

A Study on Self-Directed Learning Readiness of EFL Students in Korea

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Abstract

The present study is aimed at investigating on the Self-Directed Learning Readiness (SDLR) of College EFL students in Korea. For the study, 377 students were asked to complete the self-directed learning readiness scale (SDLRS) (Guglinoms, 1977) and collected data were analyzed in terms of 7 factors; gender, age, nationality, major, English proficiency level, GPA and a participation in learning strategy training program. SDLRS is a questionnaire with Likert-type items, asking attitudes, skills and characteristics that comprise an individual's current level of readiness to manage his or her learning. According to the manual of SDLRS, the scale indicates the below average score for SDLR for the general adult population is between 58 to 201, the average score for SDL readiness is between 202 to 226 points, and the above average score for SDLR is 227 to 290. In the result, participants reported the below average point, which indicates they have a lack of problem solving ability, creativity and change. It is implied in the language learning classroom that learners with below average points prefer very structured learning options such as lecture and traditional classroom settings.

Keywords

Self-Directed Learning Readiness (SDLR), learner-centered learning, structured learning

Introduction

Self-Directed Learning (SDL) has theoretical supports from behaviorism and humanistic psychology (Zimmerman, 1989), thus it is believed that SDL is facilitated by both external reinforcement and internal motivation. For

several decades, SDL has been widely used in adult education for learners to foster individual responsibility and work force development (Braman, 1998). SDL is also accepted in the area of pedagogy to stress the social construction of knowledge and the social context of learning. According to Knowles (1975), the process of learning is crucial to SDL development, since learners with high levels of SDL are more likely to initiate planning and setting a goal of instruction and participate in the institutional process and assessment of performance. Accordingly, it is assured that there's an intertwined relation between SDLR and overall learning performance, including language learning. The research questions are as follows:

1. What are the levels of Self-Directed Learning Readiness of college learners?
2. What are the factors to decide Self-Directed Learning Readiness of college learners?

1 Findings and Discussion

1.1 Levels of Self-Directed Learning

The Table 1 shows that most of participants (68.2%) reported that they are in the below average group, which indicates that they have a lack of problem solving ability, creativity and change.

Table 1: Levels of SDLR

SDLR*	N (%)	M	Max	Min
1	16(4.2)	233	227	254
2	104(27.6)	209	202	225
3	257(68.2)	184	5.22	201

Note: 1=above average group (227~290 points)

2=average group (202~226 points) and 3=below average group (58~201 points)

1.2 Factors to Determine SDLR

The present study analyzed 7 factors to determine SDLR which are gender, age, nationality, major, English proficiency level, GPA and participation in learning strategy training program and found the significant difference from some factors and they are described in the following Tables.

Table 2: A Comparison of Gender

	N	SDLR	t	p
M	136	195	1.897	.059
F	241	192		

*p<.10

Table 3: A Comparison of Major

	N	SDLR	F	p
Tourism	152	192	15.784	.000
English	97	201		
General Studies	128	188		

*p<.001

Table 4: A Comparison of English Proficiency Level

	N	SDLR	F	p
High	36	208	22.571	.000
Intermediate	155	195		
Lower	186	188		

*p<.001

Table 5: A Comparison of GPA

	N	SDLR	F	p
Advanced	60	198	9.322	.000
Intermediate	191	194		
Lower	80	186		

*p<.001

Table 6: A Comparison of Participation in Learning Strategy Training

	N	SDLR	t	p
Y	101	200	4.525	.000
N	276	190		

*p<.001

1.3 Discussions

In the present study, most students reported the below average level of SDLR and their levels of SDLR are significantly related to gender, majors, English proficiency level, GPA and a participation in learning strategy programs.

Knowles (1975), suggested the course guides for teachers in terms of students' level of SDLR and for teachers with students with SDLR Level 1(below average point) should provide choices or options for setting goals and objectives of class, diagnose, and then provide several options for assessments of entry behaviors. It also suggests that during the instructional process teachers for Level 1 student provide options for students to employ independently at his or her own pace. Lastly, teachers should relate evaluation to objectives and give students opportunity to react or respond.

2 Conclusion

The study found that participants showed the below average point and preferred very structured learning option such as lecture and traditional classroom settings. Thus, to increase the level of SDLR in language learning classroom, the study suggests that before providing more collaborative, learner-centered and problem-solving based learning methods, which have been focused during the CLT approach, teachers are encouraged to diagnose their learners whether they are ready to participate in those language learning methods.

3 References and appendices

3.1 References

References

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