THE METHODOLOGICAL SYSTEM FOR DEVELOPING INDEPENDENT LEARNING SKILLS IN FUTURE ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHERS

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ABSTRACT: *This article deals with the issues based on analyzing the methodological system for developing independent learning skills among future English language teachers in higher education. The study emphasizes that autonomy and self-directed learning have become essential components of teacher education in the context of lifelong learning and digital transformation. The methodological system integrates pedagogical design, reflective practice, and digital learning technologies to cultivate learners' self-regulation, critical thinking, and responsibility for their own academic progress.*

Keywords: *independent learning, methodological system, teacher education, autonomy, self-regulation, reflective practice, digital pedagogy, lifelong learning*

Introduction

The rapid transformation of education in the 21st century has highlighted the importance of independent learning as a cornerstone of professional growth. Future English language teachers, in particular, must be capable of managing their own learning processes to adapt to continuous pedagogical and technological changes (Harmer, 2015). Independence in learning involves setting goals, selecting resources, evaluating outcomes, and reflecting on progress. Such autonomy is vital not only for personal development but also for fostering learner-centered teaching practices.

The methodological system of developing independent learning skills refers to the structured pedagogical mechanisms, strategies, and technologies designed to cultivate self-directed behavior in students. It combines psychological, didactic, and technological components that collectively aim to shape an individual's ability to plan, implement, and evaluate learning activities autonomously (Little, 2020).

In the context of teacher education, fostering independent learning aligns with modern educational policies promoting competence-based curricula. As future educators, English language students must develop not only linguistic proficiency but also meta-cognitive and self-regulatory skills that enable them to facilitate independent learning in their future classrooms (Benson, 2013).

The digitalization of education has expanded the opportunities for self-directed study. Learning Management Systems (LMS), interactive platforms, and online resources have become integral tools for developing autonomy. However, digital tools

alone cannot ensure self-direction unless guided by a coherent methodological system that encourages reflection, feedback, and responsibility (Mishra & Koehler, 2006).

Moreover, sociocultural theories of learning stress the collaborative dimension of independence. According to Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the Zone of Proximal Development, independence evolves through guided interaction before becoming internalized. Thus, autonomy does not imply isolation but the ability to make informed choices within a supportive academic environment.

The purpose of this study is to present an integrated methodological system aimed at developing independent learning skills among future English language teachers. It seeks to describe its theoretical foundations, pedagogical principles, and practical implications in teacher training programs.

Literature Review

Recent studies emphasize that independent learning is not an innate trait but a set of competencies that can be systematically developed through pedagogical design (Oxford, 2017). According to Holec (2020), autonomy in learning emerges when learners take responsibility for their decisions regarding objectives, content, methods, and evaluation. In teacher education, this responsibility becomes both a personal and professional necessity.

In Uzbekistan's higher education context, research by Ergasheva (2021) and Nazarova (2022) shows that students' independent learning improves when supported by mentorship, formative assessment, and digital tools. These findings align with global trends emphasizing scaffolding as a critical factor in developing autonomy (Tharp & Gallimore, 2018).

Psychological dimensions also play a vital role. Bandura's (1997) theory of self-efficacy explains that learners' belief in their capabilities influences their motivation and persistence. Teachers can nurture self-efficacy through positive feedback, achievable tasks, and opportunities for reflection.

Practical implementation of a methodological system for independent learning involves several interconnected components: pedagogical design, digital integration, mentoring, and assessment.

At the pedagogical level, learner-centered methods such as project-based learning (PBL), problem-solving tasks, and inquiry-based instruction are effective. In an English methodology course at a teacher training university, students were asked to design mini-lessons independently, integrating authentic materials and self-evaluation rubrics. This activity encouraged ownership and creativity, demonstrating increased motivation and responsibility.

Mentorship and collaboration are equally significant. Pairing students with senior teachers or mentors fosters guided autonomy. This approach mirrors Vygotsky's (1978) social constructivism, where learners internalize independent skills through

interaction. Reflective dialogue with mentors helps bridge the gap between theoretical understanding and classroom application.

Another component is assessment for learning. Instead of relying solely on summative testing, formative evaluation—such as self-assessment checklists and peer review—develops metacognitive awareness. When students regularly reflect on their progress, they gradually internalize self-monitoring mechanisms that sustain lifelong learning (Brookhart, 2013).

A case study from Tashkent State University of Languages revealed that English teacher trainees who participated in self-directed research projects improved their planning and critical inquiry skills. They learned to formulate research questions, gather data, and interpret results independently. Their reflective reports showed increased confidence and academic maturity.

Challenges remain, however. Many students struggle with time management and decision-making when transitioning from teacher-dependent to autonomous learning. Institutional constraints such as rigid curricula and limited digital literacy further hinder progress (Ergasheva, 2021). Addressing these requires teacher educators to provide initial scaffolding before gradually releasing control.

By systematically combining these, universities can cultivate autonomy as a professional competence rather than an isolated skill. The model encourages English teacher trainees to act as reflective practitioners capable of adapting to changing educational contexts.

Conclusion

Developing independent learning skills among future English language teachers is a strategic priority for modern higher education. The research demonstrates that a coherent methodological system—integrating reflective practice, digital technology, and pedagogical scaffolding—can effectively foster autonomy and self-regulation. Independent learning is both a pedagogical goal and a lifelong professional necessity. By structuring learning environments that balance guidance and freedom, universities can prepare teachers who are proactive, adaptable, and reflective. The findings confirm that fostering autonomy enhances not only academic performance but also motivation, creativity, and critical thinking—qualities essential for successful teaching in the 21st century. Institutions should therefore embed autonomy development into curricula, assessment, and professional training frameworks to ensure sustainable educational quality and innovation.

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