

STUDENT PERCEPTION OF INDEPENDENT STUDY TASKS ON ESP CLASSES IN THE UNIVERSITY OF WORLD ECONOMY AND DIPLOMACY

Batirova Ma'rifat Xomidovna

Independent researcher,

Osiyo International University, Bukhara.

mkhbatirova@gmail.com

Abstract. This article is based on a small research conducted in the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, Tashkent to analyze independent education in ESP classes. The article includes an analysis of student opinions, recommendations, and conclusions on the effective organization of independent education.

Keywords: ESP, independent learning, independent study tasks, students' perception

Introduction. On October 8, 2019, the head of our state signed the resolution "On approval of the Concept for the Development of the Higher Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030". This important program document aimed at including at least 10 higher education institutions in the Republic in the academic rankings of the first 1000 higher education institutions of internationally recognized organizations (Quacquarelli Symonds World University Rankings, Times Higher Education or Academic Ranking of World Universities). In addition, it was planned to gradually transition the educational process in higher education institutions to the credit-module system. Currently, as of 2024, the Ministry of Higher Education, Science and Innovation of Uzbekistan reported that a total of 48 higher education institutions from Uzbekistan had received "reporter" status. This status is given to

educational institutions that have provided information for inclusion in the rating, but have agreed to be included in the list as "reporters" because they do not meet the eligibility criteria.

In conclusion, it can be said that there are still many reforms that need to be implemented in the higher education sector of the republic. In particular, one of the fundamental tasks is to improve the credit module system to bring it to a level that meets international standards. The main emphasis in this system is on increasing the share of independent learning in the educational process. It is no exaggeration to say that the organization of independent learning has caused several problems in the management of higher educational institutions, teachers, and students since the introduction of the credit module system.

Some of the following problems are listed as the main problems of independent learning: motivation problems, self-management problems, and cooperation problems (Ganiyev 2023, p.291). Students can be motivated to learn independently when they feel a sense of purpose, have independence, and set meaningful goals. Students can be motivated to learn when they have clear, achievable, and challenging goals. A sense of purpose, when students understand why they are learning something, they are more motivated and take responsibility for their learning. They can also set goals for themselves and enjoy the learning process. Therefore, it is necessary to help students understand what the general or specific purpose of independent learning is and to give them the right direction. The second problem: is autonomy that is, giving students choices about what to prioritize or what to study, helps them control themselves and motivates them to learn.

The specific features of the organization of independent learning of students and the study of students' opinions on this issue will help to organize the educational process more effectively. While modern education prefers to transfer the main role from the teacher to the student, it requires the direct participation of students in

organizing the educational process, developing curricula, forming course syllabi, and designing tasks.

To study the general opinions of students about independent learning, a survey was conducted among first-year students of the Faculty of Economics of the University of World Economics and Diplomacy (Tashkent). The purpose of this experiment was to study the independent learning tasks that have been assigned to students for several years and their effectiveness. It can be said that the students actively participated in this survey. The survey was anonymous so that the research subjects could objectively express their opinions. 47 C1 level students participated in the survey and answered the following questions via an online questionnaire:

1. What is your general impression of the tasks set for independent learning?
2. Is it appropriate to assign 4-5 large-scale tasks per semester?
3. Is the 20% of points allocated for completing independent learning tasks enough?
4. Were you satisfied with the feedback given by the teacher during the tasks?
5. How would you rate the teacher's support in completing the tasks?
6. Do you think that students were given enough instructions during the completion of complex tasks?
7. What types of tasks did students complete willingly?
8. Did the time and effort spent on independent learning justify themselves? Did these tasks help you in learning the language?
9. Did you allow plagiarism when completing the tasks?
10. Share your thoughts on the process of organizing independent learning and the tasks.

The results of the survey show that the students' overall impressions of the independent learning process and the tasks they completed were positive. 80.9% of students said that the tasks were appropriate for their language proficiency level, and

12% of students noted that the tasks were easy for them. The statistics on the attractiveness of the designed tasks also showed a positive result. 78.7% of the respondents considered the tasks interesting, while only 8.5% of students rated them as boring.

| <i>IL tasks are:</i> | 100 |
|-----------------------------------------------|-------------|
| (47) | |
| <i>Rather difficult</i> | 6,3 |
| <i>Quite easy</i> | 12,8 |
| <i>Appropriate to my level</i> | 80,9 |
| <i>Dull</i> | 12,8 |
| <i>Engaging</i> | 78,7 |
| <i>Not very much engaging</i> | 8,5 |
| <i>Help to develop language skills</i> | 55,3 |
| <i>Could be better organized</i> | 29,8 |
| <i>Not very much helpful</i> | 14,9 |

Since most of the tasks require a complex approach and at the end of the task, speaking or writing skills play a decisive role, it is natural that they will be difficult for some students. Although all the students in the groups are at the C1-B2+ level, speaking and writing skills are difficult for most students. As we have already noted, one of the main problems in independent learning is the correct distribution of time and its proper use. Past studies point out that during the learning process, independent study tasks like PBL learners often face difficulties in planning appropriate time-management strategies for their project (Thomas 2000) that may negatively impact their performance. The fact that many students cannot achieve good results in completing tasks in various subjects is a reflection of this problem in the process.

When asked about the points allocated to independent learning and the scope of tasks in the questionnaire, the majority of students (61.7%) believe that the number of tasks given is chosen correctly. When considering the points allocated to tasks, almost 32% of students noted that the points were less than the scope of the task, while more than 50% considered the ratio of points to tasks to be correct.

In the process of completing independent learning tasks, students can develop self-management skills by managing their own time, organizing their studies, and effectively processing information. However, there is still a great need among students to develop the skills of working autonomously without the help and guidance of a teacher. The role of the teacher in the educational process is undoubtedly important. Teachers can help students learn independently by:

- Promoting a sense of purpose
- Giving students choices
- Helping students set goals
- Providing and supporting systematic organization
- Showing students ways to categorize and sort information
- Involving students in lesson planning.

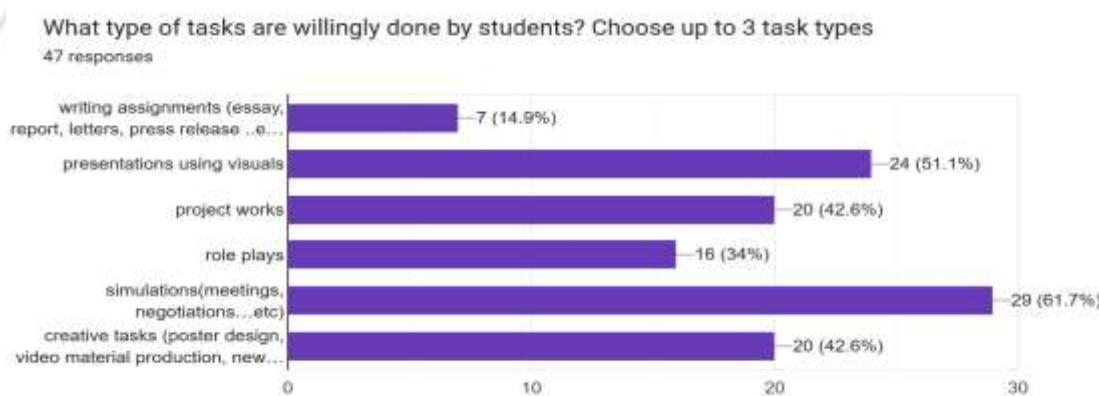
Students who have independent learning skills have higher self-esteem, work to higher standards, and develop skills that help them learn. The student's opinions on the role of the teacher in the independent learning process in the questionnaire show that they still believe that the teacher should be at the center of learning and should be a supporter at every stage of learning, guiding the student. 68% of students considered the teacher's support to be satisfactory, and about 30% of students noted that more support was needed and that the teacher's participation was not sufficient when given complex tasks. A third of those who participated in the survey said that they had difficulty understanding the task instructions.

Almost 75% of students positively assessed the feedback provided by the teacher after completing the tasks, while about 15% said that this feedback was not

constructive enough. Feedback from the teacher is given during the task assessment process and at the end of the assessment and serves to show the extent to which the student has completed the task, his achievements, and shortcomings. In addition, it serves to eliminate existing and potential shortcomings in the performance of subsequent tasks.

Since independent learning is a relatively new approach in our education system, it is natural that it poses several difficulties not only for students but also for teachers. In particular, the correct formulation, organization, and assessment of tasks intended for independent learning require a high level of skills and qualifications from teachers. Properly selected tasks allow for an accurate assessment of student's knowledge and skills and the quality of education.

The survey revealed that students prefer tasks that require a comprehensive approach to the types of tasks given.

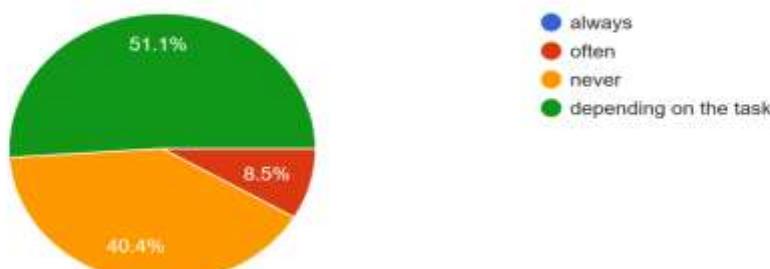


Almost 30% of students chose meetings, negotiations, debates, and court simulations as the best tasks. Next in line were presentations project work and creative tasks. Although written work is one of the easiest tasks to complete, only 7% of students chose this type of task.

Another problem that teachers face in the process of independent learning is the problem of plagiarism. Plagiarism is often observed when students complete tasks outside the classroom. Especially in the era of advanced technologies, the presence of

the Internet and artificial intelligence complicates this situation even more. When analyzing the students' answers to the question about plagiarism, the following results were observed:

How often do you plagiarize while preparing for IL tasks?
47 responses



Since the survey was conducted anonymously, likely, that students answered objectively and truthfully. The encouraging thing is that more than 40% of students said that they never cheat, while more than 8% said that they often cheat. It is noteworthy that more than half of the students who participated in the survey said that the use of plagiarism depends on the type of task. From this, it can be concluded that one of the effective ways to prevent plagiarism is to choose the right tasks and create opportunities for students to work creatively.

The last section of the survey was devoted to students' feedback, where they were asked about the process of organizing independent learning, their reactions to independent learning tasks, and their suggestions. 40% of students wrote that they were satisfied with the process of independent learning and did not encounter any problems. In this section, many students expressed their opinions about various problems in working in groups, including the method of dividing into groups.

-Sometimes when working in groups it is difficult to gather everyone and make them contribute to the project. I would like to suggest more role playing in education process because not only does it help students learn and really get the situation, but also it fosters the collaboration between students.

-If the IL task is group work, I think the teacher should think about the ways of executing it such that every member will have to participate, I mean there should be no way for a member to exclude himself/herself and still get the same mark as his/her groupmates, who actually worked it would be nice if IL tasks included debates and competitive tasks

From the above suggestion, it can be concluded that the student does not have enough experience and skills in working in a group. By encouraging students to work in a group, the goal is to form leadership, delegation, and collaboration skills in them. These skills are formed in the process of working in a group without the participation of the teacher or with minimal intervention.

It was found that the majority of students' opinions, demands, and suggestions were in favor of tasks aimed at developing oral speech skills.

-It would be better if we organize ted events as it helps us to improve our oratory skills

-I would like to have more speaking tasks rather than writing assignments

-It would be better , if we focus on more speaking. Because, we will attend conferences and volunteering projects which require high-level of oratory skills. That's why, we have to get more tasks which will help to boost our speech

-organizing more speeches and group works would be great ..

Conclusions and Recommendations

At a time when the issue of organizing independent learning in higher education institutions is considered one of the most important and problematic situations, it is of great importance to study the opinions, suggestions, and comments of students who are direct participants in this process. Summarizing the results of a small-scale study conducted at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy, the following can be said:

- the general impressions of students from independent learning and tasks used in the educational process are positive;
- most students consider the tasks to be interesting and appropriate for their level of language proficiency;

- the majority of students expressed their preference for tasks based on project work, presentations, and simulations. Although the preparation and implementation of these types of tasks are difficult, the knowledge and skills formed in students are more important.

- the majority of students believe that the reason for plagiarism depends on the type of task. Teachers are recommended to focus on tasks that require a more creative approach in order to reduce the incidence of plagiarism.

-students prefer tasks aimed at developing oral skills more than written work and consider it necessary to develop speaking skills.

-it is important to further develop the concept of working in a group among students, to form and develop the skills of successfully completing tasks outside the classroom without the participation of a teacher.

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