

Enhancing the Effectiveness of an Autonomous Learning Approach Applied to an English Academic Writing Course

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ABSTRACT (maximum 250 words; now 242 words)

*Research has suggested that students exhibit greater motivation and satisfaction when allowed to assume a high degree of responsibility for their learning, and learner autonomy has been shown to correlate positively with effective learning in foreign language courses. An autonomous learning approach would appear to be particularly suited to EFL courses in academic writing, due to the intrinsically independent nature and varied pace of production of written work. To help students with diverse levels of proficiency and motivation in an EFL academic writing course acquire skills and study habits that will result in richer, more accurate English academic writing, a team of researchers developed and applied text-based self-learning materials and an autonomous learning curriculum over a period of several years. The approach was categorized by student determination of performance objectives, self-monitoring and self-assessment, and a peer tutoring system. Along the way, the team identified weaknesses in writing performance and peer tutoring effectiveness and made several revisions to the learning materials and methodology during and after each trial. Finally, the team examined writing performance by analyzing the outcome of identical written paragraph assignments from trials in three consecutive years using a variant of the ESL English Composition Profile. This presentation explores how autonomy can link to writing skills mastery, explains the methodology that was developed, and discusses the results of the paragraph writing analysis, with the hope that in future this approach can be applied in a variety of university classroom environments.*

BIOGRAPHICAL DATA (maximum 60 words)

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