

Evaluation of self-regulatory program curriculum for to improve academic achievement...



How can using a Self-regulatory program curriculum improve academic achievement in secondary schools?

“ Learning is about one’s relationship with oneself and one’s ability to exert the effort, self-control, and critical self-assessment necessary to achieve the best possible results and about overcoming failure, distractions, and sheer laziness in pursuit of REAL achievement. This is self-regulated learning” (Nilson, 2013 p. 32). As teachers it is incumbent upon us to foster a love of lifelong learning and develop students who have the ability to self-regulate their educational and personal goals. Pintrich (2000), states that self-regulation is an active and constructive process that learners verify, regulate, and motivate to control their cognition and behavior. The importance of this skill in education is apparent by the fact that Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) has recently been credited as being a ‘ pillar of education’. SRL is a concept in which the learners initiate and conduct learning, personally, instead of relying on educators, parents, or other educational factors. The basis of SRL is that students who exhibit self-regulation of their learning, will learn more effectively and will have enduring learning skills.

Review of the Literature

Defining self-regulation

One theorist who had a great impact on the promotion of self-regulation was Zimmerman (2008), who defines it as self-regulation of thoughts, emotions and self-generated actions, which are planned and acquired periodically to achieve personal goals. Through this process students manage their

thoughts, behaviors, and emotions so they can successfully steer through their learning experiences. This happens when a student intentionally aims his actions towards the acquisition of knowledge or skills.

Self-efficacy- a key factor

Self-efficacy is defined as a person's belief in his or her innate ability towards achieving their goals. Bandura (1982), defines it as a personal judgement of how well one can execute courses of action required to deal with prospective situations. Self-regulation of motivation involves factors such as self-efficacy, goal orientation, and task value. Of these the most important factor is self-efficacy. The research study of Zimmerman and Martinez-Pons (1986), clearly showed a correlation between self-efficacy and self-regulation among the high achieving students from the advanced classes. These students exhibited higher executive functioning skills in terms of goal setting, organization, self-monitoring and self-evaluation (Zimmerman, 2008). Thus, they showed higher self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation towards their learning.

Research supports this significant influence of self-efficacy on student's ability to self-regulate. Wilson and Narayan's (2014), study" assessed learning strategies by counting each instance of strategy use as it occurred in peer-to-peer conversations typed into a computer software system" (p. 236). Results tabulated from the ninety-six undergraduate students working on projects with three sub tasks, showed that for each subtask, learners with higher task self-efficacy had higher task performance (Wilson & Narayan, 2014). While learners may use varied learning strategies, their use of these

strategies is dependent on intrinsic motivation. This solidifies the premise that self-efficacy is a motivational variable that bolsters a person's self-belief in their ability to reach a goal (Bandura, 1993).

Another approach to test self-efficacy judgement is to compare students with differences in self- efficacy judgement but with comparable knowledge and experience on a performance task. Bouffard-Bouchard, Parent and Larivee (1991), showed a significant influence of self-efficacy on time management, on-task behavior, self-evaluation and motivation, all of which are aspects of self-regulation. This was seen regardless of the grade level of the students.

Qualities of self-regulated learners

Self-regulated learners are proactive and self-motivated and this distinguishes them from their peers. They are deeply engaged in their learning experience and exhibit a single-minded motivation to be successful. These learners prefer to sit in the front row of the classroom (Labuhn, Zimmerman, & Hasselhorn, 2010), are eager to answer questions being asked and find additional resources to master the content. They find ways and means to manipulate their learning environment to suit their needs. Research shows that self-regulated learners are more likely to seek tutoring help or other aids and a positive learning environment (Labuhn et al., 2010). This has been validated by recent studies which shows a significant improvement on academic assessments and performance of self-regulated learners over their peers. This is attributed to their resourcefulness and deep engagement towards their academic goals (Schunk & Zimmerman, 2007; Zimmerman, 2008). Labuhn et al. (2010) found that high school students,

who were taught SRL skills were more likely to achieve higher levels of academic self-efficacy and have higher performance levels compared to peers who did not receive SRL instruction. This strongly suggests that SRL strategies are the road to academic success for most students.

Motivation and Self-regulated learning

Motivation seems to be the crucial link in the network of factors that controls self-regulated learning (Bandura, 1993; Pintrich, 2000; Zimmerman, 2008).

Students with a growth mindset have the intrinsic motivation towards the pursuit of self-chosen learning goals. They are energized by motivational factors such as personal interest, expected satisfaction, values and rewards.

It has been observed that when students consider a learning activity and the amount of effort they should put towards that activity, their interests and values are the deciding factors towards the completion of the activity (Vidal-Arbarca, Mana, & Gil, 2010).

If students do not see value in completing the tasks, then they are less likely to spend much time setting goals and planning strategies to accomplish the tasks. In addition, having higher self-efficacy beliefs increases the use of self-regulation strategies which in turn

leads to increases in academic achievement (Bouffard-Bouchard, et al., 1991; Zimmerman, & Martinez-Pons, 1986).

Personal preference and intrinsic motivation steer the degree of effort and perseverance students employ in completing a learning task while also using other self-regulation strategies.

Therefore, the cyclic correlation between self-regulation and motivation is evident and its positive impact on student learning and success in the

classroom has been clearly established (Zimmerman, 2008; Vidal-Arbarca et al., 2010).

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SRL Strategies

Since research has established the vital role of self-regulated learning to better prepare students for the demands of higher education, secondary education has now put a clear emphasis on this approach. Teaching of self-regulated learning skills has increased at the middle and elementary schools too, with the aim of preparing students for secondary education. Since learning of strategies requires a conscious effort in understanding them, motivated learners are more likely to use these strategies and thus increase their knowledge base. The literature provides a large number of strategies, ranging from very simple rereading methods to more complex approaches to synthesizing knowledge or drawing concept maps to illustrate problems. Broadly they can be classified into four types such as goal setting and planning, self-monitoring, self-evaluation and seeking assistance.

Setting and planning goals

Merriam Webster dictionary defines goal as the object of a person's ambition or effort; an aim or desired result (Goal. n. d.). Goal setting and planning of how the goal will be achieved is an important life skill that needs to be taught to all students regardless of grade level. They are complementary processes, that can help learners establish goals and use strategies to reach these goals. Goals can be as simple as earning a good grade on an exam, or as detailed as creating a pathway to comprehending a topic extensively. In order to achieve long term goals, it is important to teach students to have short-term attainable goals, also referred to as a SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely) goals. If a student's long-term

goal is to do well on a future exam, then their short-term attainable goal should be to set a specific timeframe to prepare and use specific study skills to help ensure success on the exam. Research suggests that students who set short-term goals for their education find it an effective way to track their learning progress (Zimmerman, 2008). Planning occurs when students set a goal for the task, establish strategies for achieving the goal, and determine how much time and resources will be required to achieve the goal (Schunk, & Zimmerman, 2007). Instructing students to plan and organize their academic tasks in small doable steps is a great approach to promoting self-regulation and learning.

Self-monitoring

Students become self-regulated learners when they become the drivers of their academic outcomes (Bouffard-Bouchard et al., 1991). Monitoring their progress is key to this responsibility towards their learning goals. Self-monitoring includes setting their learning goals, planning ahead, employing self-motivating strategies, being attentive to the tasks, and using strategies for content comprehension (Zimmerman, 2008). Teachers can foster this by encouraging students to write a journal to record when they worked on particular tasks, the strategies used, and the time they spent working on it. This presents a great visual of their progress which they can change as needed (Vidal-Arbarca et al., 2010). To self-monitor effectively, strategic learners must be able exert a good control on their attention (Winne, 1995). This process requires dispelling distracting thoughts and creating suitable learning environments such as a quiet place with no distractions. Research indicates that when students' increase their focus and remain on task for the <https://assignbuster.com/evaluation-of-self-regulatory-program-curriculum-for-to-improve-academic-achievement/>

required time frame, it improves academic outcomes considerably. Thus, incorporating self-control or on task strategies within the curriculum should be a priority.

Self-evaluation

Self-regulated learners are able to evaluate their own learning, independent of teacher given assessments (Winne 1995). This practice enables students to adjust and change their learning style or methods for similar tasks. Self-evaluation needs to be promoted in the classroom by encouraging students to monitor their goals on an ongoing basis and adjust the goals and strategies based upon academic performance. (Zimmerman, 2008).

Seeking assistance

Self-regulated learners are not self-sufficient or adept at achieving their learning on their own. They often seek assistance from peers, educators or other resources, when needed. Students need to understand that seeking help in no way makes them appear less smart or intelligent in any way. But on the contrary, allows them to use the resources at their disposal to enhance and facilitate their learning at a higher level. Therefore, teachers should promote positive help seeking behaviors by providing on-going feedback that can be easily understood and allowing students opportunities to resubmit assignments after making appropriate changes.

Analysis

These studies show a distinct correlation between a student's self-efficacy, self- monitoring and evaluation, self-control and assistance seeking and their <https://assignbuster.com/evaluation-of-self-regulatory-program-curriculum-for-to-improve-academic-achievement/>

ability to self-regulate. These studies propound that students perceptions of their academic tasks are filtered through a system of self -structures composed of self-beliefs, self-goals and self-evaluations (Zimmerman, 2008). When a student becomes aware of self as an agent of personal growth, a sense of self-efficacy prevails, a desire to achieve personal goals is ignited and an experience of competence is produced (Zimmerman 2008). Therefore, developing lessons that prepare students to engage in SRL strategies and provide support and opportunities for their implementation is necessary (Wilson, & Narayan, 2016). The major obstacle in helping students become self-regulative is the time required to teach these specific strategies (Bouffard-Bouchard et al., 1991). Even so, it is vital to be cognizant of the fact that SRL strategies help students learn new information and effectively prepare for the learning tasks. Classroom curriculum and accompanying assessment systems must include ways that support and value autonomous inquiry and strategic problem-solving (Vidal-Arbarca et al., 2010).

Conclusions

Self-regulated learning (SRL) has become a pivotal factor in the pursuance of effective academic learning. If teachers set aside a short timeframe within their allotted periods to practice self-regulation strategies within their curriculum, it can go a long way to helping them prepare for challenging learning tasks and assessments (Wilson, & Narayan, 2016). If the goal truly is to create successful lifelong learners, then we must teach them the strategies and skills necessary for that pathway to enduring learning.

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