# Self-access or Access to Self?  - Experimenting with e-learning in Oman

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## Abstract

There has been a radical change in the responsibility of learning in the last few decades and the reasons of this shift of responsibility from the teachers to learners are not arbitrary. The absence of direct participation and activities in traditional method of learning paved the way for an extensive research on student centred learning. Opposite to the traditional method, student-centred learning focuses on constructing knowledge through searching and gathering and synthesizing information and integrating it with the general skills of inquiry, communication, critical thinking, problem –solving, and self-access learning, students are actively involved in the learning process. The emphasis therefore is not on the answers but on using and communicating knowledge effectively to address enduring and emerging issues and problems in real life context. In this scenario, technological advancements could not remain unnoticed especially in an innovative, dynamic field as the one of language education. Self-access learning is thus regarded as an important breakthrough in the ELT field as it allows for the exercise of self-direction or autonomy in learning. In this context, the present study intends to explore the relationship between self-access learning and self-directed learning in the field of English language education in Oman, by presenting the case of a higher education institution and its implementation of an e-learning platform. The study looked at data originating from multiple sources, namely four  interviews with decision makers in the institution that were directly involved in the initiation of the respective learning platform as well as students and teachers' testimonies regarding their perceptions of the e-learning environment as an effective learning tool. In addition to the above mentioned sources, the volume of access to the e - learning platform at different periods of time during the academic year was analysed.

Key Words:  Self-access learning, learner autonomy, e- learning, Gulf region, learner centredness