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Independent Learning

Introduction

Independent Learning is a form of acquiring knowledge through the personal effort of an individual, where he or she sets specific strategies to acquire learning goals. The students have full freedom of the way the he or she defines its path of learning (Cassidy 989). The process involves sheer sense of critical evaluation and inquiry by taking responsibility of the subject being learnt. The teacher involved in this process plays the role of a facilitator.

The concept of Independent Learning is normally evident in university setting, where the students have the liberty to choose courses and set independent learning paths. This kind of learning gives the practical insights to deal with real life problems. A student who has studied from the aforementioned concept will have strong grip to deal with new and challenging issues. A student from this background will have strong leadership skills to set successful strategies. Not only the independent learning enhances the learning ability, but it also makes a person accountable for the set of objectives prescribed by him or her (Christie, Paul, & Norma 15). Myriad students study in the university setting for the goal of getting a degree that shatters the opportunity to get practical grip over the subject. Since the students are teachers themselves in this methodology, they tend to develop personal urge and interest to acquire knowledge. This urge and interest does not make the academic journey as a mundane job, but it helps pupils to sense it with interest.

Constituents of Independent Learning

There are three basic constituents of Independent Learning. The first constituent includes purpose usage of various strategies, response, processes by pupil to sharpen their academic performance. The second constituent is the usage of self-developed feedback mechanism that guides the individual to monitor and alter the learning strategy or self-perception (Cassidy 989). The third constituent is the dimension of motivation that includes self-efficacy beliefs. Inclusion of the aforementioned three elements is foremost significant for a person to attain expertise in independent learning. If even one element from the mentioned constituents is missing then the notion of independent learning could not be achieved.

Developing Independent Learning Skill

Independent learning or self-regulated learning can be understood through a three-layered conceptual model. This conceptual model assists individuals to develop the independent learning skills. The first and the foremost important element of this model is Choice of Cognitive Strategies. This allows an individual to regulate his internal thinking processes (Meyer, Bill, & Naomi 20). This part of the cognitive process identifies the personal skills of an individual to process information and uses his thinking the way it should be utilized to attain the required results. This step refers to an individual who regulates his thinking process.

The second element to develop this skill is through the use of skills and metacognitive ability to direct learning. Metacognition is the ability of thinking over the thinking process. Therefore, the person who is willing to develop his independent learning must be able to control and think over his

or her thinking process.

The third element of this conceptual model is the control over motivation and self. The reason why students are told to study what they find interesting instead of aiming for something else. If a student personality finds something of interest then he will be able to control his inner self, and he will be automatically be motivated. The third element is vital to achieve the goal of independent learning. If a student is willing to sharpen his independent learning or self-regulated learning skills then he or she must develop all the three aforementioned elements.

Independent Learning and Higher Education

According to Christie, students who understands the independence learning well and who are able to adapt to the new environment will have higher success rate at higher education level. The university is the final stage of the students, where they end their academic career to start a professional career. The years before university life, pupils are more dependent on teachers who provide the goals and strategies of learning (Cottrell 22). When students enter professional lives, they are expected to work independently and they are held accountable for everything. In schools, the teacher plays a supportive and pampering role that is usually not witnessed in professional lives. Although, organizations offers mentoring and coaching but they are still expected to be independent critical thinker.

The reason why there is a drastic change from their colleges to higher education is based on the idea that the higher educational system tends to prepare pupils for successful professional lives. This process grooms the individuals into successful leaders. Since leaders are required to be

independent and lead others, the educational system inclines them to think and learn independently. If such role is not played by the higher educational system, the students will always be dependent on others to provide the guidelines (Meyer, Bill, & Naomi 15). In graduate and postgraduate studies, students conduct numerous researches that they are required to do individually, which can only be achieved through independent learning. In a nutshell, the strategy of learning independently is of immense importance in higher educational setting and in professional lives.

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