



The self-regulation processes of student learning in the autonomous study time

C. Figueira¹, F. Almeida²

¹ Instituto Politécnico de Lisboa, Portugal (clanca@eselx.ipl.pt)

² Park International School, Portugal (mfilipalmeida@gmail.com)

Abstract

The teacher's role has been changing over time, having evolved from a model of knowledge transmission to student-centered teaching and learning processes, which take into account their individual characteristics, respecting their needs and interests as well, as their learning styles and rhythms. The Autonomous Study Time (AST) appears as a work routine in the classroom capable of enabling the processes of pedagogical differentiation, in which students plan, develop and evaluate their work in collaboration and cooperation with classmates and teacher. This routine proves to promote the development of skills of autonomy, responsibility and self-regulation of students' learning processes. Is in this context that the interest in the present study emerges, under the theme The Self-regulation processes of student learning skills in Autonomous Study Time. In accordance, this research had as its main objective to study the self-regulation processes of student learning in the Autonomous Study Time routine in the classroom. For the purpose, a qualitative interpretative methodology was used, with procedures close to the research-action methodology, using semi-structured interviews, focus group and participant observation as data collection techniques. The data processing was carried out using content analysis, following the assumptions suggested by Bardin (2013). The study results allowed us to observe that the participation of students in the processes of learning regulation, in AST, they contribute to the development of skills of autonomy, responsibility and to the progressive understanding the purposes of this routine, acquiring an awareness in the regulation of their learning. The teacher's role in this process is fundamental, in the sense of supporting the organization of work, designing diversified material resources suitable for students, as well as creating conditions that facilitate the implementation of self and hetero-evaluation processes and monitoring of the entire process.

Keywords: *Autonomous Study Time (AST); Individual Work Plan; Pedagogical differentiation; Self-assessment learning*

1. Introduction

The teacher's role has been changing over time. Moved from a knowledge transmission model to a pattern in which learning takes into account various work rhythms, in which teacher organizes the learning processes together with his students (Cardoso, 2013). The student has become a manager of the learning process itself, taking an active role in the construction of his knowledge. The Autonomous Study Time (AST) constitutes "the most relevant moment of differentiation of teaching that develops in parallel with the most relevant moment of differentiation of learning" (Niza, 2000, p. 44). However, in the classroom where the present was developed, it was found that students had some difficulty in understanding the processes of (self) regulation of their work in AST. It was considered pertinent to study this self-regulation competence, helping students to develop it.

2. Methodology

Regarding the weaknesses identified in the students, related to the skills of developing work in AST, the following questions were raised: What are the perspectives of the cooperating teacher on the



routine of AST? What is the teacher's role in this process? What do students think about the AST routine and what is its purpose? What piloting instruments are made available to students for the regulation of this work? Would they know how to use them with rigor? What skills would students develop with the practice of this work routine? Would they be prepared to plan their individual work according to their needs? In line with the problem questions, the general objective of this study was identified: *Studying the self-regulation processes of students' learning in AST*. The general objective is, according to Sousa and Baptista (2011), "the main intention of a project, that is, it corresponds to the final product that the project wants to achieve" (p. 26). Accordingly, specific objectives were identified, namely: i) Describing the cooperating teacher's conceptions about the self-regulation processes of learning in AST; ii) Describe the students' conceptions about the self-regulation processes of student learning in AST (beginning of the pedagogical intervention process); iii) Compare the perspectives of the cooperating teacher and students on the self-regulation processes of students' learning in AST iv) Describe the students' conceptions on self-regulation of learning in AST (end of the pedagogical intervention process). In the perspective of Sousa and Baptista, (2011), these objectives "allow for a gradual and progressive access to the final results" (p. 26). A qualitative methodology was followed, taking into account the procedures close to the research-action methodology. In qualitative research, the issue may emerge "through the literature review or through the researcher's experience or experiences" (Sousa & Baptista, 2011, p. 21), since, in its process, there is a relationship between "the theoretical model, strategies methods of collecting and analyzing information, evaluating and presenting the results of the research project" (p. 14). With regard to data collection techniques, for the development of the study, priority was given to: Semi-structured Interview, *Focus Group* and direct participant observation. A content analysis was carried out, following the assumptions of Bardin (2013). The present study was carried out in a public institution, with valences between Preschool and Secondary Education, located in the metropolitan area of Lisbon. The 24 students from the 2nd year class participated, 10 females and 14 males, aged between 7 and 8 years. In addition to these, the cooperating teacher also contributed with her conceptions.

3. Results

Data analysis allows us to identify a set of analysis dimensions present in the cooperating teacher's narrative: *the purposes of the AST; the role of the teacher and students in the AST development processes; the skills acquired by students in the practice of this work routine*. The cooperating teacher considered this is a time to improve curricular learning "whichever is necessary", to broaden knowledge and it is an exploration routine that allows students to try activities, because, as she says, "there are other things they can do there". The *Teacher's role* is to guide the organization of the students' work, reviewing the activities carried out with them, as well as questioning, informing or supporting whenever necessary. This role is to guide and motivate this process. The *role of students* in the AST development processes is to plan their individual work, diversifying activities and requesting support when necessary, in order to improve learning and develop autonomy and responsibility skills, thus learning to self-regulate their learning. Data analysis also allows us to observe that the cooperating teacher considers not having the classroom organized by work areas, nor are the material resources organized for the conscious handling by the students, an essential aspect for the development of the routine. The *rules of operating in the classroom during the AST* emerged naturally and according to the needs of the class, as well as the support from the teacher that is managed according to the requests for help. The importance of human resources for *individual support*, the organization of files and respective records, as well as time management are considered by the cooperating teacher as important aspects for the development of the AST. However, it assumes that it does not have these conditions due to various difficulties. In the dimension related to *assessment*, the cooperating teacher states that the processes of self and hetero-assessment, as well as the influence of teacher *feedback*, are all interconnected and directed towards student success through awareness of the work to be planned and developed. The cooperating teacher concludes that the implementation of the AST has several potentialities, constraints. The main potential considered in the AST routine is based on the differentiated work that makes it possible, however, reveals itself as constraints: the management of time, noise and individualized support. These constraints are overcome with support and human resources. However, the self-regulation of learning does not depend on more human resources, as it is "a way for the student to be the decision-maker of their learning path, adapting it to their abilities, rhythms, difficulties and interests" (Pinto & Gomes, 2013, p. 49). Data analysis also allows identifying a set of dimensions described in the students' narratives. Students report that they acquire new learnings, working in



partnership, working with others, carrying out a form in which they work on curricular skills. However, there is a high frequency of students who identify this working time as a time that allows them to “play”. It is noticed that reading and writing activities are in the *positive aspects*, since the class, in general, has a good relationship with this type of activities. Safety in learning is essential and this is built, according to the students, with the support of the “big people” present in the classroom, teachers and trainee teachers. However, the *negative aspects* are related to study activities and activities in which they feel less comfortable, being related to their difficulties. It is observed that the students did not identify this working time as a routine, but as a time for activities, indicated by the teacher. The assessment was not carried out systematically, so the students did not present clear conceptions about their self-assessment, referring only to the total number of work carried out and not the type of work or reference to their difficulties. The suggestions that the teacher gave in the weekly assessment registered in the Individual Work Plan were not consulted by the students, in order to improve the planning of the next work. After pedagogical intervention, it was concluded that the students’ performance evolved and their conceptions about this work routine changed. In planning the work, students began to consider areas where they revealed difficulties, curricular activities to be developed in the 2nd year, compliance with the rules for good work regulation, autonomous work, work in partnerships and acquisition of new learning. This awareness allows the development of skills that should be acquired when leaving compulsory schooling, taking into account the “skills of self-regulation of learning” (Cardoso, 2013, pp. 30-31). In short, students began to have a clearer conception of the AST routine and to understand the importance of planning, execution and assessment. The *assessment* started to be considered in the regulation of their work for the following week, according to the assessment criteria, agreed in cooperation with the class.

4. Conclusions

The study revealed that, in AST, students develop competences of autonomy and responsibility through the self-regulation processes of their work. Initially, it was found that students, in general, had little awareness of the self-regulation processes of individual work in AST, as well as the assessment processes. The activities they chose to carry out were activities related to their tastes or interests and not their difficulties. They had difficulties in integrating feedback from peers and teacher, provided in an assessment meeting with the class for planning next week work. After an intervention process more directed and adapted to the students, they developed their autonomy, responsibility and awareness of the processes of learning regulation and, equally, of the processes of self and hetero-evaluation of the work developed. In planning the work, aspects of *feedback*, given by the teacher or by colleagues at the end of the previous week, were integrated. The results reveal an evident progress in the competences already mentioned and, consequently, a recognition of the potential of the AST. These skills were developed through implemented strategies such as: file registration maps, partnership maps, organization of the work planning tool, self and hetero-assessment criteria and working times. This work routine is a privileged time for the implementation of pedagogical differentiation processes, including partnerships. Students also gained a greater understanding of what was intended while working in AST.

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