

# A Study on the Cultivation Path of English Learning Initiative Ability of Xinjiang Students

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**Abstract:** The “counterpart aid to Xinjiang” is one of the important measures to implement the country’s western development strategy. It aims to shorten the gap between higher education in Xinjiang and the eastern region and to maintain the coordinated development of education, economy and society in the eastern and western regions. This article takes the counterpart support of Xinjiang students from the School of Foreign Languages of Jilin Engineering Normal University as an example to explore the problem of the initiative training of Xinjiang students in English learning in our school, mainly from the aspects of the students themselves, the teachers and the entire education and training environment of our school. The angle explains how to help them improve their learning initiative. This article is divided into three parts. The first is the analysis of the connotation of learning initiative; the second is its meaning; the last is how to build the learning initiative of Xinjiang students.

**Keywords:** Counterpart assistance to Xinjiang; Subjective initiative; Autonomous learning

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At present, foreign language teaching in our country is still in the test-oriented education stage in many aspects, and the tradition of the education system, teaching methods and examination forms are relatively closed. Therefore, most students still have serious passivity in foreign language learning. How to make students pay attention to their own learning process, take the initiative to learn independently,

shift their attention to self-recognition, and finally form self-learning ability has become the most important problem in the new era, and it is also an urgent solution in the current foreign language education field. The "counter-part support" foreign language higher education for ethnic students in the western region is another corresponding problem. How to improve and cultivate these students' proactive language learning is the subject of this article.

## 1 The connotation of active learning ability

It is called active learning in this article. The reason is that in the learning process of higher education, college students gradually turn into adults, so they are their own owners and enablers. The academic circles also call it “autonomous learning”. The two are the same thing, but the emphasis is slightly different. What is "active learning" or "autonomous learning"?

Holec pointed out that the so-called autonomous learning is to take up your own learning responsibilities. In terms of learning performance, it mainly includes the following five aspects (1981, quoted from Benson & Voller 1997): Fully self-conscious; Can guide oneself; Can not be restrained by the campus environment; Can take on their own responsibilities; Can decide their own learning direction.

Regardless of whether it is school education or other education, the ultimate goal of education is to cultivate students' autonomous learning skills. In the second language teaching class, the main reason for promoting students' autonomous learning skills is for two basic goals: First, we hope that students have certain criteria for judging and can think about

and evaluate their own potential in learning. ; The second is to ensure that students themselves gradually become the masters of learning and can learn independently. These two points are closely related and inseparable. Generally speaking, if a student has a certain degree of autonomy, he can learn new knowledge in any language use situation. In other words, every new knowledge acquired by students is obtained from various language use occasions<sup>[1]</sup>.

Autonomous learning mainly includes the following aspects: Clear learning goals. Students can start from the requirements of all aspects, establish appropriate learning methods, and evaluate the completion of their goals in batches. Determine the learning content. Learners should collect relevant extracurricular learning materials as much as possible, and explore their own interests as an important teaching resource. Classroom teaching is not all learning, because students will eventually go to society and explore alone. Generally speaking, there is a positive correlation between learning strategies and learning effects. Therefore, for learners, they must start from their own objective conditions and their own learning goals, and summarize the learning strategies, so that they won't waste time in the process of learning. Exercise self-discipline. Learners must have a certain degree of self-control and be able to effectively control their learning time and progress. Self-assessment of learning outcomes. Learners should establish a set of evaluation standards that are only applicable to themselves before formal learning, and strictly follow the standards to carefully measure their own learning progress. In general, learners must study in a planned and step-by-step manner to ensure the effective use of the evaluation system<sup>[2]</sup>.

## **2 The important significance of cultivating the active learning ability of counterpart students of Xinjiang**

### **2.1 Helping improve classroom learning efficiency**

Improving learning efficiency is the most important part of all learners' learning, so in classroom teaching, we should focus on cultivating students' active learning ability. However, active learning in the classroom is not to do whatever you want. Instead, under the guidance of teachers, students should do a good job in pre-class preparation, listen carefully

to class and review after class, and constantly exert one's own subjective initiative, strive to abandon the traditional concept that teachers want me to learn, reduce dependence on teachers, and strive to grow into a "on who wants to study hard" as a learner.

### **2.2 Improving the shortcomings of classroom learning**

The knowledge points taught by the teacher in class are relatively important. For the English foundation of the students of Xinjiang, there are still many relatively simple knowledge points that require students to do a lot of active learning after class, Checking for deficiencies in listening, speaking, reading ,writing and other aspects,which is to achieve the purpose of language acquisition.

### **2.3 Making up for the limitations of teachers**

Each teacher's teaching methods and teaching styles are unique, and teachers' teaching methods are highly independent. However, different students have different language talents, cognitive levels and emotional characteristics, so teachers cannot take care of all students. This requires students to learn independently, turn themselves into masters of learning, and promote the formation of self-efficient learning.

### **2.4 Meeting the requirements of students' future career planning**

In modern society, the idea of lifelong learning has become the trend of the times. UNESCO once pointed out in "Learning to Survive" that people who are illiterate in the future are not truly illiterate, and those who do not master active learning methods will be eliminated by society. It can be seen that autonomous learning has become the general trend. Although many students leave the university's ivory towers to become members of society and shine in their jobs, this does not mean that foreign language learning will be cut off. On the contrary, this is a new beginning for foreign language self-learning. For example, reading foreign language articles independently, speaking foreign languages and talking with international friends, etc., are all inseparable from the mastery of foreign language knowledge, so independent learning foreign language skills has become an inevitable new trend.

### **3 Cultivation path for the active learning ability of counterpart students in Xinjiang**

#### **3.1 Construction prerequisite analysis**

There is a general consensus in the education sector that two basic conditions must be met to achieve active learning: having the intention to learn actively, that is, you "want to learn"; knowing how to learn, that is, you "can learn". However, when we examine self-directed learning, we will be surprised to find that the cultivation of self-directed learning ability is not as simple as talking about it.

#### **3.2 Constructing the training path of Xinjiang students' active learning ability**

From the above analysis, it can be seen that the learner's self-learning state cannot be completed overnight. The learner's own persistent efforts and the continuous help of the teacher are indispensable. In addition, a good learning environment and system support are also needed. These several elements coordinate with each other to promote learners to become autonomous<sup>[3]</sup>. From the actual learning situation of Xinjiang students and our new attempts in teaching, we found that changes can be made from the following aspects:

##### **3.2.1 Changing the traditional classroom teaching mode and implementing flexible teaching mode for Xinjiang students**

Classroom teaching and autonomous learning are not contradictory. Autonomous learning is not arbitrary learning that deviates from the school's teaching plan. In modern classrooms, autonomous learning has become a new form of learning, and it is an inevitable requirement for classroom teaching in new-style teaching. In traditional classroom teaching, teachers instill knowledge points blindly, and students lack the space for thinking and exerting their subjective initiative. Under the flexible teaching mode, students can be given some choices in schoolwork tasks to complete the tasks assigned by the teacher in the direction they are interested in. Make sure to create a classroom where students are willing to learn actively, thereby promoting knowledge absorption.

##### **3.2.2 Improving the sense of learning responsibility and historical mission of counterpart students in Xinjiang**

Students are the first responsible person for

independent learning. Autonomous learning conforms to the development of human psychology. It takes the learners, the counterpart students of Xinjiang, as the central subject. From the ideological and political perspective of the curriculum, the students realize the backwardness of education, culture, and economy in some areas of Xinjiang, and gradually establish the determination that "after graduating from university, I will return to Xinjiang to build a beautiful hometown, enhance the sense of responsibility of Xinjiang basic education teachers, and fundamentally realize the importance of the unity of all ethnic groups in the motherland". They will also establish the sense of mission of "I work hard for my hometown, and my hometown is proud of me". Good motivation can enhance the learning initiative of the counterparts in Xinjiang. Motivation and responsibility are inseparable. Therefore, teachers should continue to encourage students in Xinjiang to make students feel strongly about their responsibility. In addition to strengthening motivation, learners' self-confidence also plays an important role in fostering a sense of responsibility<sup>[4]</sup>. They must believe that they have the ability to manage their own learning and have the ability to build their hometown.

##### **3.2.3 Guiding Xinjiang students to improve their English learning strategies**

Due to the relatively backward education in parts of Xinjiang, most of the counterparts of Xinjiang have poor English foundation. It is reflected in many aspects, such as not knowing English words, being inaccurate, and not understanding long and difficult sentences. The students of Xinjiang usually learn English by rote memorization, completely out of context, and their own learning is extremely lazy, which eventually leads to the status of "dumb" English. Therefore, instructors need to guide students to become autonomous by arranging schoolwork tasks, so that Xinjiang students can clarify their learning goals, select teaching materials and tutoring materials that meet the learning level of Xinjiang students, determine the learning time and progress, and evaluate the learning process and results. To fully master these skills, learners must have a strong language perception, not only to master the learning methods, but also to have learning assessment standards and reflective strategies, to check for omissions, and learn from each other to make up for

their own learning skills.

### **3.2.4 Creating an environment conducive to promoting the autonomous learning of Xinjiang students**

Students are the center of English teaching. In order to continuously improve students' subjective learning initiative, teaching institutions, schools and teachers are required to make various efforts to create a good learning atmosphere for students. The counterparts of Xinjiang are relatively lively and cheerful, who can sing and dance well. Teachers should increase their initiative in learning English by appropriately expanding their appreciation of English songs. Also, use the existing language laboratory of the school to cooperate with the teaching, play some positive songs and videos, use some English learning software to assist, and finally form an environment suitable for foreign students to learn English. It is worth mentioning that the process of cultivating students' autonomous learning ability is not limited to the language learning center environment. As long as there is a suitable environment, learners should establish an awareness of active learning wherever they are. In the opinion of most research scholars, although independent learning is highly independent, independence does not mean isolation. In autonomous learning, the individual is not omnipotent, and will encounter a series of difficult problems that he cannot solve. Then, the help of others is particularly important. Self-directed learners must constantly seek help from others. In the process of seeking help, it is also a moment when the self-learning experience of self-directed learners is enriched. In addition, self-learners must have the ability to create a learning material environment. Through the rational use of material resources, self-creating a place that is convenient for learning can also help learners improve the quality of self-learning and promote self-learners to gain more in the learning process<sup>[5]</sup>.

## **4 Conclusion**

As Chinese economic strength continues to increase, helping the western region to improve the ability of talent training as soon as possible is China's major policy and a great measure to benefit the country and the people. In the process of China's globalization, there is an increasing need for skilled foreign

language talents, especially in western regions such as Xinjiang, because the "Belt and Road" formally provides a great opportunity for the development of the western part of China. And if the development of the region or the whole country is delayed because of the lack of language tools, it will be more than worthwhile. Therefore, with the development of the new era, there has been a big gap between the original outdated educational concepts based on knowledge instillation and their counterparts of Xinjiang. There is an urgent need for new teaching methods that meet the needs of the times, especially with the guidance of education policy, talents with active learning ability are the high-quality talents that China really needs. However, in actual teaching, it is not an overnight task to cultivate the English self-learning ability of counterpart students of Xinjiang. It is a gradual process. Throughout the process, the teacher must completely transform the traditional foreign language teaching model, strive to create an environmental system that promotes learners' independent learning, and cultivate the students' ability to use the social and material environment that is conducive to learning; students must give full play to their subjectivity initiative, establish the subject consciousness and sense of responsibility of independent learning, get rid of the passive situation in English learning, and become the real master of English learning. Only when teachers and students work together can they break the situation of passive learning in foreign language education for decades, enable students to truly grow into independent learners and inheritors of foreign language teaching, and promote the further cultivation of students' autonomous learning ability. For these ethnic students with "counter-part support", it is better to teach them how to fish than to give them fish to eat. It is important for us to build up the path and environment for the students' learning initiative training of "counter-part support" students as soon as possible.

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