Research Paper

Enhancing EFL Learners' Autonomy through Cultural Project-Based Learning

Duong Que Linh, Nguyen Hong Hanh*, Phan Minh Huyen

Foreign Language Department, Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration,Thai Nguyen University, Thai Nguyen, 250000, Vietnam
*Correspondence: nhhanh@tueba.edu.vn

Abstract
Learners' autonomy is a debating topic that attracts thousands of researchers all over the world. This term has seriously been considered in language learning and teaching due to its benefits. However, in Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration (TUEBA)- Thai Nguyen University, Vietnam, this notion is in the process of approaching both learners and teachers since the variety of language background knowledge and teaching methodology. Though it has been applied in language teaching and learning here, the evaluation of how much it is appropriate with school curriculum, learners and teachers is still opened. This paper aims to make the investigation and suggestions for this approach through cultural project-based learning at TUEBA, particularly among students who are members of the prohibition period of Advanced program. Not surprisingly, there was a positive result in learners' attitude and learning methods in this study.
Keywords: *Cultural project, autonomy, self-study competence, Advanced program, EFL, learners, teachers*

I. Introduction

It cannot be denied that English is not only an international language but also an important tool for any global citizen. In Vietnam, English is considered a foreign language (EFL). People of all ages and social status are interested in how learners can learn English independently and effectively. Thus, improving self-study competency (Learner Autonomy) is one of the methods that have been applied worldwide for many decades [1].

Many studies show that one of the most important factors to help learners learn English effectively is the ability to self-study. There are four main advantages of self-directed learners. Firstly, learners are not always received timely support from their teachers, so they need to be able to learn on their own. Secondly, they are able to learn more effectively because learning is more personal and attentive. Thirdly, self-study is a necessary skill in the future work process. Finally, self-directed learners are often more active and successful in their learningalthough they may not always feel positive about their learning or may sometimes lack motivation [2].

However, developing learners' English self-study ability is a long and sometimes very difficult process. To be autonomous in learning, learners need to have a sense of responsibility, positivity, and initiative when participating in useful self-study activities (for example, individual/group work), from which learners actively explore, gain knowledge and improve their autonomy [3]. Working in groups in this way can be difficult for some learners as they are not used to seeing learning as a social activity; therefore,they need to develop soft skills such as communication, teamwork, leadership and social skillsas well as the ability to explain, discuss, and negotiate with teachers and other learners [4].

In order to meet the increasing demand as well as the progress of society, education in general and higher education, in particular, require changes to meet the urgency of this requirement. The traditional educational method must be replaced by an active teaching method called learner centered teaching, aiming to promote the positivity, initiative, creativity, and self-study of students [5]. This issue is particularly interested in teaching and learning foreign languages at Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration - Thai Nguyen University.

However, this is a challenge for foreign language teachers in the context that the school's students have an uneven English proficiency due to the reason that students from mountainous areas have little chance to approach English. Besides, most students are influenced by their English learning habits from high school,which

---

mostly focuses on perceptive skills like grammar and reading. Therefore, when they are asked to conduct productive skills like speaking or writing, many students fail to meet the minimum requirements. These students even cannot use the basic language knowledge they have learned during their high school period. In addition, the lack of confidence in communicating, participating in teams and groups, lack of initiative in learning English is also a huge cause affecting students' foreign language learning. Accordingly, at Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration - Thai Nguyen University, active teaching methods have been applied extensively and thoroughly. Students can participate in learning both in individual and teamwork form guided by teachers. Hence, they can discover things they do not know rather than passively receiving knowledgetaught by the teacher. However, many students have not yet adapted and are still used to passive learning. Moreover, one of the objective reasons is the lack of a language practicing environment so that students cannot apply what they have learned into practice as well as maximize their own language ability.

To overcome these difficulties, the project-based learning subjects, specifically the Cultural Project, has been designed and put into teaching to contribute to improving the English self-study ability for students of the prohibitionperiod of the Advanced Program. Althoughit has been included in the curriculum since the 2018-2019 school year, up to now, the assessment of English self-study ability of students of the Advanced Program at Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration - Thai Nguyen University through this subject is still open and there is a need for research work on this issue. Hence, the authors are motivated to make the study on enhancing the learners' autonomy for English foreign language through cultural project-based learning with junior students of the Advanced program.The study was conducted to assess whether the English language self-study ability of the students of the prohibition period of the Advanced Program was enhanced through this Cultural Project course as well as the students' attitude towards this subject. Through the research, recommendations on solutions to support the development of students' English self-study ability will be given. Specifically, the study aims at: (1) Investigate the improvement of English self-study ability of students of the prohibition period of Advanced Program after doing the Cultural Project; (2) Determine the attitude of the students of the prohibition period of the Advanced Program towards the development of English self-study ability through the subject of the Cultural Project.

The combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used in this study. First, after finishing the project, students participating in the research conduct surveys and interviews. The responses of students participating in the survey will be analyzed with the help of certain tools. In addition, based on documents such as transcripts and evaluation sheets of lecturers on the articles, presentations, and products of the Project, the comments are made on the ability to self-study English in the subject, the benefits and drawbacks they encountered while implementing the project. Following these, the solutions will be proposed to improve students' self-study English ability.Due to time constraints and subject specifics, the study was conducted in the 2nd semester of the academic year 2020 - 2021. The study only focused on investigating the influence of the Cultural Project on the capacity of students' English self-study ability as well as their attitude towards the project-based teaching method. The number of people participating in the study is all students of the prohibition period of the Advanced Program. Therefore, there is no sense of generalization in this study.

II.   Literature Review

2.1. Self-study ability of students

Self-study has been done earlier by humans since education has not yet become a real science. From the seventeenth century, educators such as J.A Comensky (1592-1670), G.Brousseau (1712-1778); J.H. Pestalozzi (1746-1872) A.Disterweg (1790-1866) emphasized the importance of learners' intellectual development, positivity, independence, creativity and emphasized to encourage learners to accumulate knowledge by self-exploration and thinking in the learning process in their own research.In Vietnam, the issue of self-study has been seriously and widely researched since the birth of the educational revolution in 1945 under the initiative and example of President Ho Chi Minh – the greatest president of Vietnam. According to him automatic learning means self-learning in a completely self-disciplined and autonomous way, without waiting for anyone to remind, without waiting for anyone to assign tasks, but actively drawing up a learning plan for themselves, then self-directed and implementing that plan voluntarily, owning time to study and self-checking and evaluating their own learning [6].

In the field of language teaching, Holec's (1981) definition of self-efficacy is most frequently used [7]. There are six features in his definition. First, self-study is the ability to take charge of one's own learning. Second, this ability is not innate but necessarily acquired through the means of purposive and systematic learning (self-assess learning). Third, it describes a potential capacity to perform a learning activity, rather than an individual's actual behavior in that situation. The fourth characteristic concerns learners' ability to take responsibility for their learning by taking responsibility for the decisions made in the learning process, including:
- determining the target;

- defining the contents and processes;
- selecting methods and techniques to be used;
- tracking the acquisition process (rhythm, time, place, etc.);
- evaluating what has been learned."

The fifth characteristic relates to learners' acceptance of learning under situations with or without teacher support. The last feature refers to the learners' ability to fully or partially self-direct their learning.

Sharing the same idea with Holec (1981), Dickinson (1994) [8] said that self-learning ability, understood as the ability to take responsibility for one's own learning, is not innate but acquired by "natural" or by formal learning, i.e. in a systematic and purposeful way. Taking responsibility for one's own learning means taking responsibility for all decisions regarding all aspects of this learning.

Benson and Voller (1997) suggested that self-directed learning leads to the belief that learners bear the greatest responsibility for what they learn and how they learn it [9]. They should be concerned with how to set learning goals, determine ways of learning, reflect on and evaluate what they have learned. Self-study is said to make learning more personal and focused and thus achieve better learning outcomes as learning is based on learners' needs and interests. It is in contrast to the traditional teacher-centered approach, in which most decisions are made by the teacher.

Students' self-study ability is also clearly shown in the study of Fisher et al. (2006) [10], in which students have to take responsibility for their own learning, instead of depending on the teacher. Self-directed students are knowledge builders from real experience rather than responding to teachers' instructions. Self-study capacity can be expressed in different ways and at different levels depending on the individual student and learning situation.

Learning a foreign language outside the classroom and without teacher intervention allows students to take more responsibility for their own learning. Furthermore, it allows students to take control of their own learning process and content, the context in which learning takes place, and the ability to interact and collaborate with others when working in groups (Lamb and Reinders, 2006) [11].

Thus, self-study capacity is the ability to identify learning tasks voluntarily and proactively; hence,self-learning goals require efforts to strive for implementing effective learning methods, adjusting their own errors and limitations when performing learning tasks through self-assessment or suggestions from teachers and friends, actively seeking support when having learning difficulties and take responsibility for their own learning.

2.2. Students' ability to English self-study

As one of the compulsory subjects in schools in Vietnam, English is taught from primary school to university level. Due to objective conditions such as lack of facilities, practicing environment, large class sizes and subjective conditions such as limited English practice and self-study capacity and poor learning strategies, English is considered the most difficult subject for many students. English is a subject requiring regular practice in all four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing. In the process of self-studying English, students need to be independent, dynamic, creative, and affordable to find ways to exploit resources to acquire knowledge.

The criteria of English self-study ability used in this work are self-determination; self-goal setting, learning plan decision, applying learning methods, self-regulate learning behavior (self-recognize and adjust their own errors and limitations in the course of learning the subject). English) and taking responsibility for their own English learning.

2.3. Cultural Project-based subject
2.3.1. Learning through projects/projects

Nguyen Thi Van Lam (2011) defines that Project Based Learning is a learner-centered method where teachers mainly play the role of facilitators and motivators towards practical problems and linking learning content with real life [12]. With the goal of achieving success in teaching and learning under the credit system, training highly qualified human resources, learning through projects/projects is an approach that brings numerous benefits and is being applied in schools in Vietnam.

Moss et al. (1998) confirmed that project-based learning is a teaching method designed to provide students with the opportunity to develop knowledge and skills through projects that need to address challenges and problems they may face in practice [13]. It is a teaching method that encourages students to learn and apply knowledge and skills through experience, offers opportunities for further study and development of important skills associated with future college and career learning. While project/project learning certainly has specific content, it is also integrated with many different topics. This approach encourages students to make connections between content, rather than thinking about each area in isolation.

Y. Kim et al. (2020) also pointed out that project-based learning provides opportunities for students to engage in hands-on learning. Students can participate in real projects or perform tasks associated with their

future careers [14]. In addition, A.S. Potvin et al. (2021) also refers to project-based learning as a learner-centered pedagogy in which students acquire a deeper knowledge through actively exploring challenges and problems in practice [15]. Students explore a topic by doing their own research to answer a question, challenge, or complex problem. This method is in contrast to the traditional method in which the teacher is the transmitter of knowledge, the students acquire pre-determined knowledge by memorizing or simply presenting pre-existing facts. With project learning, students learn core knowledge and apply what they know to solve authentic problems and create products.

More importantly, project-based learning follows two process- and product-oriented approaches. Students have the opportunity to use a variety of skills (problem-solving, creative thinking, teamwork, communication, critical thinking, presentation as well as language) at different stages of work [15]. Both skills and language are developed [16]. Since project-based learning has the ability to motivate, empower and challenge language learners, it often helps learners build confidence, self-esteem, self-learning capacity as well as improve language skills and cognitive abilities. Currently, learning becomes effective for learners because they demonstrate the ability to plan, manage and complete projects through their content knowledge and language skills (Kloppenborg & Baucus, 2004) [17]. These things cannot be taught in a textbook but must be activated through experience.

The learning process through projects is a continuous process carried out by students with the support of teachers. To better understand each stage, the four general steps of the project development process from T. Markham et al. (2003) [18] are summarized as shown in Figure 1.
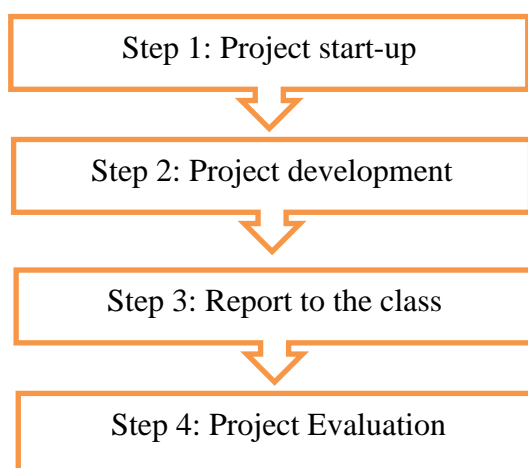
Figure 1. Project development model[18]

Project Start-up: This stage involves students choosing topics of interest and relevance to them. Teachers can create guiding questions for students to brainstorm ideas, outline learning directions, or develop content related to their chosen topic. After that, students make a proposal that includes a project outline, a specific implementation plan, the final result to be achieved and the responsibility of each individual. The project must be challenging and motivating for students to develop, have the flexibility to perform according to their qualifications and capacity, especially, with the participation and support of team members because this is an important part of contributing to the successful outcome of the project.

Project development: this phase includes relevant content research done by all team members individually, in pairs, or as a group. This should be agreed upon within the team before starting the scheme. Students seek information to answer orientation questions, collecting the results they achieved or any problems they encountered, and how they were resolved. This is an efficient process that can be used to improve a project along the way.

Report to the class: this phase involves presenting and receiving feedbacks from other students on progress and improvements to the project but they have to evaluate steps taken throughout the project to ensure that students understand the issues and apply the skills and concepts needed to complete the project.

Project Evaluation: The final product can be evaluated by a teacher, an individual, a group of students, or an external audience. This phase allows students to present what they have learned and apply it to the project/project in a variety of formats.

2.3.2. Cultural project-based learning

The Culture Project is a compulsory core subject group, designed for students of the prohibition period of the Advanced Program in the second semester of the first year. In this subject, students work in groups of 5-7 people, choose typical cultural features (material and spiritual) of a region or country, study materials, give introductory presentations as well as write articles about it. The cultural content students need to learn including cuisine, customs, languages, ethnic groups, traditional costumes, scenic spots. For this project, students need to study the most prominent features in the culture of that region/country, write articles with pictures and design a cultural magazine.

Students have to recreate those unique cultural features in the Cultural Festival that takes place in the last week of the project. In this festival, in addition to demonstrating the cultural contents that students have learned through specific activities and products, they also have to present those contents in English so that the judges who are teachers of English of the Department of Foreign Languages and related faculties and centers evaluate and comment.

Each week, students working in groups and under the guidance of teachershave to make separate plans for the group and themselves, evaluate the implementation of the project, write a weekly report on their group's activities.

2.4. Project framework

There are several frameworks developed by Fried-Booth (1986) and Katz (1994), but it is important to choose one that reflects learners' needs and training program goals [19,20]. Based on feedback received when developing training programs, students showed a desire for a learner-centered teaching method with practical activities to help them make cultivatetheir knowledge and language skills learned in the program into practical activities and enhance language production in specific situations. Students not only expand their cultural knowledge, improve their ability to use languages, but also develop critical thinking and self-discovery skills, improve their sense of responsibility for their own learning. Therefore, the Culture Project is designed using regional cultural themes and aspects of culture. The authors adapted the project framework of Beckett and Slater (2005) [21] in implementing this research as it was found to be most useful in promoting the simultaneous acquisition of language, content, and skills.

Figure 2 shows the modification of the project framework by Beckett and Slater (2005, 110). The fourth subheading "*Attitude*" has been added to the box as a criterion for assessing attendance scores. Here, attitude is understood as fully and actively participating in course activities and class by 80% of the total duration of the module, collaborating in pair and group activities. Accountability, responsibility is promoted as a measure of self-directed learning, includes preparing course content before class, completing assignments on time, and reporting on project progress on a weekly basis.
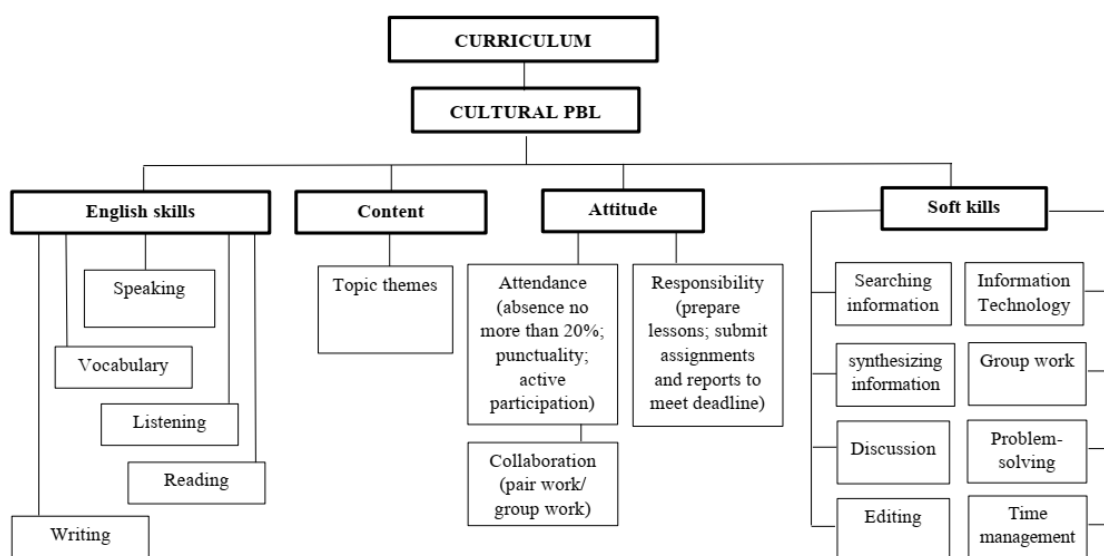

Figure 2.The modification of project framework [21]

2.5. The relationship between English self-study ability and the subject of Cultural Project in English

With the specific nature of the Project subjects that are the knowledge and skills synthesized by students through the process of self-study, the subject helps students maximize their acquired knowledge and language skills in the course into practical activities, enhance the ability to produce language in specific

situations. Students not only expand their cultural knowledge, improve their ability to use languages, but also develop creative thinking and self-discovery and research skills.

To create a cultural brochure, students must integrate a lot of skills such as reading and listening comprehension of English documents, English writing skills to write articles, information technology skills to find sources and references, design, present content, apply the ability toprocess information, data, and many other soft skills, in which, teamwork is considered one of the most important one. Normally, students discuss in groups to delegate tasks, prepare content for presentations, jointly edit group members' writing and evaluate individual activities in their groups.

During the Cultural Festival, students have to work together to transfer the information and content presented in the cultural magazine into specific activities and products. Thereby, it can be seen that, in the process of teaching and learning, the teacher only plays the role of a guide and supporter while students play an active role in participating in activities. In this way, the problem-solving ability, creative thinking ability and self-study English of learners can be maximized.

III. Methodology

3.1. Research Methods

The topic is implemented based on the method of reviewing domestic and foreign research documents; descriptive statistics on the characteristics of students of the prohibition period of Advanced Program by a survey; synthesizing, analyzing and interpreting data on the ability to self-study English through the Cultural Project from surveys, document research and in-depth interviews to find out the change in students' awareness, attitude and actions on English self-study ability before, during and after the implementation of the project as well as finding difficulties and proposing measures to improve students' self-study English ability.

3.2. Research participant

The study was conducted among 43 students (31 females, 12 males) of the prohibition period of the Advanced Program at Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration. The number of students studying English for 10-12 years and 7-9 years is equivalent to 44.2%. Only 1 student has studied English for 1-3 years. Thus, almost all students participating in the survey have a relatively long time of learning English (from 7 years or more).

3.3 Research procedure

The authors conducted a study of documents including transcripts of the Cultural Project mark sheet of students of the prohibition period of Advanced Program at the University of Economics and Business Administration and the assessment of teachers who taught the subject in 18 weeks. At the same time, the researcher surveyed students' English self-study ability after doing the Cultural Project. After the survey, the authors conducted in-depth interviews with the team leaders who participated in the project.

IV. Results

Students' self-study English ability is higher after participating in the Project. Specifically, before implementing the Project, 8/43 students did not study English themselves although the conduction of the Project require allparticipants to perform this task strictly to fulfil the requirements of the subject and the teacher. Also the relative number of students can study English by themselves (Table 1).

Table 1. *English self-study method (N = Number of students)*

English self-study methods	N	Ratio
Take note, summarize learned content	2	5.7%
Self-search information in the internet	1	2.9%
Do assignments in textbook and reference	26	74.3%
Record their own voice	1	2.9%
Talk with friends in English	2	5.7%

For the criterion of self-determination of learning English, before participating in the Project, 27.9% could study by themselves without a teacher. However, the number of students agreeing with this statement increased nearly 3 times after participating in the Project (with a rate of 76.8%).
Most students find it important to set goals for themselves in learning English. In addition, participating in the Project with other students helps them achieve their learning goals faster.

Table 2. *Students' language self-study competence during the implementation of the project (N = Number of students)*

No.	Content	N=43	Ratio
1	Improve writing score	20	46.5%
2	Self–study time (less than 1 hour a day)	12	27.9%
3	Self–study time (from 1-2 hours a day)	25	58.1%
4	Self–study time (from 2-3 hours a day)	6	14%
5	Take note, summarize learned content	8	18.6%
6	Record individual presentation	5	11.6%
7	Look up material in the library	5	11.6%
8	Using the Internet to search for materials and improve IT skills	43	100%
9	Self-read reference related to presentation skills and writing journals	23	53.5%
10	Discuss with teachers and classmates about how to learn and carry out the project effectively	30	69.8%
11	Positively interact in group work	25	58.1%
12	Take note of difficulties and benefits in doing the project (in personal report)	33	76.7%
13	Peer review and feedback with a team member before submittingjournals.	28	65.1%

From Table 2, there is a positive change in the amount of time students study English by themselves each day. Before implementing the project, 62.9% of students spent less than 1 hour studying English daily, followed by the number of students who spent 1-2 hours and 2-3 hours a day at 20% and 17.1% in turn. During the implementation of the Project, the number of students who spent less than 1 hour a day studying English on their own decreased to 27.9% and the number of students with 1-2 hours of self-study time increased nearly 3 times. The number of students studying on their own from 2-3 hours did not decrease significantly. After participating in the project, the number of students who realized that they should take advantage of their free time to study English increased more than 4 times compared to before participating in the project from 20% to 86.1%

Regarding the criteria for self-determined English learning methods, the research results show that each student has a different method of self-studying English. However, the method most used by students is to use resources on the Internet to study and improve their English. It is worth noting that 30/43 students account for 69.8% realized that they need to change their study methods after participating in the Project.

After implementing the Project, the majority of students admitted that they had found a better way to study, promote their strengths and adjust their own errors and limitations. Each student applies a different approach. However, many students still do not understand which mistakes students can correct themselves and which ones need teachers to point out. In addition, over 80% of students surveyed had a clear awareness of their responsibility in learning English.

Over 80% of students surveyed have a positive attitude towards developing self-study capacity through the project. The results of data analysis show that learning through the project increases the incentive to use English, creates an environment for communicating in English, improves self-study, develops independence, raise self-awareness of learning, and this is also a suitable learning method for students. In addition, in the process of implementing the Project, students have to apply numerous skills to complete the content and requirements of the subject such as searching for information from different sources, synthesizing information, editing content, etc. content, presentation, discussion, IT journalism, teamwork, problem-solving, and time management.

V.   Conclusion

It can be concluded that the majority of students of the prohibition period of the Advanced Program at Thai Nguyen University of Economics and Business Administration are properly aware of the importance of self-studying English. All of them participated in all activities of the project such as finding out information about their group's assigned topic, giving presentations, making magazines and organizing Cultural Festivals. Because of the time limit of only 54 hours, equivalent to 45 hours of face-to-face study to carry out the activities of the project, it requires students to study at home a lot.

From the research results, it is clear that the students' language self-study ability is enhanced during and after the implementation of the project because it has created an English learning environment for students when English is used both inside and outside class. However, each student's autonomous ability is different and affected by many factors. After receiving weekly student feedback, teachers can adjust plans, methods, tasks and outcomes more flexibly to accommodate multi-level classrooms and achieve goals of both short and long term in learning English.

Students who are confident in their English ability are more likely to be self-directed learners when they realize that working on projects creates more opportunities to practice the language in and out of the classroom. Positive attitudes of students play an important role in increasing the initiative in learning English.

Teachers act as guides and supervisors in the process of implementing the project, so students are encouraged to make decisions about their own learning, be aware of their learning styles, and figure out how to develop their own learning strategies.

Basing on the results of the study, it is suggested that students need to develop a study plan for themselves and each subject. Besides, they should manage their studying time appropriately. It means they need to balance time between studying and personal activitiesin order to adapt to different requirements.

Self-study means that you have to be proactive and responsible for your own learning without relying on teachers or other subjective factors. In other words, they need to actively refer to the lesson before the lesson,discuss with lecturers and friends to fully grasp the content, systematize learned knowledge and find solutions to overcome difficulties in English self-study.

Students' English self-study method is influenced by many factors, so it is necessary to adjust and apply them in a flexible and specific way.

Regarding self-assessment of results and adjustment of learning behavior, each student must be able to self-assess their learning results of self-study through course results, accumulated knowledge and should not rely on results from teachers. They also need to adjust their learning method if the results are not really suitable.

Students need to improve English skills such as presentation, discussion, writing, information technology and other soft skills during self-study.

In terms of teachers' roles, they should be flexible in designing activities to increase students' initiative, especially considering students' proficiency, attitudes, learning goals, program framework, time and role in guiding and supporting students.

Teachers should organize training sessions on essential skills such as presentation, discussion, writing, planning, etc. so that students can hone their skills better and become more confident.

The school should organize field trips for students to have the opportunity to learn about the traditional cultures of regions/ethnicities as material for the article as well as organize extra-curricular activities during the trip. This is for students to enhance their interaction and communication in English in a real environment.

References

[1]. Tseng, W.-T., Liou, H.-J., & Chu, H.-C. (2019). Vocabulary learning in virtual environments: Learner autonomy and collaboration. System, 102190. doi:10.1016/j.system.2019.102190

[2]. Shen, B., Bai, B., & Xue, W. (2020). The effects of peer assessment on learner autonomy: An empirical study in a Chinese college English writing class. Studies in Educational Evaluation, 64, 100821. doi:10.1016/j.stueduc.2019.100821

[3]. Little, D. (2007). Language learner autonomy: Some fundamental considerations revisited. Innovation in Language Learning and Teaching, 1(1), 14–29. https://doi.org/10.2167/illt040.0.

[4]. Haddad, R. H. (2016). Developing Learner Autonomy in Vocabulary Learning in Classroom: How and Why can it be Fostered? Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 232, 784–791. doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2016.10.106

[5]. Lojdová, K. (2019). Socialization of a student teacher on teaching practice into the discursive community of the classroom: Between a teacher-centered and a learner-centered approach. Learning, Culture and Social Interaction, 22, 100314. doi:10.1016/j.lcsi.2019.05.001

[6]. Huu Tho (2000). On ideological and cultural work. National Political Publishing House, Hanoi, Vietnam, p.3

[7]. Holec, H. (1981). Autonomy and foreign language learning. Oxford: Pergamon Press Pergamon. (First published 1979, Strasbourg: Council of Europe)

[8]. Dickinson, L. (1994). Preparing learners: Toolkit requirements for preparing/orienting learners. In E. Esch (Ed.), Self-access and the adult language learner (39-49). London: CILT.

[9]. Benson, P. & Voller P. (1997). Autonomy and independence in language learning, Longman, London

[10]. Fisher, D., Hafner, C. & Young, J. (2006). Integrating independent learning: lessons learned and implications for the classroom. In D. Gardner (Ed.), Learner autonomy 10: Integration and support (33-55). Dublin: Authentik.

[11]. Lamb T.& Reinders H. (2006). Supporting independent learning: Issues and Interventions. Frankfurt: Peter Lang.

[12]. Nguyen Thi Van Lam (2011). Project-based learning in teaching English as a foreign language. VNU Journal of Science, Foreign Languages, 27 (2011), 140-146.

[13]. Moss, D., & Van Duzer, C. (1998). Project-based learning for adult English learners. Eric. Digest. Retrieved May 20, 2021, from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED427556.pdf

[14]. Kim, Y., & Kang, S. (2020). Writing to Make Meaning through Collaborative Multimodal Composing among Korean EFL Learners: Writing Processes, Writing Quality and Student Perception. Computers and Composition, 58, 102609. doi:10.1016/j.compcom.2020.102609

[15]. Potvin, A. S., Boardman, A. G., & Stamatis, K. (2021). Consequential change: Teachers scale project-based learning in English language arts. Teaching and Teacher Education, 107, 103469. doi:10.1016/j.tate.2021.103469

[16]. Solomon, G. (2003). Project-based learning: A primer. Technology & Learning, 23, 20-27.

[17]. Kloppenborg, T. J., & Baucus, M. S. (2004). Project management in local nonprofit organizations: Engaging students in problem-based learning. Journal of Management Education, 28, 610-630.

[18].   Markham, T., Larmer, J., & Ravitz, J. L. (2003). Project-based learning handbook: A guide to standards-focused project-based learning for middle and high school teachers. Buck Institute for Education.

[19].   Fried-Booth, D. L. (1997). Project work. (8th Ed.) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[20].   Katz, L. G. (1994). The Project Approach. Retrieved May 20, 2021, from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED368509.pdf

[21].   Beckett, G. H., & Slater, T. (2005). The project framework: A tool for language, content, and skills integration. English Language Teaching Journal, 59(2),108-116.

APPENDIX
POST- PROJECT SURVEY QUESTIONAIRE

This survey questionnaire is designed to collect data for the study which aims at finding out the students' autonomy after studying the subject "Cultural Project". Your responses to the questionnaire will be of great value to the research and kept confidentially. Thank you!

SECTION 1. Background survey

1. Your name: ………………………………………….

2. Your date of birth: …………………………………..

3. Your gender:…………………………………………

4. Your hometown: …………………………………….

5. Before entering the university, how long had you studied English?
- Never
- 10-12 years
- 7-9 years
- 4-6 years
- 1-3 years
- Other: …………………………………………………….

6. How many sentences about familiar topics are you able to speak?
- More than 30 sentences
- From 20 to 29 sentences
- From 10 to 19 sentences
- From 1 to 9 sentences
- Other: …………………………………………………….

7. Are you able to listen to lectures in English comprehensively?
- Understand more than 90%
- Understand from 80% to 89%
- Understand from 65% to 79%
- Understand from 55% to 64%
- Understand less than 40%
- Don't understand
- Other: …………………………………………………….

8. A passage of about 300-400 words as in the textbook of Reading 1, how much do you understand?
- Understand more than 90%
- Understand from 80% to 89%
- Understand from 65% to 79%
- Understand from 55% to 64%
- Understand less than 40%
- Don't understand
- Other: …………………………………………………….

9. What can you write? (You can choose multiple options)
- Write simple sentences
- Write compound and complex sentences
- Write a short paragraph of 25 to 35 words
- Write a short paragraph of 35 to 45 words
- Can write a letter about 100 words according to the requirements of the question
- Write a story about 100 words
- Other: …………………………………………………….

10. What is your final result of the subject READING 1?
- From 8.5 to 10 (equivalent to grade A in training under the credit system)
- From 7.0 to 8.4 (equivalent to grade B in training under the credit system)
- From 5.5 to 6.9 (equivalent to grade C in training under the credit system)
- From 4.0 to 5.4 (equivalent to grade D in training under the credit system)
- From 0 to 3.9 (equivalent to grade F- FAIL in training under the credit system)

11. What is your final result of the subject LISTENING 1?
- From 8.5 to 10 (equivalent to grade A in training under the credit system)
- From 7.0 to 8.4 (equivalent to grade B in training under the credit system)
- From 5.5 to 6.9 (equivalent to grade C in training under the credit system)
- From 4.0 to 5.4 (equivalent to grade D in training under the credit system)
- From 0 to 3.9 (equivalent to grade F- FAIL in training under the credit system)

12. What is your final result of the subject WRITING 1?
- From 8.5 to 10 (equivalent to grade A in training under the credit system)
- From 7.0 to 8.4 (equivalent to grade B in training under the credit system)
- From 5.5 to 6.9 (equivalent to grade C in training under the credit system)
- From 4.0 to 5.4 (equivalent to grade D in training under the credit system)
- From 0 to 3.9 (equivalent to grade F- FAIL in training under the credit system)

13. What is your final result of the subject SPEAKING 1?
- From 8.5 to 10 (equivalent to grade A in training under the credit system)
- From 7.0 to 8.4 (equivalent to grade B in training under the credit system)
- From 5.5 to 6.9 (equivalent to grade C in training under the credit system)
- From 4.0 to 5.4 (equivalent to grade D in training under the credit system)
- From 0 to 3.9 (equivalent to grade F- FAIL in training under the credit system)

14. What are the causes of your difficulties in learning English? (You can choose multiple options)

Lack of background knowledge in language

Lack of communication environment

Lack of effective learning strategies

Lack of self-study ability

Other: ……………………………….

15. Before studying the Cultural Project, did you often study English by yourself?

Yes ☐   No ☐

If YES, please continue to answer questions 16-18 by putting a tick on the option(s) or giving other comments.

16. When did you often self-study?

In the morning ☐

In the afternoon ☐

In the evening ☐

In the free time ☐

Any time ☐
Other: ………………………………………..

17. How much time did you usually spend self-studying English every day?

Less than 1 hour

From 1 hour to 2 hours

From 2 hours to 3 hours

More than 3 hours

18. How did you usually self-study English?

Taking notes, summarizing the lesson I have learnt

Searching materials on the Internet

Doing exercises in the textbook, and reference books

Recording my voice

Chatting with my friends in English

Other: …………………………………………

19. Do you often note your strengths and weaknesses in learning English?

Yes ☐ No ☐

20. In your opinion, are you able to self-study English without the teacher's instructions?

Yes ☐ No ☐

SECTION 2.

Direction: Please check the one closest answer to the following questions according to your true cases. Thank you very much for your help and patience.

- 1= Strongly agree
- 2= Agree
- 3= Unsure
- 4= Disagree
- 5= Strongly disagree

Section 2.1. The students' learner autonomy after studying the Cultural Project

Content	1	2	3	4	5
1. I should set my goals in learning English					
2. I should make good use of my free time in studying English					
3. I should make notes and summaries of my lessons					
4. I should practice English outside the class such as: recording my own voice; speaking to other people in English, etc.					
5. I should use the library to improve my English					
6. I should note my strengths and weaknesses in learning English and improve them					
7. Besides the contents of the course, I should read extra materials in advance					
8. I should use the internet and computers to study and improve my English skills					
9. I have to be responsible for finding my own ways of learning English					
10. I should use self-study materials to learn English					
11. I have to evaluate myself to learn better					
12. I should be responsible for my own learning					
13. I should assess my own progress					
14. I should plan my time while learning English					
15. I should look for better ways to learn English					
16. I should exchange ideas with my friends and/or teachers on how to learn English					
17. I (rather than the teacher) should be responsible for evaluating how much I have learnt					
18. A lot of learning can be done without a teacher					
19. Teachers should point out students' errors					
20. Teachers not only have to teach —"what" English is but should also teach —"how" to learn English					
21. Teachers should let students find their own mistakes					
22. Teacher should engage students in group work activities in which they work towards common goals					

Section 2.2. The students' attitudes towards the Cultural project carried out regarding the development of the learner autonomy

What do you think about the Cultural project?					
1. Increasing motivation for using English					
2. Creating an environment for authentic communication in English					
3. Helping students to self-regulate learning					

4. Developing students' independence					
5. Raising awareness of self-study					
6. Providing a better way of learning English					
7. Developing responsibility for working in groups					
8. A waste of time					

Thank you for your cooperation!