

“I Just Hadn’t Thought about it Before”

Developing Self-Regulated Learners in a Fully Online Course

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INTRODUCTION

Purposeful lifelong learning requires self regulation, the ability to monitor and manage cognitive processes, emotions, motivations, behavior, and environment. This is particularly true in online courses, which lack typical face-to-face supports.

COURSE CONTEXT

Sociolinguistics and Bilingual Education

- Fully online course
- 34 students, teachers seeking a TESOL endorsement
- Mainly experienced teachers
- For many, first online course

PRACTICES AND PURPOSES

Before the course, students answered questions about a case study classroom scenario to demonstrate their prior knowledge. They also set 1-3 specific goals for what they wanted to learn in the course to foster motivation.

After the course, students responded to the same case study to demonstrate cumulative knowledge. They then looked at their previous answers wrote a reflection about how their answers had changed and whether they had met their personal goals.

EMERGENT THEMES

Three overarching themes emerged from student after-course responses ($n = 34$).

Taking Stock (65%)

By re-visiting this case study, I definitely feel like I have grown as a teacher, expanded my thinking, and gained a lot of knowledge regarding Sociolinguistics.

Connecting (100%)

I have gained a greater appreciation of the language variations in English—something I knew about from my own life trajectory, but now something I will value even more in my diverse classroom in the Fall. I have a goal now of speaking to my colleagues about our tendency to say “broken English” or “bad English” when our students use dialects in school.

Problematizing (35%)

One of the biggest take aways is that there isn’t always one right way, one right answer or one right theory to build my philosophy of ESL education, that it is about individual learners and what they need to be successful.

LESSONS LEARNED

Students used this assignment to **take stock** of what they had learned during the course in comparison to what they knew prior to the course. They also **connected this learning with prior experiences, specific course content, and future goals**. Finally, they **problematized** the field, acknowledging their increased awareness of the complexity of bilingual education.

Next time around:

- Consider time, support, credit given and relationship with how deeply students engage with assignment.
- Consider providing orientation and parameters around personal goal setting so more closely aligned with what is possible.
- Use multiple self-regulated learning practices within an online course; let students take the lead on some.

This was an awesome assignment as it was so enlightening to see how much I have learned through this course.

