



Nurturing Autonomy: Forming Wiki-groups for Online and Classroom Learning

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Abstract

This paper reports on one part of a large scale project that investigated the impact of various pedagogical strategies to promote autonomy in courses taken by English majors at the Hong Kong Institute of Education. The focus of this paper is on the implementation of a student-authored Wikibook project to nurture learner autonomy in academic research, English writing and cooperative learning.

Students involved in the project were required to work cooperatively to write comprehensive chapters for a student-authored academic textbook based on the content of an introductory course, 'Introduction to Language Studies'. These small groups of 3-4 students worked with Wikibook technology to freely create and edit the book online. While writing the book chapters collaboratively, students in each group were also required to peer review and peer edit the work of other groups online. Groups also cooperated during the course to make a formal presentation of their work to their classmates.

This blended learning mode provided alternative learning spaces and significantly increased learner autonomy. A questionnaire survey was carried out to determine students' perception of the effectiveness of the Wikibook project, particularly on the promotion of learner autonomy. The findings suggest that the Wikibook project was successful in promoting autonomous academic reading and writing and peer editing among English major students. As a result, it helped students to become more active and autonomous learners, which is crucial for successful academic studies at tertiary level.