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Qabul qilingan sana: 07.12.2025
Nashr etilgan sana: 30.01.2026

UDK:821.111.0+821.512.133.1

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THE ROLE OF REFLECTION IN DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT LEARNING SKILLS

Abstract

The article discusses the importance of reflecting on the educational process, its significant role in improving the effectiveness of education, and the ability of students in higher education institutions to organize their learning independently and develop skills for self-improvement during the learning process. It primarily emphasizes the development of crucial competencies such as independent thinking, critical analysis, self-monitoring, and time management.

Key words

critical thinking, self-assessment, self-control, self-directed learning, learning cycle, qualitative component, personal growth, intrinsic motivation, academic achievement.

РОЛЬ РЕФЛЕКСИИ В РАЗВИТИИ НАВЫКОВ НЕЗАВИСИМОГО ОБУЧЕНИЯ

Аннотация

Статья обсуждает важность рефлексии в образовательном процессе, её значительную роль в повышении эффективности образования, а также

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способность студентов высших учебных заведений организовывать своё обучение самостоятельно и развивать навыки самосовершенствования в процессе обучения. В статье основное внимание уделяется развитию ключевых компетенций, таких как независимое мышление, критический анализ, самоконтроль и управление временем.

Ключевые слова

критическое мышление, самооценка, самоконтроль, самостоятельное обучение, цикл обучения, качественный компонент, личностный рост, внутренняя мотивация, академическая успеваемость.

MUSTAQIL TA’LIM KO’NIKMALARINI RIVOJLANTIRISHDA AKS ETTIRISHNING O’RNI

Annotatsiya

Mazkur maqolada aks ettirishning ta’lim jarayonidagi o’rni, ta’limning samaradorligini oshirishda muhim ahamiyatga egaligi, oliy ta’lim muassasalarida talabalarga o’qishni mustaqil ravishda tashkil qila olish va o’qish jarayonida mustaqil ravishda o’z ustida ishlash ko’nikmalari haqida so’z boradi. Unda asosan **mustaqil fikrlash, tanqidiy tahlil qilish, o’z-o’zini nazorat qilish** va **vaqtni boshqarish** kabi muhim kompetensiyalarni rivojlantirishga urg’u berildi.

Kalit so’zlar

tanqidiy fikrlash, o’zini baholash, o’zini nazorat qilish, mustaqil o’rganish, o’rganish sikli, sifatli komponent, shaxsiy o’sish, ichki motivatsiya, akademik yutuq.

Introduction. The modern education system is undergoing processes of renewal in the context of globalization, digital technologies, and rapid changes. In higher education institutions, it is crucial not only to provide students with

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theoretical knowledge but also to develop their independent learning skills. Such skills are essential for students not only to achieve success in the learning process but also to become highly qualified specialists in their fields in the future. Therefore, the development of independent learning skills is important for ensuring a student's academic success as well as their overall personal development.

Independent learning fosters a student's self-management, the ability to expand their knowledge, critical thinking, and taking responsibility for their own learning. All of these are among the main objectives of higher education and are necessary for students to grow into independent and self-confident professionals in life. Students need to acquire skills to analyze their knowledge independently, assimilate study materials in a timely manner, and complete assigned tasks fully and qualitatively by managing their thought processes and exercising self-control. This, in turn, requires the development of independent thinking and critical analysis skills, which are fundamental competencies in higher education. The role of the teacher is extremely important in developing independent learning skills. The teacher not only teaches students lessons but also guides them in independent reading and thinking, conducting research, and analyzing information. The primary task of the teacher is to show students effective methods for assimilating knowledge and self-management. Additionally, the teacher's mentoring role is crucial for enhancing students' motivation, supporting them when they face challenges, and encouraging independent thinking.

Moreover, critical thinking and self-assessment processes are particularly significant in developing independent learning skills. Students should not limit themselves to merely reading the material; they need to deeply analyze it, make decisions, and evaluate their own activities. A student who has mastered critical thinking and self-assessment skills can effectively assimilate knowledge, successfully conduct research, and achieve success in their professional activities.

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Thus, special attention should be paid to developing independent learning skills among students in higher education institutions. This process will not only facilitate individual study activities but also contribute to students' social, moral, and professional growth. Therefore, organizing independent learning in higher education serves to develop high-level competencies among students and lays the foundation for their future success.

Methodology. This study employed a **mixed methods approach**, which integrates both qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis techniques. This approach was selected to allow for a comprehensive investigation of the phenomenon, as reflection—an inherently complex psychological and pedagogical process involved in developing independent learning skills—cannot be fully understood through a single method alone. The **qualitative component** helped explore the content and depth of students' reflective thinking, including their self-awareness, attitudes toward learning, and intrinsic motivation. The **quantitative component**, on the other hand, enabled the analysis of how reflection impacted students' academic outcomes through measurable, statistical indicators. For example**:** Students submitted weekly written reflections throughout their learning process, providing rich qualitative data. Additionally, final assessment tests were administered to gather quantitative data on their academic achievement, allowing for a statistical analysis of the relationship between reflection and learning outcomes.

Qualitative Research Methods

Reflective Journals: Students were asked to write weekly reflections on their learning experiences. To guide their writing, they were provided with the following prompts:

- What new knowledge or skill did I learn this week?
- How did this knowledge contribute to my personal development?

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- What challenges did I face, and how did I overcome them?
- What will I aim to improve in the coming week?

These reflective entries enabled the identification of students' attitudes toward independent learning, their self-perception, and strategies for personal growth. For example**:** One student identified issues with time management through reflection. As a result, they were supported with strategies for more effective scheduling and planning.

Semi-Structured Interviews: In-depth interviews were conducted with 15 students. The questions focused on how the reflection process influenced their learning motivation, self-assessment skills, and ability to make autonomous decisions. All interviews were recorded and later transcribed for analysis. **Assessment Analysis:** Students completed specially designed tests both before and after engaging in independent learning tasks. These tests were used to measure the impact of reflection on actual academic achievement. **Questionnaires:** A structured questionnaire consisting of 20 items was distributed to examine students' reflection habits, attitudes toward independent learning, self-regulation, and motivation. Responses were measured using a 5-point Likert scale.

The study sample included the following:

- **Total number of participants:** 60 students
- **Academic levels:** Second- and third-year undergraduate students
- **Fields of study:** Pedagogy, Philology, and Economics
- **Sampling method:** Voluntary participation via purposive sampling

Students were selected from various faculties to explore potential differences in reflective and independent learning practices across disciplines. For example, students in Philology were more expressive in their written reflections, often utilizing rich language to articulate their thoughts, while students in Economics

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tended to approach reflection more strategically, using it as a tool for planning and analysis.

The following tools were used to gather data for the study:

Reflective Portfolios: Each student submitted weekly written reflections over a 6-week period. All entries were coded and systematically archived for analysis. **Online Questionnaires:** Surveys were distributed via Google Forms and collected automatically, enabling efficient and convenient data gathering. **Face-to-Face Interviews:** Each interview lasted approximately 20–30 minutes, was audio-recorded with the respondent's consent, and later transcribed. Confidentiality was strictly maintained throughout the process. **Thematic Analysis:** Reflective journal entries and interview transcripts were analyzed to identify recurring themes. The most frequent themes included:

- Self-assessment
- Strategies for overcoming difficulties
- Intrinsic motivation
- Personal planning and time management
- Openness to change

Key phrases and ideas within the texts were coded and categorized under thematic clusters. This helped identify general trends and patterns in students' reflections. For example**:** A common issue noted in reflections was "poor time management," which emerged as a recurring and was considered a barrier to effective independent learning. Data from the questionnaires were analyzed to determine general trends in students' reflection habits, attitudes toward independent learning, and academic achievement. Mean values, variances, and percentages were calculated. A t-test was conducted to compare learning outcomes between the experimental group (students engaged in reflective learning) and the control group (students who studied without reflection). This analysis

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demonstrated that students who practiced reflection achieved higher academic results.

Analysis and results. The qualitative and quantitative analyses conducted throughout the study demonstrated that reflection plays a significant role in developing independent learning skills. Data collected through reflective journals, interviews, and surveys clearly revealed positive changes in students' self-awareness, intrinsic motivation, and attitudes toward the learning process.

Analysis of Reflective Writings

Weekly reflective journals written by students revealed that most participants actively engaged in self-assessment and critical thinking. They analyzed their learning behaviors realistically, acknowledged their weaknesses, and planned specific strategies to address these shortcomings in the future. In particular, students identified their lack of preparation for lessons and low participation during classes, and they outlined actionable steps to improve these areas. The reflective writings also revealed several common challenges faced during the independent learning process. Students frequently mentioned issues such as poor time management, difficulty concentrating, and excessive reliance on technology—especially the internet and social media. Despite these obstacles, students developed individualized strategies to address them, including planning, prioritization, and making responsible decisions. Moreover, the writings demonstrated students' growing intrinsic motivation, desire for self-improvement, and a positive attitude toward acquiring knowledge. Through the process of reflection, they not only critically analyzed their learning experiences but also developed skills in articulating their thoughts clearly and working on self-improvement.

Interview Analysis

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Semi-structured interviews provided a deeper understanding of students' attitudes toward reflection. The majority of students indicated that writing reflections increased their motivation to learn, enhanced their sense of responsibility toward coursework, and encouraged them to manage their time more consciously. Some students admitted that they initially approached the reflective writing tasks as formal assignments, but over time, they began to view them as beneficial tools for self-awareness and personal growth. Through reflective journaling, students were also able to monitor their learning processes, recognize problems, and actively seek solutions. This helped reposition them from passive recipients of information to active participants in their education—one of the core goals of independent learning.

Conclusion and recommendations. This study highlights the crucial influence of reflection on enhancing independent learning skills. Through analyzing reflective journals, interviews, and survey responses, it became clear that students improved their self-awareness, motivation, and approach to learning. They engaged in honest self-evaluation, recognizing their weaknesses and developing personal plans for improvement. Reflection encouraged students to take a more active role in managing their studies, preparing for classes, and participating in discussions. Common difficulties identified included challenges with time management, maintaining focus, and excessive use of digital devices. Nevertheless, the reflective process empowered students to acknowledge these obstacles and create tailored strategies to overcome them, fostering greater responsibility and autonomy. Students also noted that reflection helped deepen their understanding of material, sharpen their communication skills, and increase their motivation. Those who practiced reflection consistently achieved higher scores in final evaluations compared to those who did not, demonstrating the effectiveness of reflective learning in improving academic outcomes.

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Suggestions. Based on these results, the following suggestions are made for educators and institutions:

Integrating reflective assignments on a weekly or monthly basis within various subjects can help students critically analyze their learning experiences and achieve better comprehension .Providing educators with guidance and resources on how to facilitate reflective practices will help transform reflection into a purposeful educational method rather than a mere task. Since time constraints limit reflective activities, offering students training on managing time, setting priorities, and planning studies can help balance reflection with other academic duties.

Facilitating group discussions, online forums, or e-portfolios where students can share reflections encourages collaborative learning and enriches individual insights. Establishing criteria for assessing reflective skills can motivate students to engage with reflection more thoughtfully and consistently. Future research should explore how reflection supports independent learning across different fields, student groups, and educational levels, providing deeper understanding of its broader applicability.

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