An Analysis of Learning Principal in Two Types of Self-directed Learning Purpose

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Abstract

Self-directed learning has been utilized as the method that increases the students' participation in classroom activities or been suggested as the purpose of school education. However, it is unclear whether the purpose of self-directed learning is a purpose to enhance for the self-directed learning competence or a method to achieve higher grades in school curriculum. The article divided Self-directed learning purpose to two types and compares the learning principles. The self-directed learning according to its objectives is applied to different learning principles; scope of knowledge, focal point of learning, personal attributes, main strategy, and evaluation of learning. In order to achieve the self-direct learning competence in the standard education system like public schools, It is required to research how the learning principles according to the self-directed learning objectives can be conceived in school education.

Keywords: self-directed learning, learning purpose, learning principles

1. Introduction

Self-directed learning started to be referred in the realm of adult education beginning in the late 1960's and recently has expanded to children's education. It has been utilized as the method that increases the students' participation in classroom activities or been suggested as the purpose of school education.

However, it is unclear whether the purpose of self-directed learning purpose is a purpose to enhance for the self-directed learning competence or a method to achieve higher grades in school curriculum. Candy (1991) stated that self-directed learning should be a goal and as well as a learning process [5]. The self-directed learning has been discussed as an instruction method, a characteristic of the learner, individual quality, and as a strategy of increasing the learner's self-directed competency. However, such ambiguous concept of the goal of the self-directed learning can ultimately lead to errors in applying the concept of self-directed learning. The purpose of self-directed learning needs to be clarified.

The objective of self-directed learning can be divided two types. The first type is to discover among the characteristic of adult's characteristic and focus on enhancing the self-directedness. The second perspective is to seek teaching method focused on the learner through methodical and organized education system and overcoming the typical instructor-centric teaching methods.

This paper presents two types of self-directed learning: 'self-directed learning for the purpose of achieving of the subject goal', and 'self-directed learning for the purpose of enhancing the self-directed learning competence'. The article compares the two types of learning principles. This study will be a foundation in the establishing strategies related to

self-directed learning and innovative school education system to enhance self-directed learning competence.

2. The Learning Principle in Self-directed Learning for the Purpose of Achievement of the Subject's Goal

The subject's goal is not established by the learner's intention, but rather decided by the teacher upon evaluation of the students' abilities in a set learning process. Learning activities may start without the students' recognition for their needs in the subject. In most school education system, self-directed learning purpose follows this approach.

2.1. Scope of Knowledge

The concept of knowledge takes on the positivistic approach. Knowledge is accumulated to through observation and experiment, and is intended to be independent and objective. Therefore, knowledge is regarded as something to be something to be planned, intended, and structured. Here, knowledge is referred as an 'explicit knowledge', having the 'know-what' knowledge emphasizing the cognitive area which is rational, and objective.

2.2. The Focal Point of Learning

Self-directed learning for the purpose of achieving the subject's goal seeks the teaching method centered on the student through overcoming the established the teacher centered education. The significance of learning here is how the teacher delivers instructions to students effectively. On the basis of constructivist learning theory, it materializes methods for student's participation in spontaneous learning activities and emphasizes students' autonomy. Self-directed learning of such purpose emphasizes the planned and structured process that serve to develop knowledge and skills. The focal point of self-directed learning is placed on materialization to achieve the subject's goal presented by a clear structure.

2.3. The Personal Attributes

Guglielmino (1977) measures how the learners perceive his skills and attitudes related to self-directed learning as eight elements [6]. Oddi (1985) attempted to examine personal attributes related to continuous and leading diverse learning of his lifetime [2]. The self-directed learning with the purpose to achievement of the subject's goal needs to importantly consider the learner's cognitive attributes, knowledge, and learning progress. Furthermore, the learner's attributes are characteristics restricted in events of instruction.

2.4. Learning Activities

The learning activities within self-directed learning for the aim to achieve the subject's goal requires special teaching skills and methods in order to aid learners in acquiring contents that need to be accomplished. In order to accomplish the subject goals, students need to create learning strategies, practice them and evaluate the result of learning. However, the learning goal of this is determined by the teacher according to the context and logic of the curriculum. According to Bae(2008), without considering the learner's interest of the plan and the subject, the learning methods can be set up by others rather than, not by the choice of the students [3].

The teacher needs to collaborate with the planning, execution, and evaluation of the students by creating a curriculum that considers the students' purpose of learning and interest. The evaluation in this concept is processing students' understanding of the structure and logic of the subject and measuring the degree of achievement in the subject matters

3. The Learning Principle in Self-directed Learning for the Aim to Enhance the Self-directed Learning Competence

The self-directed learning for the aim to enhance the self-direct learning competence is based on the personal autonomy which does not needed to require approval or verification by others. The learning subject may be selected by the learner who intends to study it for his or her own goal, or the subject may emerge accidently, and - not through planning. Therefore even though the learning objectives may be unclear at the initial outset of learning, it becomes clear through the process of elaboration and reconstruction of the objectives (Spear and Mocker, 1984) [1]. This appears the education not structured well and controlled formally like school education.

3.1. Scope of Knowledge

The scope of knowledge that a learner acquired through self-directed learning with a purpose to enhance the self-direct learning competency not only employs structured and intended knowledge, but also acquires values, conviction, and attitude, concept of knowledge takes on the positivistic approach. Knowledge is accumulated to through observation and experiment. The objectives of this self-directed learning are obtaining tacit knowledge, which encompasses empirical knowledge, the know-how way of learning and practical knowledge. Knowledge in this context has a tendency to be, context in the situation, potential thing, complex, thing and difficult to observe and quantify due to its potential and relative nature.

3.2. The Focal Point of Learning

Self-directed learning aimed to enhance the self-direct learning competence emphasizes internal changes by the learner. This learner depends on the internal motivation and aims to make a qualitative shift in learning. This is based on the Transformation Learning Theory which emphasizes self-directedness that highlights the shift in learner's internal characteristics. Learning is not developed in conjunction with elements in one's life, rather than isolated to from one's life context. It is important to understand that leaning can exist without planned and structured process and through enhanced self-directed learning, a learner is able to develop self-directed competency and gains valuable new insights.

3.3. The Personal Attributes

In self-directed learning aimed to enhance the self-direct learning competence, the personal attributes change, and requires to be developed through the processing of self-directed learning. It is important to understand that self-directed learning emerges differently depending on the learning situation and undergoes a continuous transformation.

3.4. Learning Activities

The objectives of self-directed learning to enhance self-directed learning competency, learning activities are presented in humanistic orientation. Autonomy and critical thinking are important elements in such self-directed learning activities. Autonomy here signifies being critically aware of debilitating rules, norms, expectations, values and critical thinking has been seen as reflective skepticism, applying standards of reason to arguments, and understanding another person's thinking(Mezirow,1990)[4]. Such learning activities are a process that qualitative shift of the learner rather than acquiring established knowledge. The results of the learning are evident through the learner's shift in perspective of reality, degree of change, of attitudes, positivity oriented self-concept, responsibility of learning, and increase in problem solving skills.

4. Comparison of Learning Principal based on Self-Directed Learning Purpose

Self-directedness is affected by the subject and the learning objectives the students encounter. In a structured curriculum and systematically regulated education environment, the students are presented with specific and fixed objectives that have are already been decided on their behalf. On the other hand, in a less structured and controlled learning environment like that of adult or informal education system, the learning objectives are decided by the learners- themselves and the subjects are selected based on personal preferences and depends on the learner's internal motivation.

Table 1. Comparison of Learning Principal based on Self-Directed Learning Purpose

	Objectives of Self-Directed Learning	
	Achieving of the subject's goal	Enhancing self-directed learning competence
Application	Learning structured and systematically regulated education	Un-structured learning
Scope of Knowledge	Explicit knowledge Positivistic Approach Rational, objective and structured	Tacit knowledge Empirical knowledge Relative and contextual
Focal Point of Learning	Special teaching skills and the materialization of methods for obtaining the learners spontaneous participation	Learner's internal changing through the critical thinking, reflection, arguments, understanding other's perspective
Personal Attributes	Characteristics to consider regarding learners present stage of study in events of instruction.	Characteristic of developing future of learner through self-directed study
Main Strategy	Harmonize the learner's understanding with the teacher's requirement	Interacting with environment, integrating the learner's belief and value with the environment.
Result of Learning	Understand system and logic of contents presented	Qualitative shift in learning, understanding how to learn
Evaluation	Degree of understanding of subject material	Self-directed learning competence
Learning Theory	Constructivism	Transformative learning

Self-directed learning the aimed to achieve the goal of a given subject develops into a learner selecting a suitable learning task within the boundaries of established learning environment. It can be understood that such development is a type of teaching-learning methods. However, in the self-directed learning aimed to enhance the self-directed learning competence, learning is pursued as developing an internal shift and qualitative change within the context of one's life.

Table 1 compares principles of self-directed learning aimed to achieve the subject's goal and principles of the self-directed learning aimed to enhance self-directed learning competence discussed thus far.

4. Conclusion

To apply self-directed learning methods in formal education environment, it is necessary to determine whether the objective is to enhance self-directed learning competency, or whether it is merely to be utilized as a method to help accomplish the planned subjects. Self-directed learning is presented as two types: the aim to achieve of the goal of a planned subject and the aim to enhance the self-direct learning competence. These two types are applied to different learning systems and methods.

Achieving the goal of an established subject's goal attempts to capture the learner's self-directedness. However, such goal is seen as a learning method to serve the purpose of merely acquiring knowledge in a planned and structured learning environment. On the other hand, self-directed learning that aims to elevate self-directed study competency pursues internal change in individual's beliefs, values, and attitudes. As a result, this process to captures and strengthen the learner's self-directedness.

The two types of self-directed learning according to its objectives is applied to different learning principles; scope of knowledge, focal point of learning, personal attributes, main strategy, and evaluation of learning. In order to achieve the self-direct learning competence in the standard education system like public schools, It is required to research how the learning principles according to the self-directed learning objectives can be conceived in school education.

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