space and time One will have a great deal of more responsibility for one’s own success. This is very difficult to manage.

Taking control: We are responsible for our choice that affect our future and career choices .Though advice and guidance is available, it is up to make optimum use of it .

Personal planning: University offers more opportunities for developing responsibilities and gaining experience and knowledge in a wider range of area than almost any other setting .But when we have to attend interview it’s our personal planning that helps us to use those opportunities, we get benefit from taking control of our time and organizing a plan.

Knowing the essentials: University may send a big volume of information .But it's one's responsibility to select the essential information about deadlines assessment, regulations that we must know

Finding resources and support: Independent learning is usually developed through out a learner's time at school or college to give learners more responsibility for work or learning. It helps learners to make informed choices and top make responsibility for deciding for what they need to do in order to learn .to do this learner need to –

1. Feel confident about taking and acting upon decisions.
2. Appreciating the value of reflecting on learning.

So independent learning means that learners make decisions about their learning rather than relying on their teachers to do it for them. At first many learners find this challenging when they are more familiar with it to focus on their own individual needs and to take account of the way they prefer to learn ,Independent learning is about “ isolated “ or unaided learning or operating without the help of teachers .

Learning strategies include four steps .Self directed learning can be challenging, ever for the brightest and most motivated students. As a means of better understanding two processes involved in this mode of study, the four key stages to independent learning – being ready to learn, setting learning goals, engaging in the learning process, and this offers some tips for both faculty member and students.

Eternal learner : Various skills and attitudes towards learning are required for successful independent study .this step requires time for analysis s students situation ,study habits ,Family situations and support net work both at school and at home as they continue in the program progress, in degree program and past units taken that will prove useful, signs of readiness for self directed learning include being –autonomous, organized, self disciplined ,able to communicate effectively and able to accept constructive feedback and engage in self evaluation and self reflection .

Setting learning Goals: Communication of learning goals between a student and the advising faculty member is critical learning contracts generally include:

1. Goals for the unit of study.
2. Structure and sequence of study.
3. Details about resource materials for goal
4. Details about grading procedure.

Engaging in the learning process: students need to understand themselves as learners in order to understand their needs as self –directed learning students .Students also need to understand their approach to study independently.

The major Advantages of Independent strategies:

According to Bill Meyer and other language scholars there are lots of benefits of Independent learning for students .The review found some evidence of the benefits of independent learning including-

1. Improved academic performance.
2. Increased motivation and confidence.
3. Greater pupil awareness of their limitations and their ability to manage them

4. Enabling teachers to provide differentiated tasks for pupils and
5. Fostering social inclusion by countering alienation.
6. Enables one to memorize concepts.

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