

Independent Learning

HOW2



PINPOINT



Self-regulated learning refers to how students become masters of their own learning processes. It is not a mental ability or a performance skill but rather is the self-directed process.

Barry Zimmerman

Definition

Independent learning does not necessarily mean individual learning. It's about the skill and the will of learning without dependency on the teacher. This may involve individual work but also may occur with groups of

Development

Teachers can prepare students for independent learning by:

- encouraging predictions of scores in tests
- involving students in lesson planning
- building in reflection and extension
- setting peer and self assessment
- designing for free access to resources.
- giving choices
- setting group work
- setting own learning goals
- keeping personal learning logs.

Study skills

Study skills, or learn-to-learn, are necessary for successful independence in learning. Isolated instruction, devoid of real subject content, has a much lower effect than integrating study skills within subject content. Expect resistance, even some regression, from older students who have developed ingrained habits and fear any change — like adults.

Robert Marzano designs his programmes around three components of independent work.

Cognitive system

This domain concerns task-related skills such as note taking and summarising. Studies show students perform better with teacher-modelled notes and a rubric (criteria) with which to create their own notes. Least successful is to leave note taking to students unaided. The review of notes was found to have a higher impact on learning than the actual creation of them.

Metacognitive system

This domain concerns self-management, also known as self-regulation. This involves planning, monitoring and deciding which strategies to adopt. The top-ranking strategy in terms of effect size was *organising and transforming* which includes summarising and paraphrasing. It ranks highest, Hattie suggests, because it demands a more active approach to learning.

Self system

This domain concerns motivation and self-concept. Giving students increased control over their learning impacts their motivation more than actual learning outcomes. Carol Dweck's concept of Growth Mindset where learning and improvement rely on effort rather than a notion of talent is highly relevant. Related interventions on this topic can have dramatic positive effects.

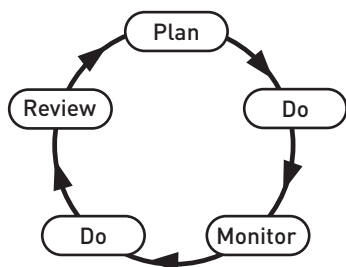
Process

Students work better with a structure. This simple cycle will help. Planning has the greatest effect size followed by the review. Stress going back and forth between stages.



We need to teach the skills and attitudes required for independent learning. They do not spring magically from maturation.

Geoff Petty



Skills

Independent learning requires that students:

- complete tasks for increasing amounts of time
- preview and skim materials before reading them in detail
- show persistence and determination
- transfer learning from one situation to another
- see mistakes as an integral part of learning
- summarise and take notes
- predict likely outcomes
- present learning to others
- set goals
- cooperate with others
- ask for help.

REFERENCES

Hattie, J. (2009) Visible Learning. Routledge

Petty, G. (2009) Teaching Today Nelson-Thornes