

Does Self-Access Language Learning at the Tertiary Level Really Work?

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This paper presents the results of an evaluation of the independent language learning programme for part-time university students taking a remedial English language programme at the Language Institute, City University of Hong Kong. Achievement in listening, writing, reading, and usage between control (51 students in the Classroom mode) and experimental (78 students in the Self-Access mode) groups was compared by using a pre- and post-test. Those studying in the Self-Access mode made more significant improvement in reading while more significant improvement in writing was made by students in the Classroom mode. Furthermore, data from questionnaires of 718 students in the Self-Access mode and in-depth student interviews were used to evaluate students' perception of the effectiveness of the programme. The results show that students found the Self-Access mode of learning useful and motivating and that it increased their confidence in learning English. Major factors influencing students' positive attitudes towards the Self-Access mode of learning included improvement in English proficiency skills, increase in confidence, usefulness of materials and organisation of the course.