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Research Paper

Effectiveness of Wisdom Training on Students' Self-directed Learning

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Abstract

Aim: The purpose of the present study was to assess the effectiveness of wisdom training in self-directed learning and its components in students. This research was applied and quasi-experimental with pre-test, post-test and a control group. The statistical population included students of of Allameh Tabataba'i University in the academic year 2021-2022, among whom 30 students were selected by convenience sampling method, and divided into an experimental group (n=15) and a control group (n=15). The data collection tool was Fisher et al.'s Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale (2001) and the wisdom training package of Daneshpayeh and colleagues (2022). The experimental group received 10 sessions of wisdom training. The data were analyzed using the analysis of the covariance test. The results showed that wisdom training was significantly effective in increasing self-directed learning, self-management, and students' desire to learn, but had no significant effect on the self-control dimension. Accordingly, wisdom training can increase students' self-directed learning. Hence, it is suggested that professors and teachers master the skills required for wisdom training, and transfer them to the learners.

Keywords*: Wisdom, Self-directed learning, Self-control, Self-management, Desire to learn*

Introduction

Learning skills are essential for the 21st-century students to enable them to thrive in an uncertain future. These skills enable individuals to determine their learning needs and goals according to the existing knowledge and achieve self-direction. As such, self-directed learning is a critical competency for living and working in our complex and unpredictable world (Morris and Rohs, 2021). Knowles et al. (2015) consider self-directed learning a learning process in which learners take the main responsibility to direct their learning tools and goals to achieve personal learning goals. In the educational system, self-directed learning is currently a widely-accepted approach and promoted at higher and professional education levels (Mulube and Jooste, 2014, Song et al., 2015). University students are expected to be more independent and responsive to learning according to their curiosity, interests, and abilities such that their potential and talents are cultivated (Shirazi et al., 2017). Self-directed learning appears to be a desirable method for dealing with today's rapid changes because it will increase the effectiveness and quality of education, as well as improving the learning process (Loeng, 2020).

One of the personality traits related to self-directed learning is wisdom (Lander, 2009). Lander (2009) showed that wise individuals may initially adopt role models, but often reach levels of expertise beyond their teachers and require self-direction in new areas of knowledge. Indeed, approaches to understanding self-directed learning often cite the same characteristics of learning associated with wisdom and wisdom development. Shirazi et al. (2021) consider wisdom of choice a characteristic of self-directed students, which motivates students to learn. Given the relationship between wisdom and self-directed learning, developing wisdom can enhance self-directed learning. Researchers believe wisdom should be infused into regular classroom activities, which means that teachers and professors in various disciplines should learn to teach wisdom using existing wisdom teaching packages (Sternberg et al., 2008).

Despite a variety of local and international research on the relationship of wisdom with self-directed learning and its components, we did not find any research on the effectiveness of wisdom training on self-directed learning and its components in students. Therefore, considering the importance of self-directed learning in students, the purpose of this research is to investigate the effectiveness of wisdom training on self-directed learning and its components in students.

The research hypotheses are:

1. Wisdom training is effective on students' self-directed learning.
2. Wisdom training is effective on the dimensions of self-management, desire to learn, and self-control of self-directed learning of students.

Methodology

This quasi-experimental with pretest-posttest design and a control group was conducted with a statistical population of students of Allameh Tabatabai University in Tehran in the academic year 2021-2022. Based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria, convenience sampling was used to select a sample of 30 students who were divided into an experimental group (n=15) and a control group (n=15). The inclusion criterion was willingness to participate in the study, and the exclusion criterion was being absent for more than one session. This research was reviewed and ethically approved at Allameh Tabatabai University (IR.ATU.REC.1401.011). Fisher et al.'s Self-Directed Learning Readiness Scale (SDLRS) (2001) was used to collect data, and the wisdom training package designed by Daneshpaye et al. (2022) was used for the educational intervention.
Before commencing the research, the participants were briefed on the confidentiality of their data, the voluntary nature of the research and were asked to sign a consent form. Then, both groups did a pre-test for self-directed learning. Next, the experimental group received wisdom training for 10 sessions of 90 minutes, but the control group did not. Finally, both groups did self-directed learning post-test. The obtained data regarding the hypotheses were analyzed by multivariate covariance analysis (MANCOVA) in SPSS26 software.

Results

The comparison of the mean scores of pre-tests and post-test in the experimental and control groups indicates that wisdom training increased students' mean score of self-directed learning. MANCOVA was used to check the significance of changes in mean scores.

Table 1: The results of multivariate covariance analysis on self-directed learning scores and its components in the experimental and control groups with the control of pre-tests.

Effect		Value	F	Hypothesis df	Error df	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Group	Pillai's Trace	0.385	4.807	3	23	0.01	0.385
	Wilks' Lambda	0.615	4.807	3	23	0.01	0.385
	Hotelling's Trace	0.627	4.807	3	23	0.01	0.385
	Roy's Largest Root	0.627	4.807	3	23	0.01	0.385

According to Table 1, the overall effect of the group is significant because the F value of all four tests is significant ($p<0.01$). This means a significant difference exists between the experimental and control groups in at least one of the dependent variables.

Table 2: MANCOVA results for the intergroup effects of the mean dimensions of delf-directed learning

Source	Components	Sum of Squares	Degree of Freedom	Mean Squares	F	Sig.	Eta Coefficient
Group	Self-management	307.927	1	307.927	14.004	0.001	0.359
	Desire to learn	121.307	1	121.307	9.574	0.005	0.277
	Self-control	49.287	1	49.287	3.001	0.096	0.107
	Self-directed Learning	1266.099	1	1266.099	13.510	0.001	0.351

According to Table 2, the F ratio of covariance analysis are significant for self-management ($F = 14.004$ and $p = 0.001$), desire to learn ($F = 9.574$ and $p = 0.005$), and self-directed learning ($F = 13.510$ and $p = 0.001$), but it was not significant for self-control ($F = 3.001$ and $p = 0.096$). These findings reveal a significant difference in the variable of self-directed learning, self-management components, and desire to learn between the experimental group and the control group.

Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this research was to investigate the effectiveness of wisdom training on self-directed learning and its components in students. The findings of the research showed that wisdom training led to an increase in self-directed learning, self-management, and the desire to learn in the experimental group compared to the control group. These findings are consistent with the results of Lander's (2009) studies and inconsistent with the results of Azadmanesh et al. (2020), and Desi and Rodelando (2017). These findings can be explained in that self-directed learning encourages students to expand their ability to assess their knowledge deficiencies, to have attitudes such as a strong desire to learn and self-discipline, to accept responsibility for their learning, and to see problems as challenges. These attitudes are likely to be based on independence and self-confidence and appear to be related to intrinsic motivation (Lander, 2006a, 2006b), which are associated with wisdom and self-directed learning (Lombardo, 2006).

This research had limitations including no follow-up, the outbreak of COVID-19 which hindered accessing the target population, and failure to include the effect of variables such as age and socioeconomic status. According to our results, it is suggested that professors and teachers master the skills required for wisdom training, and transfer them to the students to improve their self-directed learning.

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