

## On the Cultivation of College English Learners' Autonomous Learning Ability in the Internet Age

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### Abstract

How to cultivate and improve college students' ability of autonomous learning English plays a very important role in changing their learning style, developing their practical and innovative spirit and enhancing their comprehensive language application ability. In the information age how to make the most of the Internet education and arouse students' potential autonomous learning ability has become a major research project. According to the theory of constructivism, we suggest that teachers should stimulate learners' autonomous learning motivation by using the network technology scientifically, expand learners' autonomous learning space by changing the learning mode and create learners' autonomous learning environment by reforming the evaluation means. Then we can explore college English learners' autonomous learning ability in the Internet age.

**Key words:** College English; Autonomous learning ability; Internet

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

In the era of global economic integration, the internationalization of science and technology, and the informatization of knowledge economy, people have to deal with a lot of information in responding to the rapidly changing environment. The education received in

schools alone is not enough for life. People must study all their life, develop and improve themselves constantly for adapting to the future society. Learning to learn has become the need of people's survival and development in the new century. In order to enable students to continuously acquire new knowledge in their life and meet the requirements of information and learning society, school education must take students' development as its purpose, highlight students' subject status, awaken students' subject consciousness, cultivate students' subject ability and shape students' subject personality. Therefore, modern college students must establish the awareness of self-learning, enhance the ability of independent learning, and form the ability of lifelong learning and sustainable development.

The teaching objective of College English is "In order to make students use English properly and effectively in their study, life and future work and meet the requirements of international, social, school and personal development, it is necessary to cultivate students' English application ability, enhance cross-cultural communication awareness and communication ability, develop autonomous learning ability, improve comprehensive cultural literacy, foster humanistic spirit and critical thinking ability". In the information age with network as the core, how to use network technology scientifically and reasonably, give full play to the advantages of network, cultivate students' learning habits of acquiring knowledge and solving problems independently, and stimulate students' potential autonomous learning ability has become an important topic in the current college English teaching reform.

### 2. CONSTRUCTIVISM LEARNING THEORY

Constructivism originated from cognitivism (Bruner, 1966) in the 1960s. The learning theory of constructivism has the following basic characteristics:

(1) Active learning. Constructivism emphasizes the positive role of learners in learning activities. Learners are active knowledge explorers.

(2) Constructive learning. In the process of inquiry and learning, learners always understand the world in their own way on the basis of existing knowledge, so as to obtain knowledge with unique significance.

(3) Cumulative learning. Any learning is based on previous learning, and the accumulation of knowledge is an inevitable process. However, it is not a simple accumulation of knowledge, but the deepening, breakthrough, transcendence and qualitative change of original knowledge.

(4) Goal-directed learning. In constructivist learning, the reason why learners take the initiative is that they feel the existence of problems and set goals for themselves. Obviously, these goals are also parts of learners' constructive learning.

(5) Reflective learning. Combined with their own prior knowledge, learners can produce the task of inquiry in the process of learning because they carry out necessary diagnosis and reflection on their own learning, such as self-monitoring, self-examination and self-analysis.

It can be seen that Constructivism Learning Theory emphasizes learning as the center. Students are the main body of learning and the active constructors of knowledge. According to their original knowledge and experience background, students actively choose the external information and then process, deal with them. The process of meaning construction is completed through active exploration, active search, discovery and analysis of relevant information resources, namely "autonomous learning" (Khotimah, 2019). The application of this new learning mode can provide students with full opportunities for autonomous learning, so that students can find the most suitable learning resources, optimize their learning methods, give full play to their learning potential, form effective learning strategies, improve their ability of autonomous learning, and develop into lifelong learners who are good at learning.

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### 3. THE CULTIVATION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS' ENGLISH AUTONOMOUS LEARNING ABILITY IN NETWORK ENVIRONMENT

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#### 3.1 Stimulating College Students' Motivation of Autonomous Learning English by Using the Network Technology

All learning behaviors are caused by motivation, and learners' motivation is the motive force of active learning. According to the origin of learners' motivation, Jane Arnold (Arnold, 2019) and other scholars divide

motivation into external motivation and internal motivation. The former is called instrumental motivation, which is to get some reward or avoid some punishment through learning, only involving things outside of learning activities; the latter is called integrative motivation, which refers to taking learning itself as a reward. Crookes and Schmidt (Crookes, 1991) believe that if learners can effectively commit themselves to learning tasks and persevere, without constant encouragement and supervision, they can be said to have internal learning motivation. Motivation and interest are closely related. As a kind of conscious motivation and cognitive tendency, interest has the function of orientation, promotion and motivation for students' autonomous learning. In foreign language learning, interest is the motivation to stimulate students' thirst for knowledge, promote their exploration and learning, and acquire language knowledge and skills. Students' autonomous learning is a process of psychological activities. Only by activating students' internal desire for autonomous learning, can externally teaching influence be effective.

Objectively, there are individual differences in students' learning. Different students have different cognitive basis, emotional preparation and learning ability when learning the same content, which determines that different students have different learning speed, time and help for the same content and task. The rich and colorful network world presents students with unlimited learning resources in the form of visualization, vividness and interest. It creates space for students to publicize their personality and creates a new situation for students to learn English. According to their respective tasks, students read all kinds of relevant English materials on the Internet, listen to pure English recordings, enjoy movies with English explanations, and contact with diversified English materials, which effectively meet students' desire to realize themselves, fully mobilize students' enthusiasm for autonomous learning English, activate students' internal learning motivation. Students devote themselves to autonomous learning English with interest and perseverance. In the network multimedia environment, with the help of advanced network technology, students can choose their own content, order and time according to their own interests and English level, so as to realize personalized English learning, stimulate their desire to use language for English communication. Students find solutions to problems in their active participation, which provides continuous support for their continuous research and development, broadens their horizons and develops their awareness of cross-cultural communication. So we can further promote students to form positive learning motivation, good learning attitude and correct language learning and communication strategies, and cultivate students' innovative spirit and practical ability.

### **3.2 Expanding the Space for College Students to Learn English Autonomously by Changing the Learning Mode**

The traditional learning mode centers on teachers' teaching by precept and example, but the autonomous learning focuses on learners' self-management, monitoring, adjustment and evaluation. Learning is the responsibility of learners themselves. Students are the main body of learning activities, and teachers are only the organizers, guides and cooperators of learning activities. We should fully mobilize students' self-development awareness, strengthen the internalization and innovation process for students to learn English, give students the opportunity of autonomous learning, give students the tools of autonomous learning, create time and space for their independent development, and provide students broad time and space for students to play their initiative and creativity. Internet is the largest knowledge base and database in the world. It has the most abundant information resources. It is suitable for students to carry out "independent discovery, independent exploration" English learning (Robertson 1991). It also provides fertile soil for the development of students' divergent thinking, creative thinking and innovative ability. The unique means of information technology, such as hypertext reading, human-computer interaction, network interaction, resource sharing, screen broadcast, bring students multi sensory stimulation, new learning experience, meet the needs of students' personalized learning English, and also provide effective ways and tools for students to carry out autonomous learning. In the independent, conscious and free activities, students learn English actively and inquisitively. They have time and opportunity to choose, decide, think, experience, comprehend, create and apply. Constructivism learning theory holds that learning is a process in which learners actively construct internal psychological representation, not to transfer knowledge to memory, but to construct new understanding based on existing experience through interaction with the outside world. In order to satisfy the students' thirst for knowledge, teachers should find ways to open up new English learning space, organically combine text materials and electronic materials with the help of network technology, pay attention to the organic combination of in-class and out-of-class knowledge, provide students with more conditions for autonomous learning English, and let students enjoy the fun of success in autonomous exploration and improve the ability to explore.

Teaching and learning based on the network environment can fully achieve the teaching goal of autonomous learning and meet the needs of different levels of students. It not only changes the way that students only accept the language knowledge taught by teachers, but also constructs an open learning environment for students and provides more ways to acquire language

knowledge. Teachers encourage students to apply the knowledge they have learned to practice, and construct an open and non-linear information resource database through hypermedia technology, so that students can use learning materials at any time, and then they can master the autonomy of English learning, the right to participate comprehensively and to choose teaching activities. This is undoubtedly conducive to the cultivation of students' subjective consciousness and the all-round development of their personality. The process of students' browsing a large number of web pages, querying and collecting online information to acquire new knowledge is a process from passive acceptance of knowledge to active learning. On the Internet, students can find the content related to the text, understand the key and difficult points of the text, and download the demonstration materials and guidance materials of the relevant teaching materials. Through the study of these materials, students can better understand what teachers teach in class. Nowadays, we should make full use of modern educational technology, develop English teaching resources, expand students' learning channels, improve students' learning methods and improve students' learning efficiency.

### **3.3 Creating an Environment for College Students to Learn English Autonomously by Reforming the Evaluation Means**

From the current education situation, it is still the score to measure the level of a student's ability. As time passes, students will rely on the knowledge taught by teachers in class, and also be satisfied with the mechanical way of learning. Therefore, it is necessary to change the traditional and single evaluation method and adopt multiple evaluation methods. The content of evaluation should be changed, and teachers should evaluate from the perspectives of "information ability", "autonomous learning ability", "collaborative inquiry ability" and "knowledge construction ability" (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman, 2010). The way of evaluation should be reformed, and teachers should put forward enlightening and constructive opinions to students instead of making conclusions as experts. The emphasis is on process evaluation, and teachers should pay attention to students' learning process. Proper, timely and appropriate evaluation should be used to guide and control students' autonomous learning. Students should also learn to evaluate and reflect, and cultivate their awareness of self-evaluation, which is an important means to improve their ability of self-regulation. Self monitoring and self-evaluation is a learning strategy that foreign language learners must acquire, and it is also a high embodiment of foreign language learners' autonomous learning consciousness. There is a close relationship between learners' autonomous learning ability and learners' self-evaluation ability, because self-evaluation can make learners be responsible for their own learning progress,

evaluate and reflect on their own learning behavior and learning process, analyze and evaluate whether the use of time resources is reasonable, how the learning progress is. Students can make a comprehensive evaluation of their own learning objectives, learning attitudes and learning methods in a period of time. They can actively find problems, take timely measures to solve problems, constantly adjust the acquisition process, establish new learning objectives, so that they can obtain greater learning motivation.

By adopting reasonable and multi-element teaching evaluation methods teachers can create an environment atmosphere conducive to the cultivation of students' autonomous learning ability. Through the evaluation of students' learning emotional attitude, we can develop students' interest in learning English. Through the evaluation of students' participation ability, we can develop students' English communication awareness and communication ability. In order to promote the sustainable development of the ability of language use, it is necessary to strengthen the students' sense of achievement, heighten their self-confidence, develop their sense of cooperation, enhance their sense of participation, and improve their language communication ability. Students can timely and effectively control their learning process, constantly improve their learning methods, and develop their ability of autonomous learning.

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#### 4. CONCLUSION

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Autonomous learning ability is a comprehensive ability that learners show in their learning activities. With this ability, learners have a strong desire to know. They can reasonably arrange their own learning activities, have the spirit of hard study and evaluate their learning effect scientifically. They are no longer the passive machine to accept knowledge, but the master of learning who can actively explore knowledge, dare to question and develop their personality with scientific methods. With the rapid development of modern information technology, the application of network technology in college English education is increasingly extensive and in-depth, which greatly expands the time and space limit of education. In the teaching process, students' initiative and creativity can be fully exerted. The freedom of students' learning and selection is greatly improved. Therefore, it is possible

to learn according to their needs and teach students in accordance with their aptitude. We can create the most ideal teaching environment for the cultivation of students' innovation ability and information ability. Such an environment is essential for the process of creating new college English teaching activities. However, the cultivation of autonomous learning ability is a gradual and dynamic process. Teachers should pay attention to guide students to treat various information correctly, and cultivate students' ability to identify authenticity and responsible use of information technology in vast information resources.

As a part of college English curriculum reform, cultivating and improving students' autonomous learning ability plays a very important role in changing students' learning style, developing students' practical and innovative spirit and enhancing students' comprehensive language application ability. It is the need of social development, the need of developing foreign language skills and the need of meeting students' personality differences. The cultivation of students' autonomous learning ability is closely related to learning motivation, learning attitude, learning strategies, learning psychological needs and personal concepts. Using network resources to cultivate students' autonomous learning ability will become one of the important channels for students to construct knowledge, improve skills, activate thinking, show personality, develop mind and broaden vision.

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