



PedPilot – Self-regulated Learning Guide for Teachers

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PedPilots – Supporting Self-Regulated Learning

Unit 7.

Self-regulated learning in the classroom: practices and methods



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7. Self-regulated learning in the classroom: practices and methods

Compiled by:

Gabriella Martinuszné Korom – M-Around KFT, Szeged, Hungary

Introduction

As teachers, one of our greatest impacts lies in how we create a safe, supportive and inspiring learning environment for our pupils. Below, we have compiled a selection of ‘classroom’ methods and tools linked to formal learning, which can be used to inspire pupils and introduce them to the world of self-regulated learning.

The dozen or so methods listed here may be familiar to practising teachers, but we are now looking at them from the perspective of self-regulated learning, and hopefully the list also contains some new ideas and possibilities.

These are primarily offline activities; digital and online methods have been covered in a separate module.

Objectives

Learners are expected to develop the following abilities and skills:

- Metacognitive skills, the conscious management of learning (e.g. learning methods, planning, self-assessment). These skills help the student to become an independent learner, rather than being entirely dependent on the teacher.
- Cognitive skills, i.e. the use of learning strategies (note-taking, summarising, problem-solving). These enable the student to become an active processor rather than a passive recipient.
- Motivational and emotional self-regulation (perseverance, self-motivation, self-confidence, emotional control)
- Social and collaborative skills (collaborative learning, giving and receiving feedback, shared goals, taking responsibility)
- Laying the foundations for lifelong learning (setting learning objectives)



Time allocated to the teaching unit:

2 teaching hours

Learning outcomes

- Planning pedagogical processes and self-reflection on their implementation (differentiation to promote optimal development, motivation, extracurricular activities)
- Supporting learning (emotional and physical state, calm environment, encouraging independent learning, accepting mistakes)
- Personality development, individualised approach (special educational needs, learning difficulties..., comprehensive personality development, conscious application of pedagogical and psychological methods)
- Development of groups and communities (openness, creating opportunities, developing a culture of debate, mutual respect, acceptance, cooperation)
- Assessment and evaluation (evaluation and analysis of processes and pupils' personal development, personalised assessment, analysing and utilising assessment results, objective and clear)
- Communication, conflict management (cooperation, problem-solving, maintaining relationships, compliance with regulations, authentic communication, accepting feedback, able to persuade and be persuaded)

Study materials

INTRODUCTION

Learning is a difficult and arduous task; it requires diligence, perseverance, the ability to tolerate monotony and willpower. Moreover, students who wish to learn often face limitations imposed by their abilities and their family or cultural background. Such and similar ideas are associated with learning, whilst researchers and educators are striving to change these stereotypes. In creating our curriculum, we have set ourselves such an ambitious goal.

In the wake of the acceleration of digitalisation, the online teaching experiences brought about by the pandemic, and the findings of generational research, alongside gamification and experience-based learning, the trend towards self-regulated learning has also gained momentum. The emphasis is on self-regulated learning, not merely independent learning. Whilst independent learning refers to the



acquisition of tasks set by the teacher outside of lesson time, the concept of self-regulated learning is far more complex. We have attempted to illustrate this in the previous teaching units.

In this lesson, we step into the classroom. We will examine how both traditional, familiar methods and newer, modern approaches can be used to foster the desire for and practice of self-regulated learning in our students.

Think of the 12 practices listed here as a colourful bouquet: you may be familiar with and fond of some of the elements, but there may also be others that you have never examined more closely or from a different perspective. With this module, we aim to inspire you to view your everyday teaching practice from a new perspective and to enrich it with further methodological elements.

Self-regulated learning can be developed. Research shows that young children are capable of self-regulated learning from as early as nursery age, but as they get older and spend more time within the formal education system, this ability does not develop to the extent expected; rather, this type of development slows down (Szántóné 2019).

Teachers can consciously monitor and support their pupils' development in this area using specific tools and practical solutions.

Researcher Éva Molnár has identified in detail the factors that determine the effective application of self-regulated learning. These include, amongst others, learning style, learning ability, time and energy efficiency, perseverance, use of memory, attention allocation, interest, self-efficacy, and motivation to learn.

Below, we highlight a few of the tools and methods that can be used in classroom work to develop specific factors of self-regulated learning.

The elements of the idea bank include a brief description of each method, the possibilities for its implementation, potential pitfalls, and its role in self-regulated learning.

1. The role of the learning environment in self-regulation

A) A brief description of classroom work

The classroom layout, subject- or class-related materials and mementos, and the display of work related to the current curriculum have an impact on most students. The noticeboard, the environment and the furnishings should not only be tidy but also inspiring.

B) Ideas for getting started and putting it into practice

First, let's tidy up the shelves and the noticeboard, and repair and clean any necessary items that remain in plain sight. Then let's think about who uses the classroom and how, and what kind of inspiration we can provide for them through the visual environment. Choose from motivational quotes, pictures, drawings, diagrams, portraits of role models, scientists and artists, and ideas relating to science, self-awareness, learning methods or career choices – selecting those that suit the age group and interests of our students.

Creating and updating these resources each academic year is generally a time-consuming and costly process, but with creativity, these difficulties can often be overcome.

C) How does it support self-regulated learning?

Even the gathering of ideas, the preparation of plans, and continuous updating can be a joint project with the pupils or a task assigned to them, but in self-directed learning, the learner sets the goal themselves and determines the direction of their learning – the environment in which they spend 25–40 hours a week can provide inspiration, ideas and support for this (Szilágyi, p. 2).

D) When it is counterproductive

The sight of 'age-old' yellowed posters and dusty, broken equipment has a decidedly negative effect (especially when the class spends the whole day there).

2. Creating a shared digital workspace – with recommendations

A) Brief description of classroom work

We will set up a workspace for our groups where the lesson content, the necessary theoretical material, the content intended for practice, and supplementary material for those interested can all be displayed. In this way, not only those who are absent or falling behind receive help, but interested, intrinsically motivated students can also receive recommendations for books and articles.

B) Ideas for getting started and implementation

Colleagues who were active teachers during the COVID-19 pandemic already have experience; it is worth drawing on this, asking how others do things and what they consider most useful. When starting out, it is worth considering not only the characteristics of the students' age group, but also institutional practices, opportunities and the specifics of the subject.



C) How does it support self-regulated learning?

As well as uploaded materials providing students with ideas for setting goals, this can also serve as a space for mentoring. Let us not forget that in self-regulated learning, it is the student themselves who decides with whom and how they communicate during the process, and from whom they seek support. Such a platform can provide the space and opportunity for them to seek help outside school, according to their own schedule.

D) When it is counterproductive

Platforms that have been set up but remain inactive, technical obstacles, unfulfilled promises (materials promised but not uploaded), late replies, or even content that is too difficult, too easy, or excessive, or 'noisy', impractical platforms can undermine a student's motivation and dampen their enthusiasm.

3. A motivating start to the lesson – storytelling

A) A brief description of classroom work

Let's weave the learning material into a story! Ideally, it should be an exciting, human story that takes the age group's interests into account, but it could also be a story taken from our own lives or from the life of a scientist or role model. If our story weaves its way through every lesson in the group, and our pupils can identify with the characters' lives, whilst the link to the curriculum isn't forced, we can achieve a tremendous impact!

B) Ideas for getting started and putting it into practice

Every chapter or every lesson could begin with a story or a tale, the creation of which is no small task. In many cases, textbooks also embed the curriculum within stories, and of course, artificial intelligence or Book Creator can also help. Stories accumulate, are refined and take shape in our minds over the years, but it doesn't hurt to write them down as well.

C) How does it support self-regulated learning?

Maintaining attention in the classroom is a clear benefit of the work and time we invest in storytelling. But the positive attitude towards the learning process fostered by engaging with these stories is an



essential element of self-directed learning. If the stories also contain examples and lessons relating to self-discipline, responsibility, self-control, self-confidence, social relationships and commitment, then we are fostering development in multiple ways.

D) When it is counterproductive

If we present stories that are forced, overly formulaic, boring, or unsuitable for their age group, or if we reinforce bad habits and stereotypes.

4. Learning through questions

A) A brief description of classroom work

Encourage them to compile a set of questions on the given topic; they can ask each other questions during group work or in pairs, but we can also compile a set of questions for a 'real' exam from their questions.

B) Ideas for getting started and putting it into practice

We can set the task of writing questions as homework or as classwork; it is important that we "get started" with their questions, so that they feel that formulating good questions is linked to a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

C) How does this support self-regulated learning?

The text and the curriculum are processed through the formulation of questions, and thus from perspectives that differ from the usual ones. The processing becomes active, insightful and critical. The student can view the content through their own personal filter and select from the information; therefore, this type of processing is an important supporter of self-directed learning.

D) When it is counterproductive

Irrelevant, overly easy or overly difficult questions come to the fore, and students use the situation to tease one another.

5. Providing choices

A) A brief description of classroom work





It is beneficial if our students can regularly choose from several tasks; this allows them to feel that they are active participants in the learning process, thereby increasing their motivation.

B) Ideas for getting started and putting this into practice

The date and content of the next assignment, the compulsory reading, the material to be learnt by heart, and whether the practice exercises are to be done online or offline – there are countless opportunities to involve them in the decision-making process.

C) How does this support self-regulated learning?

If we put them in a position to make decisions on matters that actually affect them, they become accustomed to this, and their self-awareness and self-reflection also develop, which in turn has an impact on the effective implementation of their self-regulated learning.

D) When it is counterproductive

If we communicate poorly, we can create ambiguous, uncertain situations. The teacher may also appear weak, uncertain or indecisive if they do not carefully define the parameters of decision-making situations.

6. Setting small-group tasks

A) A brief description of classroom work

We can give inspiring tasks to groups of 2–4 pupils and encourage them to work together on projects outside school.

B) Ideas for getting started and implementation

In group work, pair up children who share similar interests and levels of motivation; create an opportunity for a brief motivational discussion with them, either during or after class, and set or find a joint task that suits them together with them. The topic, division of labour, time management and definition of success can all be decided by the students; the assigned task can range from creating an illustration related to the curriculum to producing a podcast or organising a field trip.



C) How does it support self-regulated learning?

Instead of competition and rewards, students motivated by effort and task-orientation make more progress in self-directed learning. This task gives them a sense of achievement as a result of their collaborative work and effort.

D) When it is counterproductive

Initial enthusiasm wanes, they are unable to manage the division of labour within the group, they miss deadlines, and the teacher does not monitor or assess the completion of the task.

7. Be a source of knowledge!

A) A brief description of classroom work

Encourage your pupils to seek out those to whom they can explain the subject matter, to spark the interest of grandparents, parents and siblings in the topic covered in class, or to explain a difficult section to a classmate who finds it harder to understand.

B) Ideas for getting started and putting this into practice

We can provide guidance on explaining the subject matter; for example, we can teach them how to create a mind map, or we can ask for feedback from our pupils' occasional learners (e.g. parents can write in the notebook that they have understood their child's explanation).

C) How does it support self-regulated learning?

Understanding something so deeply that you can explain it to others is a wonderful feeling! Those who set themselves learning goals rather than performance goals take a big step towards developing their self-regulated learning strategies.

D) When it is counterproductive

If the learner explains something without actually understanding the underlying reasoning in depth, and their occasional student or listener fails to provide feedback on this.

8. Discussions about learning

A) A brief description of classroom work

Let's talk to them about why learning and knowledge are important, what learning goals they can set, and what learning techniques they use!



B) Ideas for getting started and putting things into practice

Let's create opportunities during lessons, whether at the start of a chapter or at the end of a lesson; an inspiring idea for learning can be useful at any time, especially if it relates to the problems they are currently facing (e.g. mind maps for summarising, the traffic light method for self-assessment, end-of-lesson exit cards for feedback to the teacher) it can be particularly effective, but make sure it is recorded in the notebook, on the phone or on the shared learning platform.

C) How does it support self-regulated learning?

An important component of self-regulated learning is that the student engages in self-reflection, including regarding their learning, and the reception and processing of information. We must draw their attention to this. In the process of self-regulated learning, they must also plan how, in what way, and over what period of time they will master the content. They can answer these questions only if they have gained an understanding of the fundamentals of learning methodology.

D) When it is counterproductive

New knowledge 'hangs in the air'; they have no opportunity to try it out immediately and forget it. We frame conversations about learning as a reprimand. We speak angrily to the student about this when they have not studied.

9. Self-awareness discussions

A) A brief description of classroom work

Time management, external and internal motivation, perfectionism, family traditions, daily routines – there is an endless array of topics to help set the children on the path to self-awareness.

B) Ideas for getting started and putting it into practice

As a form tutor, we can explore a topic in greater depth through tests, websites and book recommendations, but as subject teachers we can also devote a few minutes to a particular topic. It is important to link the topic in some way to our pupils' interests and the curriculum.

C) How does it support self-regulated learning?

It is an important task for us to set children on the path to self-awareness, particularly those who struggle with self-control, self-confidence and commitment, as they are undoubtedly less suited to

self-directed learning.

D) When it is counterproductive

When dealing with sensitive areas, we may put our pupils in a difficult position; in such cases, it is advisable to seek professional help. By conveying information in an unprofessional manner, we set our pupils back on their journey towards self-awareness.

10. Focusing on students' goals, vision for the future and career plans

A) A brief description of classroom work

We need to make 'dry' and factual teaching material more personal so that as many of our students as possible feel it is relevant to them. It is important that every child knows that what they are learning now will be useful to them later on. This is not always true, of course, and may not apply to every child, but through personalised comments, stories and questions during lessons, we can improve the ratio of those who are interested to those who are not.

B) Ideas for getting started and putting things into practice

It is helpful to know some basic information about our students: their family and home circumstances, their hobbies, their friendships, and their future plans. We can ask them about these (taking care with sensitive data, of course), or reflect on them in relation to the curriculum. It is helpful to prepare a few inspiring questions linked to the current curriculum, and if possible, to formulate the answer to the question "Why are we learning this now?" in advance.

C) How does it support self-regulated learning?

Thinking through, formulating and articulating realistic goals helps students take the first steps towards self-regulated learning. The feedback received can then show how to correct or adjust course if we are not moving towards the set goal.

D) When it is counterproductive

If the group or the teacher misuses confidential information shared by a child, this can lead to negative consequences. Labelling or verbal bullying can also result from these personal questions or thoughts

shared aloud; therefore, we should provide feedback with a careful, positive and constructive attitude.

11. Extracurricular activities – connecting to LIFE with a capital L

A) Brief description of classroom work

Visits to libraries and museums, the theatre, the cinema, school trips, city walks, and the 100th anniversary lesson all provide opportunities to introduce topics and ideas regarding how our curriculum relates to life, everyday experiences, and other subjects.

B) Ideas for getting started and putting things into practice

Discussions with pupils provide the ideas on where to start. For inspiration outside the classroom, the library, museum and theatre are excellent places, provided we prepare the children properly to engage with culture (exciting discussions can be initiated before, during and after the visit, and questions raised to which they can find the answers on the spot).

C) How does it support self-regulated learning?

Interest is one of the key components of self-regulated learning, which in such situations is awakened even in those pupils who are less curious and less motivated in a classroom setting. Furthermore, the emotional engagement that aids learning is amplified in these situations.

D) When it is counterproductive

Once they leave the classroom, children feel liberated and their behaviour can go in the wrong direction. They may regard any situation where the lesson is not proceeding in the usual way as ‘skiving off’.

12. Games

A) A brief description of classroom work

Play is the children’s natural environment. We can choose from role-play, board games, skill-based games and online games to support classroom work.

B) Ideas for getting started and implementation



An online strategy game can bring financial, geographical or historical knowledge to life. We can also bring a real board game into an after-school club. However, a thinking-skills game combined with physical activity, or a game that develops concentration, memory and attention, or even the implementation of a gamified learning and teaching process, is also suitable for adding variety to lessons and increasing the effectiveness of learning.

C) How does it support self-regulated learning?

Flexibility and creativity are developed, and with them, self-regulated learning. We can also support the phases of self-reflection and self-assessment through play-based learning (e.g. the traffic light method, the use of exit cards at the end of the lesson).

D) When it is counterproductive

Winning the game is reward enough in itself; external motivation often stifles internal motivation – this is supported by numerous studies. For this very reason, the inclusion of games can be regarded as a reward in itself. Undisciplined behaviour does occur, but the rules of the game must be enforced, otherwise the game loses its meaning.

To conclude, here are a few thoughts on the attitude teachers should adopt towards their pupils if we wish to set them on the path to self-regulated, self-directed learning:

- Set an example!
- Talk to them, get to know their motivations!
- Praise and reward them effectively and appropriately!
- Ask good questions!
- Have good stories and parables!
- Have targeted tests!
- Reflect on it, and teach them self-reflection!

Supporting materials

Éva Molnár: Self-regulated learning (Iskolakultúra, 2002).

Nóra Katona: Motivation and Self-Regulated Learning (Teacher Training, 2009).





Péter Tóth: Learning Management and Self-Regulated Learning (Óbuda University e-Bulletin, 2011).
Gabriella Szilágyi: Characteristics and Opportunities of Self-Directed Learning in Adulthood (Selected Studies, 2017).

Assessment tasks

Explain the difference between self-regulated and independent learning!

Can self-regulated learning be developed in a classroom setting?

Which of the options listed above do you already use, or would you like to try in future?

Sources

Róza Szántóné Balogh: Measuring self-regulated learning ability through a motivation profile assessment (Határtalan nyelvészet anthology, 2019).

