## ARTICLE
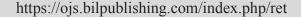
# The Impact of Online Courses towards Students in Autonomous Learning Based on New Media Technologies

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| ARTICLE INFO | ABSTRACT |
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| | In the 21st century, the rapid development of online technology has dramatically transformed people's way of lives. The emergence of high-tech products has also boosted modern education to embrace informationization and virtualization. With the promotion and development of online courses, autonomous learning is now emerging among students in colleges and universities. If they want to learn relevant professional knowledge, they could use networking and information technology with relevant devices. This learning method could not only impact traditional education but also facilitate students to explore new ways to learn autonomously. This paper is to discuss the impact of online courses towards students in autonomous learning by analyzing its current learning situation, the feature of this new form and its effects towards students. |

## 1. Introduction

At present, more and more students choose online education to study. As online courses have become accessible, students could select courses they need via different online platforms. Mobile learning, MOOC and online learning are main forms for them to learn autonomously. Based on existing findings, this paper gives an analysis about several factors affecting students in autonomous learning from the perspective of their psychology. Through the application of new media technologies, their academic performance could be upgraded and the foundation for lifelong development could be shaped. This paper will also help improve and provide further scientific basis for relevant theories.

## 2. The Development of Online Courses in China

### 2.1 Reasons about the Adoption of Online Courses

The majority of students who start to learn remotely is to complete the learning of their professional subjects in schools. But some of them would accept guidance from their teachers and by receiving their suggestions and recommendations, they might adopt online courses to learn autonomously.

Since online learning methods supported by new media technologies is brought into classes, learning channels are

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broadened for students. Some could take optional courses and would not be limited by space. Only a small portion of students would adopt online education platforms to take courses based on their own interests. In this way, their knowledge can be enriched. By taking all of these aspects into consideration, it is evident that the participation of online courses is at a low level despite its accessibility.

## 2.2 Domestic Online Courses Platforms

Given the difference between domestic and foreign platforms and student interests, such foreign platforms as coursera, udacity, edx are rarely used. Instead, they tend to use those domestic counterparts such as NetEase Online Open Courses, Sina Open Course, Chaoxing, MOOC, iCourse, Chuanke and others. Other for-profit education platforms are also predominantly adopted such as Tencent Course and Hujiang Online Class.

The promotion of online education in China breaks the limit of time and space for students and teachers. Students could access different courses based on their own conditions and needs. Given the interactive tools and functions of online education platforms, teacher-student collaboration could be achieved and students could also cooperate with each other. Besides, students could receive guidance from their teachers and acquire professional learning resources.

Online education in China is equipped with diversified learning resources and sharing outlets. It enables learners to access quality sources through computers, telecommunication networks and other transmission forms of teaching information. Besides, these resources at home and abroad can be shared via networks. Online and offline teaching, independent and collaborative learning as well as other forms of learning can be achieved via multiple media technologies.

## 2.3 Constraints for Students in Autonomous Learning

### 2.3.1 Procrastination

Mobile terminal device is helpful for students to study. They could watch teaching resources whenever they want via online platforms without considering the limits of traditional education. It would be convenient for them. But many students tend to be less positive in such circumstance and some only cram a few days before an exam.

### 2.3.2 Distraction

Mobile terminal device brings convenience for students

to learn and live. But it also brings troubles. For instance, many students tend to get addicted to their phones and pay close attention to other irrelevant things. For some reasons, occasional beeps or vibration of their phones would affect them to focus on what is going on up there. All of these have led to distraction and damage in their leaning efficiency.

### 2.3.3 Lack of System

Many college students usually fail to persevere while learning and tend to give up easily. As the lack of information integration of online education platforms, the system of online courses are yet to be shaped and students are far from having a good understanding towards learning.

## 3. The Impact of Online Courses in Autonomous Learning

### 3.1 Strengths of Online Courses in Autonomous Learning

### 3.1.1 Flexibility

Online courses can be accessed flexibly and don't have to be grasped at a fixed time and space as what conventional practice do, so this new form could help students escape those limits while learning. Moreover, as the pattern of online courses is more open than that of conventional ones, students could learn wherever and whenever they want. Their resistance towards study might be reduced to the largest extent and students might be more positive to it.

### 3.1.2 Autonomy

The main reason for students to rapidly receive online learning lies in its wide range of choices. Besides, these courses have no limit towards time and space, so students could plan and effectively finish their work in their spare time. Moreover, students could autonomously choose teachers they like to teach them and better plan their learning process. In this way, efficiency could be advanced.

Conventional classes are far less effective than online ones since it often takes more time for teachers in conventional context to illustrate a key point or difficulty and usually they might fail to let everybody get them across due to different learning capacity. While online courses could be replayed, so students could understand and memorize deeply. In addition, those online functions such as pause, note-taking and playback could help them

better comprehend those key points.

### 3.1.3 Entertainment

Traditionally, teachers need to be on the podium during classes. Whereas online teaching could be done via different forms such as pictures, words, audios, videos and it enables students to learn knowledge in a relaxing and interesting environment.

### 3.1.4 Monitoring and Communication

One of the reasons for students to learn remotely is that these courses are equipped with monitoring devices which are installed in all online education platforms. They are used to record users' length of learning, learning process and ask them for feedback. Learning data released on these platforms enables them to clearly evaluate their own performance and help them to learn autonomously.

During learning process, students in different grades have to learn different courses. For those primary students, they need to study and consolidate their professional knowledge. So they would be given priority about their compulsory courses which are required by schools while selecting on those platforms. These courses are mainly recommended by their teachers. A small part of students would select those that interest them to enrich their knowledge and broaden their horizon. For those senior students, many are preparing for higher education. So they usually choose those examination-related courses and then they might consider the learning of their professional subjects. Guided by teachers, students from different levels could increase their capacity in autonomous learning.

Online courses could not only strengthen teacher-student relationship but also boost teacher-to-student interactions and that among students. For instance, a chat tool is set under the window of online courses to promote students to learn autonomously.

### 3.2 Weaknesses of Online Courses in Autonomous Learning

### 3.2.1 Lack of Learning Awareness

As online courses are basically conducted in students' spare time, teachers couldn't monitor students about their performance, nor could they receive any feedback. So it's important for students to be self-motivated and to effectively learn online courses. But the truth is that they are lack of such awareness.

### 3.2.2 Limitation of MOOC

By pooling quality education resources into one online platform, MOOC becomes a large and fairly open online courses provider, generating greater convenience for students to learn autonomously. As courses on MOOC have to be filmed by teachers before release, such presentation fails to meet students' demand and achieve interactive effect. As the integration of education resources is not compatible with actual demand, the online platform might be a formalistic product.

### 3.2.3 Challenge in the Application of VR Technology

While establishing practical teaching platforms, sensors and computers can be used by schools to create three-dimensional environment and achieve interactive effect. Users could feel like they are in a real situation. This model is original and interesting and it is popular since its inception. However, these schools fail to apply and develop VR technology on a large scale for limited human resources and finance.

### 3.2.4 Bottleneck in Further Development

At present, online teaching platforms of colleges and universities are developed by themselves. The purpose is to present interactive data and facilitate communications between teachers and students. Meanwhile, the record of big data will be sent to these colleges and universities to make analysis and evaluation. Online teaching is widely embraced by students and teachers and could boost teaching efficiency. However, as the maintenance of platforms requires relevant high technology, further development could be difficult.

## 4. Measures to Improve Online Courses

### 4.1 Developing with Multiple Models

The development of online courses is supported by the ever-improving education system in the online environment and the system of online courses is the extension of traditional ones. Online courses allow teachers to impart knowledge via highly-advanced Internet instead of offline classes. So students should be highly spontaneous and self-motivated in their learning process. With the popularization of Internet, online education will be the main avenue for people to receive education. For instance, WeChat, a Chinese communication app, can be used to complete relevant assignments.

Individuals or institutions could apply for an account on the platform of WeChat and that is called WeChat

Official Account. Its communication is done via Internet and it serves targeted group. Users could interact with each other through voice, words, pictures and videos on this platform. WeChat Official Account is the extension of online education where students could search information. It is convenient for students and they represent the main users of the platform. Besides, it also facilitates interactions between teachers and students.

Take foreign language learning for instance, students could choose courses from domestic and foreign websites. Different platforms could meet different demands of students and offer them with broader options. Some websites supported by SNS or Social Networking Services are specialized in foreign language learning. Visitors could log in and enter into their own homepages and they could choose whatever they want to learn independently. Also, they could discuss with other students via various platforms such as Chinese Tieba and online discussion community. They could obtain a lot of useful information while acquiring knowledge.

Online resources is countless and inexhaustible. It could provide various learning channels for students and fulfill their demands. These resources is not limited by space, time and human labor. It is also cost-saving. Beyond that, it could be shared and applied fully and help students to receive higher education.

## 4.2 Changing Students' Perception about Learning via New Media Technologies

With the establishment of online education, traditional teaching methods are going to be replaced. Teachers and students could communicate wherever and whenever they want. On the other hand, without the restrictions of time and space, students could delve into new knowledge and review the old.

Meanwhile, online courses only represents one form of online education. Other teaching methods are also altering students by guiding them to learn autonomously. The conventional cramming method of teaching would be out of date. Students would realize that the most important method is to embrace autonomous learning and self-motivated learning through dedication to study for a period of time. In this way, they might select more online channels to learn in the future.

## 5. Conclusion

In this new era, students are open to new things. Online courses as an emerging learning method has been accepted by more and more students and has already been put into practice. Its popularity will bring students opportunities and challenges. So it's imperative for them to fully leverage its strengths and learn autonomously in their spare time to enrich their knowledge and elevate their learning capacity in professional knowledge while developing hobbies and interests.

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