
More and Less Structured Self - Learning Methods

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ABSTRACT:

Each and every one of us wants to learn many things in the world by our own effort. It is our desire to show our uniqueness by learning ourselves. The rate of learning depends upon the capability of the individual. According to the IQ (Intelligent Quotient) level of the students they are categorized into slow learners, average learners, and fast learners and under achievers. So, the constructed teaching methods are not suitable for all the students. This is because; when they enter higher education the rate of learning will be according to their needs, interest and individual difference. So it is said that self-learning plays a vital role now a days. It should be developed for all learners where the teaching strategies failed to meet the various needs of individual learners.

This paper discusses the features of Self-learning, methods of self-learning and its benefits. It also highlights the more structured and less structured Self-learning methods.

Keywords: PSI, CAI and IQ.

INTRODUCTION

The term self-learning is otherwise called as 'Individualized instruction', 'learner controlled instruction' and 'autonomous learning'. It does not mean that learning is independent. In order to clarify the student's doubts it needs the help of the tutor wherever necessary. Students need not work in isolation from their peers. Sometimes self-learning may be in groups. To make this learning process effective, it is essential for a tutor to have the conceptual knowledge of self learning approach and also the design of self-learning modules and materials. It progresses some special features such as which are given below.

- a) Learning is emphasized rather than teaching
- b) Individual differences of the learner can be recognized
- c) Students can become an active participant
- d)

CHARACTERISTICS OF SELF - LEARNING

- a) The learner can become a critical thinker.
- b) Self-reliance and communicative skills can be enhanced by learning of their own.

- c) Self-discipline among the students can be promoted through Self-learning.
- d) Excitement, enjoyment and rewarding are the benefits of Self-learning.
- e) Self-learning is the wave of the future now that so much information is available at our fingertips
- f) Self-learning allows the learner to go as deeply into a subject and interact with the subject matter as deeply as he/she would like to go

KINDS OF SELF – LEARNING METHODS

Self-learning methods which are framed for the learners are of various kinds. Some of them are more structured and some of them are less structured. The following are the self-learning methods which are explained in this article.

- a) **Programmed Instruction**
 - Linear style
 - Branching Style
- b) Personalized system of instruction
- c) Computer assisted instruction
- d) Project work

a) Programmed instruction

Education and Experience gives modification in behavior. Behaviour is learned only when it is reinforced. It is proved by the theory of operant conditioning by B.F Skinner. He demonstrated his theory of learning by the simple experiment of putting a hungry rat in a box. When the rat after fretting about, presses a lever accidentally, food is released. Every time rat does this, it gets food. After several repetitions, the rat learns that if he is hungry, he can get food after pressing the lever and he goes straight to the lever, presses it and gets food. In other words food reinforces the rat's activity of pressing the lever. If reward is withheld repeatedly, the behavior extinguishes.

After conducting an extensive research on rats and pigeons he framed this theory. He inserted that learning action should be followed by a pleasurable event such as praise, food and attention.

So that the correct responses should be awarded and the incorrect responses should be punished. It is recommended that the punishment should be kept minimum so that there was no danger of developing a negative attitude towards the learning activity.

This programmed instruction is developed by applying the principles of the theory, operant conditioning. Linear and Branching are the styles of programmed instruction. According to the Linear style the subject matter is broken into small pieces of information and is presented in a logical sequence of small steps. After going through every step the learner has to answer the questions which are given at the end of each step. The feedback is given in the form of correct answer in the next step. But according to the style of branching the errors committed by the students are used to direct them to an appropriate explanation or remedial measures. Mostly multiple choice and reason out questions are asked in all segments.

b) Personalized system of instruction

Personalized system of instruction is also known as Keller plan and is widely used all over the world. Instructions are designed according to the need and ability of the students. It allows the students to move through course material at his/her own pace.

SPECIAL FEATURES OF PSI (PERSONALIZED SYSTEM OF INSTRUCTION)

- a) Printed study materials are used for communication
- b) Stimulation and motivation on students are done by few lectures
- c) For evaluating student's attainment it uses tutors.

In PSI, the student is given a prepared assignment included with questions and exercises. They are instructed to how to read and what to read. At a time he/she has to learn only one unit. If he/she faces any difficulty during learning remedial measures are given by the tutor. After completing the whole task he/she will come to the tutor. By conducting short quiz or writing test student's attainment will be evaluated. Student should not be punished for committing errors and for securing low marks. Because he /she learns at his/ her own rate. Research evidences shows that PSI facilitates better performance among the Self- learning methods.

c) Computer assisted Instruction

Computer is the most important contribution of modern technology for learning activities. It can control and manage a wide variety of learning materials and can simultaneously cope with learning requirements of many individuals. Computer assisted instruction is in a sense, an extension of programmed learning material and the personalized system of instruction.

In CAI (Computer Assisted Instruction), as the lessons are programmed and stored in the system, there is flow of information and interaction between the computer and the student. The student communicates directly with the computer and puts questions. With the help of the keyboard he/she feeds answers into it and the computer provides feedback to the learner according to his/her performance.

Various instructional modes utilized by the computer for teaching – learning purpose are :

i. Drill and practice	ii. Tutorial mode	iii. Gaming Mode
The Computer allows the students to proceed further only when mastery has been achieved by him/her	Information is presented in small steps followed by a question. The student's response is analyzed by the computer and appropriate feedback is given	In gaming mode teaching can be imported through a play way method

d) Project work

Scheme or design is the dictionary meaning of project work. Certain assignments demand that students work on them for a longer period which are called project work. Through project works students get experiential learning and can plan, observe, analyze and synthesize. It tends to develop self – learning habits in the students and provides real- life experiences to them.

In schools and colleges assignments are given to the students for the purpose of reporting the experience (or) curriculum they learnt. The time duration given may be one (or) two weeks to prepare the report. So that the students can have the opportunity to learn at their own pace and time. It is called 'Project Method' which is a less structured self – learning method.

Project work has some specific aims such as knowledge, skills and personality attributes. Thus

- a) Knowing the topic
- b) Skill for independent and group work
- c) Skill for communication
- d) Critical, analytical and creative thinking
- e) Social sensitivity

are developed through this method.

TYPES OF PROJECT WORK:

- a) **Laboratory work:** For Science and Science related Subjects such project work is carried out. Laboratory work involves skills of manipulation, organization, experimentation and interpretation.
- b) **Field work:** Community project, physical and social science subjects come under field work. Visiting a nearby factory, visiting to a nearby slum and organizing a literacy campaign in the community etc., are some examples of field work.

- c) **Library work:** Though the learners are not habituated to library work in schools, the tutor can encourage them for it by assigning library projects. It may be conducted in two ways.
- a) After introducing and providing necessary information about the topic, the learners has to be asked to go through the relevant books concern the topic and develop a report on their work.
 - b) A small report has to be prepared by the learners on the basis of which the tutor can hold discussion with them. The relevant books on the topic have to be told by the tutor and can be taken by the learners.

CONCLUSION:

To conclude, this article mainly focuses on learner controlled instruction in which the instructional activity is controlled more by the students than the teacher. Before assigning students to work independently, the teacher has to provide necessary guidance to ensure that they are prepared to work on their own. Learner – controlled instruction gives the student greater role in the teaching – learning activity.

To understand reading text the term Self - learning is required. This article provides us an overview of methods through which the student can develop the habit of self-learning. Hence, instructional activity is called individualized instruction or self-learning.

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