

The Relationship Between College Students' English Autonomous Learning Ability and Classroom Environment

Ruogu Sun*

Southwest Jiaotong University Hope College, Nanchong Sichuan, 637900, China

*Corresponding author: Ruogu Sun, 921357443@qq.com

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Abstract: This paper explores the relationship between college students' English autonomous learning ability and the classroom environment. Against the backdrop of increasing demand for English proficiency in academic and professional settings, the study emphasizes the necessity of fostering autonomy in language learning. Through a conceptual and literature-based analysis, the paper identifies key factors influencing autonomous learning, including teacher behavior, student participation, task orientation, and classroom dynamics. The findings suggest that a supportive and well-structured classroom environment significantly enhances students' ability to learn independently. The study concludes by proposing practical strategies for optimizing the classroom setting, such as creating a harmonious atmosphere, implementing group-based and inquiry-based activities, and strengthening student engagement to cultivate greater autonomy and improve overall English learning outcomes.

Keywords: Autonomous Learning; Classroom Environment; College English Teaching; Student Engagement; Learning Strategies

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1.Introduction

By understanding the concept of autonomy learning, this paper exemplifies the main factors that influence autonomy learning and the necessity of autonomy learning for college students when facing English teaching in colleges and universities. The researcher explores the influence of classroom environment on independent learning and finally proposes some methods to optimize the classroom environment. The researcher hopes that through these methods, the ability of college students to learn independently can be improved.

2.Literature Review: Autonomy in Learning

2.1 The Conceptual of Learner Autonomy

Autonomous learning “is essentially a matter of the learner’s psychological relationship to the process and content of learning, i.e., the ability to think beyond, to make decisions, and to act independently”^[1]. Autonomous learning refers to the learner’s autonomy, which is an attitude toward language learning^[2].

According to the researcher, autonomous learning refers to an individual student’s active and aware learning behavior during the learning process, which is a situation in which the individual student’s non-intellectual elements act on the intellectual activity. It is exhibited in the process of educational activities by students’ great desire for information, active engagement, and active thinking behavior. Its distinguishing quality is that it has internalized the urge to learn as an

automatic action or propensity and has associated capacities. In a state of automatic learning, the pressure to learn arises from the impulse of internal needs rather than from the behavior of external pressure. Therefore, the purpose of learning is not to get a grade or pass a test, but to acquire knowledge, skills, and develop competencies. Little^[3] argues that white-owned learning refers primarily to the link between the learner's psychology and the learning process and content is not a new teaching strategy.

Dickinson^[4] lists five characteristics of self-directed learning: awareness of the teacher's instruction; goals and teaching methods; ability to form their own learning goals; selection of appropriate learning strategies to apply; monitoring of the learning strategies used; and evaluation of their own learning outcomes.

2.2 Factors Influencing Autonomous Learning

Since 1990, the field of self-directed learning research has broadened, e.g., Grolnick, Kurowski & Gur land^[5] studied the influence of family on self-regulation. boekaerts^[6], Pressley^[7] studied socio-cultural influences on self-directed learning. Alexander explored contextual influences on Alexander explores the specific influence of context on self-directed learning. Schunk & Zimmerman have suggested that more research in the future should address how self-directed learning is influenced by contextual factors. Pintrich^[8] also suggested that more research on autonomous learning should address cultural and contextual influences in the future. In addition, research on autonomous learners should not be limited to the classroom setting but should also be broadened to include the outside of the school, such as the home and workplace, to examine the impact of these contexts on the development of autonomous learning. Most models of autonomous learning propose that domain-specific knowledge, motivation and use of cognitive strategies, and cognitive awareness are positively correlated with academic achievement across contexts; however, the relative importance of different individual factors varies across contexts. For example, Howard-Rose and Winne^[11] discovered that the nature of students' task completion influences their level of autonomy, as do prior personality differences in autonomous learning, and that certain aspects of the classroom context (e.g., teacher behavior, task nature) are related to their level of autonomy. The results point to the fact that models of autonomy cannot be generalized and require in-depth research in different disciplines and different classroom contexts to apply the resulting findings effectively to instructional instruction in different disciplines. This paper will focus on how the classroom environment affects college students' autonomy in English language learning by examining how the classroom environment affects college students' autonomy in English language learning and suggesting some ways to improve college students' autonomy in learning.

3. The Necessity of Autonomous Learning of English for College Students

The requirement of using English in many affairs is bound to increase. We can only increase students' learning efficiency and establish a firm basis for them to grasp and apply English in their future career by mobilizing their learning excitement and fostering their capacity to learn English independently. The advancement of the times necessitates the growth of high-quality foreign language abilities, and English instruction should focus on the development of pupils' independent learning capacity.

The capacity to study English autonomously is required of college students to adapt to future job. And the capacity to learn English independently is one of the most critical and necessary criteria for college students' success.

Autonomous English learning can increase classroom productivity and compensate for classroom learning limits. It is important to note that students' independent learning is not self-learning, nor does it negate the function of instructors; rather, teachers play a critical role in assisting students in realizing independent learning. In the classroom, the teacher has to focus on the main points and difficulties of knowledge, motivate the students, and help and guide them to master new knowledge. Therefore, autonomous learning does not mean that students do not attend class, but that they actively use their brains in class and cooperate with the teacher to maximize their knowledge. For the language knowledge and skills explained by teachers in class, students can absorb and digest them outside of class only through independent learning.

English independent learning promotes pupils' self-development^[9]. Students must learn to control their own learning, examine their own learning characteristics, and pick appropriate learning techniques and strategies to increase the quality of learning that is favorable to their self-development during the process of English autonomous learning.

4.The Main Factors Affecting the classroom Environment

The teacher's language and behavior in the classroom play a crucial role in the formation of the classroom environment^[10]. First, in the real teaching situation, teachers play a guiding role for students' learning, and by controlling students' learning progress, they can make corresponding teaching plans for students, thus promoting the orderly development of classroom environment. On the other hand, the teaching style of teachers is an important factor affecting the classroom environment, and teachers have different teaching styles. Some teachers are funny and humorous, which naturally makes the classroom environment relaxed and their words easily accepted by students; some teachers are strict and rigorous, which makes the classroom environment more rigorous and students' classroom listening efficiency relatively high. Each of the teaching styles listed above has its own advantages, but in the face of different concepts and learning abilities of students, a teaching style or a simple teaching plan is obviously unable to meet all students.

Students' participation in the classroom has a certain influence on their ability to learn independently, and students are the main subjects of learning, so this means that students are required to integrate with the classroom. Students must be made fully aware that they are part of the classroom and even the main part of the classroom. On the other hand, the increase of students' participation in the classroom also means that students are more interested in the classroom, and interest is the best teacher for students.

Student responsibility refers to the ability of students to clearly position themselves in the classroom and to recognize that their main task as students is to learn, which leads to a change in their attitude toward learning. They can understand the purpose of the classroom with a full state of mind. And based on this, carry out relevant independent learning.

Task orientation refers to students' attitudes toward the completion of classroom tasks.

When students have a correct understanding of the classroom tasks, they will make a learning plan with the goal of completing the tasks and actively seek help from their surroundings to complete the classroom tasks properly. This process promotes the enhancement of students' independent learning ability on the one hand, and the strengthening of their communication skills on the other. Therefore, task orientation plays an important role in students' learning process.

5.Strategies for Cultivating Autonomous Learning in the English Classroom

Create a harmonious classroom environment and correctly lead students to form the habit of independent learning. To guarantee that the teaching effect is maximized during the English teaching process, instructors must begin from a practical standpoint, with the development and practice stage of English classroom independent learning activities, correctly lead students to form the habit of independent learning, promote students to learn independent learning English knowledge awareness has significantly enhanced, but also for the orderly development of English teaching activities play a key role^[11]. Some students' awareness of independent learning is not strong, so it is not conducive to the improvement of their independent learning ability. To make the development and practice of independent learning activities in English classroom can be implemented smoothly, teachers need to give students correct guidance and always supervise students to learn English knowledge to promote the cultivation of students' independent learning ability. When leading students to learn English knowledge, English teachers should combine the students' stratification, age characteristics and learning ability, and start a hierarchical teaching according to the students' comprehensive aspects, and then mobilize the students' independent learning ability to improve. In the process of practical exploration of independent learning activities in English classroom, to promote the quality of English teaching to be effectively improved, students need to be correctly led to form the habit of independent learning, to create good conditions for the development of independent learning activities in English classroom.

During the English teaching period, to make the English classroom independent learning activities can be carried out and practiced smoothly and play a major role in the development of teaching activities. To ensure the orderly implementation of English classroom autonomous learning activities, English teachers must carry out rich learning activities and thus create favorable conditions for the enhancement of English teaching effectiveness. In implementing the rich learning activities, teachers can abandon the traditional teaching model, which does not focus on

teaching English theory to students and can divide students into groups.

When grouping students in a class, teachers need to carry out the process with the comprehensive characteristics of students, either by putting students with the same interests in a group or by ensuring that the differences in learning ability and interest in learning English knowledge in each group are not too great, and by switching the group members when necessary. By being in this condition, it is conducive to the common progress among students.

In addition, in the practical exploration stage of carrying out autonomous learning activities in the English classroom, to promote the enhancement of students' independent learning ability, teachers must enhance students' main status, so that students' potential to learn English knowledge can be stimulated to the greatest extent. Then, teachers should assign reasonable tasks to students so that they can preview the text in advance, and then promote students' full mastery of English knowledge^[12]. When students have a certain understanding of the content of the text, it is important for the development of independent learning activities in the English classroom.

The development of English teaching activities is critical to the development of students' comprehensive ability; therefore, in the process of English teaching, teachers must innovate teaching methods and create good conditions for students to learn English knowledge by organizing and conducting inquiry-based learning activities to mobilize students' interest in learning English knowledge^[13]. To ensure that the independent learning activities in English classrooms can be carried out in an orderly manner, the important role of inquiry-based learning activities should be given full play during practice. Therefore, to maximize the effect of independent learning, the cooperative learning mode and the independent learning mode should be organically integrated together, and during the period of stimulating students' inquiry ability, the inquiry-based activities should be carried out with the teaching contents to play a major role in students' in-depth learning of English knowledge. Teachers establish learning groups based on students' learning abilities and the content they are studying, thus providing a good platform for inquiry-based learning activities.

During the actual organization and implementation of inquiry-based learning activities, teachers ask students reasonable questions in relation to the teaching content, such as analyzing long and difficult sentences, and students can gain a deeper understanding of English knowledge by exploring specific problems. In the process of mutual exploration, students not only improve their inquiry skills, but also play a vital role in developing teamwork. For example, in reading classes, study groups are established, and group members are asked to make presentations to the class after studying the assigned text. In short, to promote the orderly development of independent learning activities in the process of teaching English, organizing, and carrying out inquiry-based learning activities is of great significance to the development of students' inquiry skills and builds a favorable platform for students to learn rich English knowledge. It also creates a favorable platform for students to learn rich English knowledge.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, there is an important connection between classroom environment and students' independent learning ability, and targeted optimization of classroom environment can effectively improve students' learning ability, improve various learning achievements including college English, and promote the all-round development of college students.

Cultivating students' English learning autonomy is not a requirement for students to learn independently and on their own, but rather a question of how to play a leading role as a teacher, make full use of various educational resources, help learners improve their cognitive level and cognitive strategies, actively participate in teaching and learning activities, actively face evaluation and feedback, adjust learning strategies in a timely manner, be able to self-monitor their learning progress, and help learners achieve autonomy in the presence of complex factors. The study of students' English learning autonomy can help promote the reform of university English teaching and contribute to the cultivation of more talents with autonomous learning ability and competitiveness for society.

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