Individual differences

A seminar course for TEFL students

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Self-regulation and autonomy in language learning

The importance of this variable I.

- Self-regulation/autonomy is increasingly seen as a key variable in L2 learning in many foreign language learning contexts as classroom-centred instructive language teaching might not be able to provide sufficient input for students, therefore, taking responsibility and regulating the learning processes is needed for successful achievements.

The importance of this variable II.

- Macaro (2001): "One thing seems to be increasingly clear and that is that, across learning contexts, those learners who are proactive in their pursuit of language learning appear to learn best" (p. 264).

Definition

- Self-regulation is usually seen as an umbrella term employed to describe to what extent students are able to regulate, that is, manage and organize, their learning process and in what ways they are capable of taking responsibility for their own learning (Forgas, Baumeister & Tice 2009; Pintrich & De Groot, 1999; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2008).

Measurement I

- Control over students' thoughts, behaviours and learning environment as well as their motivation can be measured (Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Zimmerman, 2000)

Measurement II

- The cyclical process of self-regulation and possible affecting notions can be researched through Zimmerman's three-phase model (Zimmerman, 2000): we can answer questions like how students set goals and plan for the upcoming tasks in the Forethought Phase; in what ways students' self-control, task strategies, attention focus and performance monitoring can be described in the Performance Phase; and how the evaluation of the achievement is carried out and success or failure explained in the Self-reflection Phase.

Measurement III

- It can also be assumed that students employ a number of strategies to regulate their learning processes, and researchers can design studies to measure what strategies are used and in what ways learners help themselves with these strategies.

Control strategy use (Kuhl, 1985)

- Kuhl (1985) proposed six action-control strategies, three of which (attention, encoding, and information control) can be regarded as means of controlling cognition (Corno, 2001). Kuhl's incentive-escalation strategy is a means of controlling motivation, and his further two control strategies include emotional and environmental control.

Vocabulary learning

- Tseng, Dörnyei and Schmitt (2006) provided support for the validity of the five main types of control strategies for vocabulary learning in a foreign language: commitment control, which regulates goal commitment; metacognitive control, which helps learners maintain focus and concentration; satiation control, with the help of which boredom can be managed and alleviated; emotion control, which is used to manage emotions; and finally environmental control, which assists learners in creating an appropriate study environment.

Self-regulating academic writing I.

- Csizér & Tankó (in press): first-year university students taking academic writing course. Their self-reported control strategy use was measured on a five-point scale

Scale	M	St. dev.
Metacognitive control	3.72	.85
Emotional control	3.64	.78
Environmental control	3.63	.71
Satiation control	3.49	.80
Commitment control	3.36	.77

Self-regulating academic writing II.

Scales	Mean difference	t value	sig
Satiation control and emotional control	-.14	-2.57	.011
Satiation control and metacognitive control	-.22	-4.36	<.001
Commitment control and satiation control	-.14	-2.39	.018
Commitment control and emotional control	-.28	-5.54	<.001
Commitment control and environmental control	-.27	-3.59	<.001
Commitment control and metacognitive control	-.36	-7.108	<.001

Self-regulating academic writing III.

	Ideal L2 self	Ought-to L2 self	Language learning experience	Motivated learning behavior	Writing anxiety	Self-efficacy
Group 1 (highest control)	4.40	3.39	3.97	4.59	2.49	4.13
Group 2	4.17	3.33	3.96	4.25	2.87	3.68
Group 3 (lowest control)	4.11	3.18	3.82	3.79	3.31	3.36
F	3.247	1.241	.384	14.567	32.305	20.817
P	.041	.291	.682	<.001	<.001	<.001
Post-hoc comparison [a]: Duncan	1,2>2,3	--	--	1>2>3	1<2<3*	1>2>3

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