

## Strategies for Fostering Self-Directed Learning Used by English Language Education Lecturers at Esa Unggul University

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigates the strategies used by English Language Education lecturers at Esa Unggul University to foster self-directed learning (SDL) among students. Employing a qualitative descriptive design, data were collected through semi-structured interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis with four lecturers selected based on SDL-related criteria. Thematic analysis using ATLAS.ti revealed ten strategies: collaborative learning, formative assessment, technology integration, cooperative learning, metacognitive skills development, task ownership, constructive feedback, problem-based learning, resource utilization, and climate setting. Collaborative learning, formative assessment, and technology integration emerged as the most consistently applied across instruments, reflecting a shift from teacher-centered to student-centered approaches that encourage peer collaboration, digital engagement, and formative feedback. However, strategies that develop autonomy and metacognitive regulation were less evident in classroom practices. The findings highlight the need for continuous professional development to strengthen lecturers' capacity to integrate deeper SDL principles into their teaching, thereby supporting students' independence, critical thinking, and lifelong learning skills.

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### Keywords:

*Self-Directed Learning (SDL),  
Lecturer Strategies, English  
Language Education, Higher  
Education, Student Autonomy,  
Qualitative Research.*

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## INTRODUCTION

In recent years, there has been a growing emphasis on self-directed learning (SDL) in higher education, as it is increasingly recognized as a critical component of student success (Brandt, 2020; Khalid et al., 2020; RUI et al., 2024; Siswanto, 2024). As education becomes increasingly student-centered, self-directed learning empowers learners to take control of their own academic journey (Brandt, 2020; Khalid et al., 2020; RUI et al., 2024; Siswanto, 2024). Self-directed learning is defined as a process where learners take initiative in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying resources, selecting and implementing strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes (Robinson & Persky 2020). This process fosters independence and self-motivation by encouraging students to take responsibility for managing their own learning. In line with this, Firdaus et al. (2023) argue that self-directed learning not only enhances students' autonomy but also develops critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Moreover, Schweder & Raufelder (2022) argues that self-directed learning is a critical approach where students have a high level of autonomy in directing their own learning process. Similarly, notes that self-directed learning positively influences lifelong learning, as it equips students with the skills necessary to continue learning throughout their lives. Thus, self-directed learning is a pivotal approach in higher education, fostering autonomy, critical thinking, and lifelong learning skills, which are essential for students to navigate and succeed in their academic and their professionalism (Abou Said & Abdallah, 2024; Al-Wossabi, 2024; Kanyopa & Makgalwa, 2024; Mayombe, 2025; Siswanto, 2024).

The role of educators is crucial in fostering self-directed learning, as they provide guidance and support to help students develop the skills needed to manage their own learning effectively (Geng et al., 2019; Kim et al., 2021). Educators play a pivotal role in ensuring that self-directed learning is effectively implemented (Robinson & Persky, 2020; Song & Hill, 2022). Studies by Schweder & Raufelder (2022) indicate that while students benefit from self-directed learning, many still struggle to manage their learning independently, underlining the need for further research into fostering this skill in higher education settings (Broadbent & Poon, 2018). Furthermore, Reinders (2018) further explored this by discussing self-directed learning in technology-enhanced environments, emphasizing the balance between self-efficacy and self-directed learning readiness, particularly in online learning contexts (Zhu et al., 2020). These findings underscore the growing importance of designing tailored strategies to support students in successfully managing their own learning. Therefore, it is evident that while self-directed learning holds significant potential for student development, the active involvement of educators in guiding, supporting, and equipping students with the necessary skills is essential to ensure its successful implementation, particularly in the context of evolving educational environments (Kim et al., 2021).

The phenomenon of self-directed learning (SDL) has become increasingly relevant in Indonesian higher education, especially in the context of preparing students for independent and flexible learning environments. In Indonesia, the focus on self-directed learning has been amplified through the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology's Merdeka Belajar-Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) program. This initiative seeks to provide students with the flexibility to engage in independent projects, internships, or student exchanges, all of which heavily depend on the ability to learn autonomously (Kemendikbud, 2024). There are a number of obstacles to the adoption of self-directed learning in Indonesian higher education institutions, including the low level of preparedness of students for independent learning and the absence of technology assistance in certain institutions (Rukmini et al., 2022). According to Rukmini et al (2022), only 35% of university students surveyed demonstrated adequate SDL skills. Furthermore, disparities in technological infrastructure across regions exacerbate these challenges. For example, universities in rural areas often lack reliable internet access and adequate digital resources, limiting students' ability to engage in self-directed learning effectively (Lasfeto & Ulfa, 2020). Additionally, Auliana & Hadijah (2022), on self-directed learning attitudes among English department students revealed that while most students were aware of their responsibilities in learning, many still lacked confidence in studying independently without direct instruction from lecturers. The urgency of addressing these problem lies in the critical role of self-directed learning in supporting of higher education reform in Indonesia.

Based on the discussion above, self-directed learning has clear benefits, while it cannot thrive in isolation; it requires a supportive learning environment, one that educators must cultivate. Therefore, the role of lecturers in fostering self-directed learning is central to students' success (Ginzburg et al., 2020). As noted by Du Toit-Brits (2019), lecturers must not only provide tools and opportunities for self-directed learning but also create an atmosphere that encourages students to take initiative. In this regard, lecturers play a crucial role in creating environments that support and nurture self-directed learning (Windra & Agustiani, 2019a; Robinson & Persky, 2020). As noted by Elsa Mentz & Izak Oosthuizen (2016), educators must

not only provide tools and opportunities for self-directed learning but also develop teaching methods that actively engage students in the learning process. Furthermore, Adinda & Mohib, (2020) highlights the importance of professors' advice and assistance in assisting students in making the switch to self-directed learning. This supports that lecturers play roles such as monitor, motivator, organizer, and controller of pupil behavior, while learners have roles in developing executive control of their learning strategies (Windra & Agustiani, 2019b).

Previous studies on Self-Directed Learning (SDL) in higher education. First, according to research by Hawkins (2018) have demonstrated its significance in fostering learner autonomy, strategic learning, and self-regulation. This research explored the application of SDL within the context of adult English language learners, integrating Grow's (1991) staged model of SDL and Oxford's (2011, 2017) strategic self-regulation framework. The study highlighted the importance of explicit training in SDL to enhance learners' ability to set goals, utilize effective learning strategies, and evaluate their progress independently. It also emphasized the role of tutors in guiding learners towards self-direction through tailored support and strategic feedback. Result the integration of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) proved effective in promoting autonomy, provided that students received adequate training in its use. The research underscores the global relevance of SDL in English language programs, suggesting that incorporating SDL principles into curriculum design and tutoring practices can significantly empower learners to become independent, strategic, and self-regulated in their learning processes. Second, a study by Al-Wossabi (2024), explored the integration of Self-Directed Learning (SDL) in Saudi EFL higher education to address challenges posed by traditional teacher-centered practices, which often hinder learner autonomy and effective language acquisition. The research focused on synthesizing insights from literature, theoretical frameworks, and empirical studies to evaluate the benefits and challenges of SDL in the Saudi EFL context. The findings highlighted the transformative potential of SDL in fostering autonomy, academic independence, and lifelong learning skills among students. The results study emphasized the importance of integrating SDL principles into English language teaching, leveraging technology and collaborative learning to enhance learner engagement and proficiency. Additionally, it discussed the role of educators and policymakers in promoting SDL by creating supportive environments and scaffolding learners' transition to autonomy. Recommendations included the adoption of task-based activities, e-portfolios, and culturally relevant materials to align SDL practices with Saudi students' needs and contexts. Ultimately, the research underscored SDL as a critical factor for academic success and global competence in Saudi higher education. Third, studi by Ramadhanty et al (2024), examined the potential and effectiveness of Self-Directed Learning (SDL) in English language education. The study reviewed 15 academic papers published between 2015 and 2023 using PRISMA guidelines to identify essential traits, benefits, and challenges associated with self-directed learning.

Considering all stated previously, self-directed learning (SDL) has been widely recognized for its potential in empowering students to take control of their learning. Numerous studies emphasize its principles, benefits, and challenges across various educational contexts. However, while the general principles of self-directed learning are widely discussed, the specific strategies that lecturers use to foster this type of learning in various educational contexts have not been thoroughly explored (Elsa Mentz & Izak Oosthuizen, 2016). This gap

is acknowledged by several researchers, who highlight the need for more focused studies on how lecturers foster self-directed learning strategies particularly within the context of higher education (Boyer et al., 2014a; Nasri et al., 2020). This research aims to fill this gap by investigating how these strategies used by lecturers. Therefore, the findings from this study will provide valuable insights into how lecturers can better support and facilitate self-directed learning in practice.

This study seeks to answer the research question of how English lecturers at Esa Unggul University use instructional strategies to foster Self-Directed Learning (SDL) among their students, with the primary objective of investigating the specific strategies employed to promote students' independent learning. The research is significant both theoretically and practically: theoretically, it contributes to the existing body of knowledge on SDL by deepening understanding of lecturer-driven strategies that support student-centered learning and effective teaching practices; practically, it provides valuable insights for higher education educators who aim to enhance their instructional approaches to better facilitate self-directed learning, offering concrete strategy-based references that can be adapted to various teaching contexts.

## **METHOD**

### **Type of Research**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to investigate how English lecturers foster Self-Directed Learning (SDL) among their students. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' experiences, instructional strategies, and classroom practices within their natural setting. Through this design, the researcher was able to capture detailed descriptions of how SDL principles were implemented in real teaching contexts rather than measuring them quantitatively.

The qualitative descriptive method was particularly appropriate because it focuses on providing a comprehensive summary of events and practices as experienced by individuals. In this study, it enabled the researcher to examine lecturers' approaches to promoting autonomy, reflection, collaboration, and responsibility in learning. By emphasizing rich descriptions and contextual understanding, the design ensured that the findings accurately represented the realities of SDL implementation in higher education.

### **Population and Sample**

The population of this study consisted of English lecturers in the Faculty of Education and Teacher Training, Department of English Language Education at Esa Unggul University. The research was conducted during the odd semester of the 2025 academic year. From this population, four lecturers were selected as participants using purposive sampling to ensure that those involved had relevant experience and knowledge related to Self-Directed Learning practices.

The selection criteria included having at least five years of teaching experience, holding a Master's or Doctorate degree, demonstrating familiarity with SDL principles, engaging in reflective teaching practice, participating in professional development activities, and showing commitment to lifelong learning. These criteria were established to ensure the credibility and depth of the data, as the chosen lecturers were considered capable of providing informed and meaningful insights into how SDL is fostered in the classroom.

## **Data Collection Techniques**

This study utilized three main data collection techniques: semi-structured interviews, checklist-based classroom observations, and document analysis. The semi-structured interviews consisted of 34 open-ended questions derived from established SDL frameworks, allowing lecturers to share detailed explanations of their strategies, experiences, and perspectives in fostering student autonomy. Each interview was recorded, transcribed verbatim, and prepared for systematic analysis.

In addition to interviews, classroom observations were conducted using a structured checklist to systematically record the presence of SDL-related strategies during teaching sessions. Furthermore, document analysis was carried out by reviewing syllabi, lesson plans, and instructional materials to identify how SDL principles were embedded in course planning. The combination of these three techniques ensured data triangulation and provided a comprehensive understanding of both planned and implemented strategies.

## **Data Analysis Techniques**

The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis supported by ATLAS.ti software. The analysis followed several systematic steps, including data familiarization, open coding, categorization, theme development, and refinement. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were first carefully reviewed and coded line by line to identify meaningful patterns related to SDL strategies.

After initial coding, similar codes were grouped into categories and further developed into broader themes and sub-themes aligned with the research objectives. The use of ATLAS.ti facilitated code management, pattern identification, and theme organization, enhancing the traceability and credibility of the findings. This rigorous analytical process ensured that the conclusions drawn from the data accurately reflected lecturers' strategies in fostering Self-Directed Learning.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Overall Strategies Used by Lecturers to Foster Self-Directed Learning**

The overall strategies identified from the three data sources interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis are summarized in the chart below:

#### **1. Problem-Based Learning**

Based on interview data with several lecturers, three dominant indicators were identified within the Problem-Based Learning strategy used by English lecturers to foster self-directed learning. These components are Developing Critical Thinking Skills, Student Collaboration, and Use of Technology. Among the 12 coded instances of problem-based learning practices, each of these three components appeared with equal frequency, each accounting for 33% of the total. This indicates that lecturers employed a balanced approach when designing problem-solving activities. The first component, Developing Critical Thinking Skills, was found in activities where students were asked to reflect, justify, and apply reasoning to real-life contexts. As stated by Lecturer A (TKV-1.1): "It's not just about finding the answer, but understanding the process and connecting it to real-world benefits." The second component, Student Collaboration, was visible in lecturers' emphasis on teamwork. Lecturer B (TKV-2.1) explained: "I usually use the jigsaw technique. First, I form groups of 3–4 students, assign a group leader and a timekeeper. After the discussion, I rotate the leaders or group members to

give each other feedback." The third component, Use of Technology, was reflected in how lecturers integrated digital platforms and tools. Lecturer C (TKV-3.1) shared: "I rely heavily on Google Classroom," while Lecturer D (TKV-4.1) noted: "Sometimes I ask about trending issues on TikTok or Instagram to trigger student responses." These findings are in line with the principles of SDL outlined by Malcolm Knowles (1975) and Mentz & Van Zyl (2018), particularly in promoting autonomy, problem ownership, and reflective engagement.

Based on the observation results of all four lecturers involved in this study, the use of Problem-Based Learning strategies shows that all lecturers have applied this strategy, although the extent and consistency of its use vary across lecturers. For the Student Collaboration indicator, all four lecturers facilitated group work or collaborative activities in the classroom, guiding students through open-ended questions and encouraging collective problem-solving. In terms of the Development of Critical Thinking Skills indicator, three out of four lecturers designed activities that required students to analyze, evaluate, and reflect on real-world issues, though one lecturer was not observed consistently promoting critical thinking explicitly during classroom activities. Regarding the Use of Technology indicator, all four lecturers integrated digital platforms most commonly Google Classroom allowing students to access learning materials, submit assignments, and collaborate outside the classroom. Based on these observations, it can be concluded that PBL strategies have been effectively used to support student collaboration and technology integration, though there remains a need to improve the consistency of critical thinking development strategies across all lecturers.

Based on document analysis, the Problem-Based Learning strategy is reflected across several course plans and lesson documents, although not yet dominant, with a total of 9 coded instances identified under the Problem-Based Learning category. Among the identified indicators, the most frequently coded sub-theme is the Development of Critical Thinking Skills, constituting 44% of the total, suggesting that course documents often incorporate activities that encourage students to think analytically and apply reasoning to real-world contexts. The second and third most prominent sub-themes are Decision-Making and Clarifying Feedback, each accounting for 13% of the codes, found in task instructions that asked students to independently choose technology tools or teaching methods. Other sub-themes such as Assessment Strategies, Discussion Framework, and Resource Utilization appeared less frequently, each contributing about 6%. Notably, Student Collaboration one of the core characteristics of PBL was not explicitly coded in any of the analyzed documents (0%), indicating that while elements of independent thinking exist, collaborative engagement in problem-solving tasks was not emphasized in the formal planning stage.

Overall, findings from interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis indicate that the Problem-Based Learning strategy has been implemented by lecturers to support Self-Directed Learning, particularly through the development of critical thinking skills, student collaboration, and the integration of technology. While individual problem-solving and the use of digital tools appear to be consistently practiced in classroom settings, collaborative elements were not strongly emphasized in the planning documents, suggesting that the application of PBL in the context of SDL still requires improvement at the instructional design stage. By enhancing the integration of reflective thinking, collaborative engagement, and strategic use of technology, problem-based learning can function more comprehensively as an

approach that fosters learner autonomy and active responsibility in the learning process, as emphasized by Malcolm Knowles (1975) and Mentz & Van Zyl (2018).

## **2. Collaborative Learning**

Based on interview data with several lecturers, the collaborative learning strategy reveals six primary indicators emphasized by English lecturers in fostering self-directed learning. The most prominent indicator is the development of critical thinking skills (26%), followed by decision-making (21%), and student collaboration (21%), while assessment to clarify learning, feedback, and clear instruction each contribute 16% respectively to the overall 19 collaborative learning coded instances. This pattern suggests that lecturers employing collaborative learning place significant emphasis not only on fostering higher-order thinking but also on empowering students to take an active role in decision-making within collaborative tasks. Supporting this, Lecturer C (TKV-3.1) stated: "That's why I use the jigsaw method. After the initial small-group discussion, I rotate them into different groups where they have to share. My role as a lecturer is to facilitate, not merely correct right or wrong answers, but to accompany their learning process." The same lecturer also emphasized accountability in collaboration: "There must be contributions. It's not just about doing an assignment it's about playing a role and reflecting on the process," and further noted the integration of reflective questioning: "I include reflection questions in my PowerPoint slides about what they understood, what they want to critique, or their learning experience." These statements confirm that structured collaboration, reflective questioning, and equitable participation are central to the collaborative strategy, all of which contribute to strengthening learners' self-direction in academic settings.

Based on classroom observations of all four lecturers, the Collaborative Learning strategy has been implemented across most of its indicators, though some aspects have not yet been utilized optimally. Regarding the Group Project indicator, three out of four lecturers provided group assignments that required students to work together, with clear instructions on role division and task monitoring, while one lecturer was found not to consistently use group project activities. For the Peer Teaching indicator, all four lecturers gave students the opportunity to present learning materials to their classmates, followed by feedback from both the lecturer and peers an approach effective in improving understanding while developing public speaking skills and the ability to give and receive constructive feedback. Concerning the Discussion Forum indicator, all lecturers facilitated active discussions through open-ended questions that encouraged critical thinking and expression of opinions, with lecturers summarizing discussions to ensure shared understanding. Overall, collaborative learning strategies have been applied quite well, particularly in peer teaching and classroom discussion, though group project activities still need improvement in consistency. As emphasized by Mentz & Van Zyl (2018), through collaboration and interaction among students, shared responsibility is fostered alongside the development of social skills that support self-directed learning.

Based on document analysis, Collaborative Learning is highly represented in the instructional documents of English Language Education lecturers, with a total of 19 coded instances identified under this theme. The most dominant sub-theme is Group Project (32%), suggesting that collaborative learning is often facilitated through group-based tasks such as project development, group presentations, and lesson material design activities that encourage cooperation, distributed responsibilities, and joint problem-solving. The second most frequent sub-theme is Discussion Forum (18%), reflecting structured opportunities for peer dialogue

including case study analysis and inquiry-based group discussions. Other sub-themes such as Goal-Setting (11%), Peer Feedback, Technology Integration, and Clarifying Feedback each contribute between 7% to 14%, indicating that some collaborative tasks were also designed to involve self-regulation and mutual assessment, often supported by digital platforms like Schoology, Google Docs, or LMS. However, sub-themes such as Group Processing, Promotive Interaction, and Peer Teaching were rarely documented, and notably, Assessment of Collaborative Learning was not identified in any document (0%), suggesting a gap in how group dynamics and individual contributions were planned to be assessed. In conclusion, findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis consistently demonstrate that Collaborative-Based Learning is one of the most actively used strategies to foster SDL among English lecturers, and while many indicators are well integrated into classroom practices, strengthening the assessment of collaborative processes and structured peer feedback in future course design would further enhance alignment with SDL principles of autonomy, interdependence, and reflective collaboration.

### **3. Constructive Feedback**

Based on interview data with several lecturers, the Constructive Feedback strategy was identified from 7 coded instances, with two dominant indicators: Clarifying Feedback (63%) and Discussion-Based Formative Feedback (38%). This shows that English lecturers at Esa Unggul University did not simply provide evaluative remarks, but instead focused on delivering feedback that clarified student understanding and encouraged further discussion. The prevalence of Clarifying Feedback suggests that lecturers used feedback not as a final judgment, but as an opportunity to scaffold learning by asking guiding questions or providing comments that pushed students to revise, rethink, or deepen their responses. Discussion-Based Formative Feedback was also present, indicating that some lecturers incorporated feedback into ongoing classroom discourse rather than isolating it as a post-task activity, allowing students to immediately reflect on their performance in a supportive environment. Although no direct interview quote was explicitly labeled under constructive feedback, one lecturer shared: "Usually, after I give them a task, I let them revise. I give comments directly on Google Classroom and allow them to re-submit their work" (TKV 1.2), demonstrating a cycle of feedback and revision consistent with constructive feedback practices. Overall, these findings suggest that constructive feedback, particularly when used to clarify learning and stimulate reflection, plays a valuable role in fostering students' self-directed learning and building autonomous learners, as emphasized by Malcolm Knowles (1975) and Mentz & Van Zyl (2018).

Based on classroom observations of all four lecturers, the use of Constructive Feedback strategies shows that this strategy has been applied by the majority of lecturers, although several indicators have not been fully utilized by all. Regarding the Use of Technology for Feedback indicator, only one out of four lecturers used digital platforms such as Google Classroom to provide feedback, indicating that the integration of technology to support feedback processes still needs to be improved among the remaining three lecturers. In terms of the Assessing Collaborative Learning indicator, three out of four lecturers provided feedback related to students' collaboration, teamwork, and individual contributions during group tasks an approach essential for helping students reflect on their roles in group work and improve their collaborative abilities. Regarding the Clarity and Specificity of Feedback indicator, all

four lecturers were observed using this strategy, providing feedback that was clear, specific, and directly related to students' performance by explaining both strengths and areas requiring improvement. Overall, constructive feedback strategies have been applied quite well, particularly in providing clear and specific feedback, though the use of technology to support the feedback process still needs to be optimized, as emphasized by Mentz & Van Zyl (2018), who state that through constructive and timely feedback, students are encouraged to reflect on their learning progress and develop greater responsibility for their own learning.

Based on document analysis of course documents including RPS and lesson plans, the Constructive Feedback strategy appears with moderate frequency, with a total of 6 coded instances identified from documents used by English Language Education lecturers at Esa Unggul University. The most frequently observed sub-theme is Clarity of Feedback (21%), indicating that several course documents have made efforts to provide students with clear feedback through rubrics, task instructions, or guidelines for revising assignments a fundamental aspect of SDL that helps learners understand the direction of their learning. Two other sub-themes, Development of Critical Thinking Skills and Decision-Making, each appeared at 16%, suggesting that feedback in these courses encourages students to reflect critically, revise their work, and make independent decisions regarding their learning process. Other sub-themes such as Reflection, Use of Technology for Feedback, Student Engagement, and Goal-Setting appeared in lower but notable frequencies between 5% and 11%, while Assessment of Collaborative Learning, Promotive Interaction, and Peer Teaching were not coded in any document (0%), indicating that the use of constructive feedback within collaborative or social learning contexts is not explicitly described in the planning documents.

In summary, the analysis of interviews, classroom observations, and instructional documents highlights that Constructive Feedback is present and moderately integrated across various aspects of teaching practice within the English Language Education program at Esa Unggul University. Lecturers demonstrated a commitment to providing clear and formative feedback that supports student reflection, revision, and improvement, with the emphasis on clarity and specificity of feedback consistently observed in both classroom practices and written plans. However, while some feedback strategies promote individual learner autonomy, others such as the use of technology for feedback delivery, assessment of collaborative learning, and peer-based feedback remain underutilized across both classroom settings and planning documents. To further align with the principles of Self-Directed Learning, future instructional planning should consider expanding the scope of feedback practices by embedding structured, dialogic, and interactive feedback mechanisms that empower students not only to respond to feedback, but also to evaluate and guide their own learning progress more independently.

#### **4. Cooperative Learning**

Based on interview data with several lecturers, the Cooperative Learning strategy reveals three primary indicators emphasized by English lecturers in fostering self-directed learning. The most prominent indicators are discussion forum (29%) and flipped classroom (29%), followed by group process (14%) from a total of 14 coded instances related to Cooperative Learning. This pattern suggests that lecturers place significant emphasis on creating structured discussions and reflection opportunities to enhance student understanding, while the use of flipped classroom approaches further supports independent learning by encouraging students

to access learning resources outside the classroom. Supporting this, Lecturer A (TKV-1.1) explained: "If the discussion is synchronous, I facilitate it directly in class. After group discussions, they present the results to their classmates. That's where the reflection session happens, and students are encouraged to re-evaluate their understanding." Lecturer B (TKV-3.1) also shared: "I often use educational videos from YouTube or other credible sources. I share these as supplemental materials students can access anytime this lets them learn at their own pace, revisit unclear parts, and explore content beyond class time," and further noted: "There is reflection at the end of each session. There are always production and reflection phases in every lesson." These statements confirm the integration of structured discussion, pre-class preparation, and reflective group processes as part of the cooperative learning strategy, all of which contribute to enhancing students' autonomy and responsibility within academic settings.

Based on classroom observations of all four lecturers, the Cooperative Learning strategy has been applied across most of its indicators, though some aspects have not been fully utilized by all lecturers. Regarding the Positive Interdependence indicator, three out of four lecturers designed group tasks requiring all members to contribute in order to achieve learning objectives, while one lecturer was not observed applying this strategy consistently. For the Promotive Interaction indicator, all four lecturers facilitated activities and discussions that encouraged students to support each other's understanding, exchange ideas, and work collaboratively providing opportunities to develop both cognitive and social aspects of learning. In terms of the Social Skills indicator, all four lecturers provided guidance related to teamwork, communication, and conflict resolution, emphasizing effective communication, mutual respect, and problem-solving within group work. Regarding the Group Processing indicator, three out of four lecturers encouraged students to reflect on their group performance and discuss ways to improve collaboration, while one lecturer was not observed facilitating formal group reflection activities. Overall, cooperative learning strategies have been applied quite well, especially in promotive interaction and social skills development, though positive interdependence and group processing still need improvement, as Mentz & Van Zyl (2018) emphasized that cooperative activities encourage students to take responsibility, work together effectively, and develop social and metacognitive skills essential for independent learning.

Based on document analysis, while elements of Cooperative Learning are present in course designs at Esa Unggul University, their application remains focused on a few dominant practices. The most dominant sub-theme is Group Project (50%), suggesting that collaborative project-based tasks such as preparing teaching materials, presenting technology-based projects, or evaluating digital tools are central features in course design, allowing students to share responsibilities and learn from one another. The second sub-theme is Self-Assessment (33%), indicating that collaborative work is often followed by reflective tasks where students evaluate their own contributions, though its limited appearance implies that more consistent planning is needed to embed self-assessment across all collaborative processes. Technology-Supported Cooperative Learning appeared in only 17% of documents, showing that digital platforms such as Google Docs or LMS features remain underutilized compared to other instructional strategies. Notably, other collaborative indicators such as Promotive Interaction, Social Skills, and Group Processing were not found at all in the reviewed documents, indicating that although group-based assignments are present, the process of managing collaboration and facilitating

supportive interaction has not been explicitly outlined in most course plans. In conclusion, triangulated findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis indicate that Cooperative Learning has been applied with varying degrees of depth, and to fully support SDL, future instructional planning should incorporate clearer frameworks for managing group dynamics, embed peer-support mechanisms, and maximize the potential of technology to facilitate meaningful cooperation among students.

## **5. Technology**

Based on interview data with several lecturers, the Technology strategy reveals three primary indicators emphasized by English lecturers in supporting self-directed learning. The most prominent indicator is Assessment for Learning Collaboration (36%), followed by Discussion Forum (29%), and Assessment Strategies (21%) from a total of 14 coded instances related to technology integration in the classroom. This pattern suggests that lecturers utilizing technology not only provide learning resources but also strategically design assessments and discussions that promote independent learning and collaboration. Supporting this, Lecturer A (TKV-1.1) stated: "I often use Google Classroom or other platforms to distribute materials and assignments. Students can submit their work, I can give feedback, and they can see their progress easily." Lecturer C (TKV-3.1) further highlighted how technology supports collaboration: "For group projects, I use online discussion forums or chat groups so they can coordinate outside class, share ideas, and prepare together," and also noted: "Sometimes I use *Mentimeter* or Kahoot to make discussions interactive students can express their opinions anonymously, and we can discuss the results together." These examples demonstrate that technology not only serves as a medium for delivering materials but also plays a crucial role in shaping assessment, encouraging collaboration, and facilitating reflective discussions key components of fostering self-directed learning through technology integration.

Based on classroom observations of all four lecturers, the use of Technology as a strategy to support SDL has been widely applied, although certain aspects still require further improvement. For the Technology-Supported Cooperative Learning indicator, all four lecturers utilized digital tools such as Google Docs and Padlet to facilitate group projects and peer discussions, allowing students to collaborate efficiently both inside and outside the classroom. Regarding the Technology-Enhanced Learning indicator, three out of four lecturers integrated interactive platforms such as Kahoot to increase student engagement, while one lecturer was not observed using interactive technology-based tools during classroom sessions. For the Mobile Learning indicator, two out of four lecturers encouraged students to utilize mobile devices to search for information and support independent learning, while the other two lecturers did not explicitly promote mobile learning during observations. Lastly, for the Flipped Classroom indicator, only one lecturer was observed applying this strategy by sharing pre-class learning materials through online platforms, enabling students to study independently before class so that classroom time could be used more effectively for active discussions. Overall, technology strategies have been applied considerably well, particularly in supporting cooperative learning and enhancing classroom engagement, though mobile learning and flipped classroom approaches still need improvement across all lecturers, as Mentz & Van Zyl (2018) emphasized that technology integration plays a significant role in fostering SDL by providing students with access to learning resources, opportunities for collaboration, and greater autonomy in managing their learning pathways.

Based on document analysis, Technology is one of the most frequently embedded strategies used by lecturers to support SDL, with a total of 20 coded instances, suggesting that course designers intentionally integrated various forms of technology to facilitate independent learning and collaboration. The most dominant sub-theme is Technology-Enhanced Learning (43%), referring to the use of online platforms, educational applications, and multimedia tools with several RPS and lesson plans including instructions for using Google Classroom, Kahoot, and Schoology for assignment submission, digital materials distribution, and interactive assessments. The second most frequent sub-theme is Technology-Supported Cooperative Learning (13%), reflecting the integration of digital collaboration tools such as Padlet, shared Google Docs, and online discussion forums to support group work and asynchronous discussions. Other sub-themes including Use of Technology and Material Resources (each 10%), as well as Goal-Setting, Decision-Making, and Clarity of Feedback (each 7%) indicate that technology was also used to support students' self-regulation and reflective planning, though not yet in a fully consistent manner. Notably, no codes were found for Technology Integration for Assessing Collaborative Learning, indicating that planning documents did not fully detail how technology could be used systematically for self- or peer-assessment. In conclusion, triangulated findings from interviews, observations, and document analysis demonstrate that technology plays a significant and multi-faceted role in supporting SDL, and while digital tools are effectively used to enhance engagement and facilitate collaboration, their integration into structured feedback systems, reflective assessments, and flipped learning environments remains inconsistent suggesting that future teaching practices should include more intentional planning for interactive assessment, mobile learning pathways, and student-led inquiry using digital tools.

## **6. Formative Assessment**

Based on interview data with several lecturers, the Formative Assessment strategy reveals three primary indicators emphasized by English lecturers in supporting self-directed learning. The most prominent indicators are Clarifying Feedback and Assessment Strategies, each contributing 28% of the total coded instances, followed by Discussion Forum and Assessing Collaborative Learning, each with 22% of the total 16 coded instances related to formative assessment practices. This pattern suggests that lecturers implementing formative assessment prioritize the delivery of clear, constructive feedback and the design of appropriate assessment strategies to monitor student progress, while also incorporating structured discussions and collaborative opportunities to ensure that assessment supports ongoing learning and reflection. Supporting this, Lecturer A (TKV-1.1) explained: "Feedback is always provided regularly and adjusted to the type of task. For productive tasks like writing or presentations, I give immediate feedback, either written or oral usually the same day after the session." Lecturer C (TKV-3.1) added: "Yes, I use quizzes and group discussions as part of formative assessment," while Lecturer A (TKV-1.1) further noted: "After group discussions, they present the results to their classmates. That's where the reflection session happens, and students are encouraged to re-evaluate their understanding." Lecturer B (TKV-3.1) also highlighted the role of technology: "For group projects, I use online discussion forums or chat groups so they can coordinate outside class, share ideas, and prepare together." These findings demonstrate that formative assessment in the classroom serves as an interactive and reflective process that contributes to enhancing students' self-directed learning.

Based on classroom observations of all four lecturers, the application of Formative Assessment strategies was present but varied in its implementation across different indicators. For the Goal-Setting indicator, two out of four lecturers incorporated goal-setting activities by clearly communicating expected learning outcomes and encouraging students to take ownership of their progress, aligning with SDL principles where clarity in goals supports students in planning and monitoring their own learning paths. Regarding the Assessing Collaborative Learning indicator, three lecturers provided structured feedback not only on academic outcomes but also on the quality of collaboration, role distribution, and group dynamics reinforcing SDL through cooperative reflection and accountability. For the Technology-Supported Feedback indicator, three lecturers integrated technological tools such as interactive platforms or digital submissions to streamline formative assessment activities including reviewing assignments and giving timely input, though not all feedback was delivered through technology, indicating partial integration of this strategy. Lastly, the Clarity and Specificity of Feedback indicator was observed in only one lecturer's practice, suggesting that there is still room to strengthen the consistency and depth of feedback delivery across all lecturers. Overall, formative assessment as an SDL-supportive strategy has been moderately applied, and as Mentz & Van Zyl (2018) highlight, formative assessment plays a vital role in fostering students' ability to reflect, self-correct, and take responsibility for their learning — an essential component of self-directed learning environments.

Based on document analysis, Formative Assessment is one of the most frequently embedded strategies used by lecturers to support SDL, with a total of 18 coded instances across four instructional documents. The most dominant sub-theme is Decision-Making (27%), reflected in course documents that encouraged students to determine assignment formats, select project topics, or set learning priorities practices that promote ownership and learner control as core principles of SDL. Equally prominent is Assessment Strategies (27%), evidenced by the inclusion of peer-review activities, formative quizzes, self-assessment rubrics, and reflection-based tasks designed to help students track their own progress and adjust their learning strategies. Developing Critical Thinking Skills appeared at 14%, capturing tasks that required students to analyze, compare, evaluate, or synthesize information through case study analysis and open-ended questions. Clarifying Feedback accounted for 8% of codes, reflecting instances where lecturers planned for direct written or oral feedback framed as guidance for improvement. Goal-Setting and Technology-Supported Collaborative Learning each contributed 14%, though sub-themes such as Mutual Responsibility, Positive Interdependence, and Promotive Interaction each appeared only once (3%), while Assessing Collaborative Learning was absent entirely indicating that the lecturers' approach to formative assessment remains largely individualistic, with limited emphasis on peer-based or group assessment mechanisms.

In conclusion, the triangulated findings from interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis indicate that formative assessment is widely acknowledged and moderately used as a key strategy to foster SDL among English lecturers at Esa Unggul University. While practices such as decision-making, clarifying feedback, and the use of assessment strategies are evident, their application tends to focus more on individual improvement than on peer-based collaboration, highlighting a strong foundation in promoting learner autonomy and reflective thinking yet revealing the need for more structured integration of collaborative

assessment processes. The absence of collaborative assessment elements such as group reflection, peer review, and mutual accountability in planning documents suggests a significant area for growth in future instructional design. To further enhance SDL, future instructional planning should incorporate peer review, mutual responsibility, and formative group assessment mechanisms that emphasize both individual growth and collective accountability, ensuring that formative assessment not only informs learning but also actively shapes students into more self-directed, reflective, and socially engaged learners.

## **7. Climate Setting**

Based on interview data with several lecturers, three dominant indicators were identified within the Classroom Climate Setting category that support the development of Self-Directed Learning (SDL), namely Mutual Respect, Use of Technology, and Decision-Making Support. From a total of 12 coded instances, the most frequent aspect observed was Decision-Making Support (42%), followed by Mutual Respect (33%), and Use of Technology (25%). This finding indicates that creating a learning environment where students are encouraged to make independent decisions, treated with respect, and supported with technological tools is essential in fostering SDL among learners. One lecturer mentioned that mutual respect was built by positioning themselves as a learning partner rather than a dominant figure, making students feel more comfortable engaging in discussions and participating actively in the learning process.

Based on classroom observation results across the four lecturers, several key indicators emerged consistently, including Trust Building, Human Resources Utilization, Technological Support for Cooperative Learning, and Mobile Learning, all of which appeared in every observed session. The presence of Trust Building was evident through lecturers' efforts to cultivate open and respectful communication, enabling students to express their ideas without fear of judgment. Furthermore, the integration of Mobile Learning and Technology-Supported Cooperative Learning reflected the use of digital tools to support student engagement and collaboration, reinforcing flexibility and student autonomy as two central aspects of SDL. However, although technology utilization was considerably high in terms of material access, its application to support truly independent learning had not yet been fully optimized across all classroom practices.

Document analysis results indicate that Climate Setting was minimally represented in the instructional documents reviewed, with only one coded instance identified across all analyzed materials. The two sub-themes identified were Clarifying Feedback and Discussion Forum, each accounting for 50% of the total coded instances. Although both elements reflect efforts to create a supportive learning environment, several core indicators such as Mutual Respect, Trust Building, and Supportive Environment were not found in the analyzed documents. This suggests a disconnect between what is practiced in the classroom and what is formally planned, highlighting an opportunity for lecturers to more explicitly integrate climate setting strategies into their instructional design in order to create a more sustainable and student-centered learning environment.

## **8. Take Ownership**

Based on interview data with several lecturers, three dominant indicators within the Take Ownership component were identified as supporting SDL, namely Self-Assessment (40%), Decision-Making (30%), and Goal Setting (30%) from a total of 10 coded references. These

findings suggest that allowing students to evaluate their learning, decide on their learning approaches, and set personal goals are central strategies employed by lecturers to encourage students to take ownership of their learning. One lecturer emphasized the importance of guiding students to evaluate their own progress through critical reflective questions, while another gave students the freedom to make learning decisions such as choosing group presentation topics or selecting preferred learning media and resources.

Based on classroom observation results across the four lecturers, Take Ownership strategies were present to varying degrees, focusing on three main indicators: Goal-Setting, Decision-Making, and Self-Responsibility. The most frequently observed indicator was Goal-Setting, which appeared in all four lecturers' classroom practices, where students were guided to formulate specific learning objectives during the early stages of task preparation or project planning. Decision-Making was identified in the strategies used by three lecturers, with students provided opportunities to choose project topics or determine the format of their presentation deliverables. Meanwhile, Self-Responsibility was reflected in the strategies of two lecturers through the assignment of roles requiring personal accountability such as submitting self-reflections or peer assessments, although this indicator appeared with comparatively lower frequency.

Document analysis shows that Take Ownership was consistently embedded in lecturers' strategies to support SDL, with a total of 16 coded instances identified from four instructional documents. The most frequently appearing sub-theme was Decision-Making (28%), reflecting how lecturers provided space for students to make choices related to their learning. Assessment Strategies accounted for 16%, indicating that assessments were designed not only for grading purposes but also as tools for guiding learning and fostering student reflection. However, the absence of Assessing Collaborative Learning in the analyzed documents indicates that formative assessment practices related to taking ownership remained predominantly individual in nature, suggesting that the integration of collaborative and peer-driven dimensions into assessment design needs to be strengthened in future instructional planning.

## **9. Metacognitive Skills**

Based on interview data with four English lecturers at Esa Unggul University, three main indicators of Metacognitive Skill development were identified, namely Self-Assessment (40%), Strategic Planning (40%), and Decision-Making (20%) from a total of 10 coded instances. The most dominant indicator, Self-Assessment, was described by all lecturers as an essential component of learning, where students were consistently encouraged to reflect on how they learn and monitor their own progress through dedicated reflection sessions and critical questioning. In terms of Strategic Planning, lecturers reported helping students set goals and choose learning methods, including providing students with the freedom to select preferred learning approaches or task strategies as long as they remained relevant to the established learning objectives.

Based on classroom observation results across the four lecturers, strategies related to Metacognitive Skills were observed through two main indicators: Strategic Planning and Self-Assessment. The most frequently identified indicator was Strategic Planning, found in the classroom practices of three lecturers, where structured opportunities were provided for students to design learning plans or outline project phases through guided worksheets and verbal instructions. Self-Assessment appeared in the classrooms of two lecturers, where

students were prompted to reflect on their own performance through written reflections or informal verbal feedback sessions. Although the observed strategies were promising, the development of Metacognitive Skills remained limited in frequency compared to other SDL themes, indicating a need for more consistent integration of metacognitive activities such as regular reflective journals and structured goal-monitoring tools across the curriculum.

The analysis of instructional documents for the aspect of Metacognitive Skills revealed moderate representation, with a total of 10 coded instances identified from four documents. The most prominent sub-theme was Decision-Making (24%), suggesting that lecturers designed activities where students were encouraged to make choices related to learning tasks or strategies. Assessment Strategies and Developing Critical Thinking Skills each represented 17% of the coding, reflecting the use of formative assessments as guides for students in evaluating their own progress and engaging in analytical reflection. However, the absence of Assessing Collaborative Learning in the data indicates that although students were encouraged to reflect on their individual learning, collaborative planning and shared metacognitive reflection among peers remained limited, which should be addressed more deliberately in future instructional design to support holistic SDL development.

#### **10. Resource Utilization**

Based on interview data with several lecturers, three dominant indicators in the Resource Utilization strategy were identified, namely Human Resources, Material Resources, and Proactive Engagement, each representing 33% of the total 12 coded instances. This balanced distribution suggests that lecturers employ a comprehensive approach in encouraging students to make full use of both personal and material learning resources as part of fostering SDL. Regarding Human Resources, lecturers emphasized the importance of peer interaction and open communication between students and instructors, reminding students that learning does not always have to be individual and that seeking help from peers or instructors is an encouraged practice. For Material Resources, lecturers consistently encouraged students to explore various sources of information beyond the materials provided in class, training them to become resourceful and critical learners capable of verifying and integrating different sources of knowledge.

Based on classroom observation results across the four lecturers, the use of Resource Utilization strategies to support SDL was moderately evident, particularly across three indicators: Material Resources, Human Resources, and Proactive Engagement. The most frequently observed indicator was Material Resources, found in all four teaching sessions, where lecturers actively guided students to utilize a variety of supporting materials such as textbooks, online journals, and digital content platforms that were integrated into task requirements. Human Resources was evident in three observed sessions, where lecturers encouraged students to consult peers or engage in peer feedback sessions during project development. Meanwhile, Proactive Engagement appeared in two classrooms, where students were explicitly encouraged to explore additional resources beyond those provided in class, demonstrating an intentional effort to cultivate curiosity and self-motivation as key traits of SDL-oriented learners.

Findings from the document analysis indicate that Resource Utilization was moderately addressed in the instructional materials reviewed, with a total of 10 coded instances identified across the documents. The most dominant sub-theme was Material Resources, accounting for

50% of the total codes, reflecting a strong emphasis on providing students with access to diverse sources of information including reading lists, online articles, e-books, and multimedia materials. Assessment Strategies, Decision-Making, and Clarifying Feedback each appeared with 14% of the codes, indicating that students were not only encouraged to utilize resources but also to demonstrate understanding through assignments requiring independent resource exploration. However, the absence of Assessing Collaborative Learning in the documents suggests that student engagement with learning resources was still designed predominantly for individual rather than collaborative learning, indicating that future instructional designs should incorporate more structured opportunities for peer-based resource sharing and collaborative exploration to further enrich SDL development.

## CONCLUSION

This study examined how English lecturers at Esa Unggul University foster Self-Directed Learning (SDL) through various instructional strategies, identifying ten key approaches Collaborative Learning, Formative Assessment, Technology Integration, Cooperative Learning, Problem-Based Learning, Constructive Feedback, Climate Setting, Task Ownership, Metacognitive Skills, and Resource Utilization based on interviews, classroom observations, and document analysis. The findings revealed that Collaborative Learning, Formative Assessment, and Technology Integration were the most dominant strategies across instruments, as they effectively promoted student engagement, continuous feedback, and the use of digital platforms such as Google Classroom, while strategies such as Metacognitive Skills, Task Ownership, and Climate Setting appeared less frequently, indicating a gap in fostering deeper autonomy, emotional readiness, and self-regulation. Theoretically, the study reinforces the view that SDL does not develop spontaneously but requires intentional guidance, scaffolding, and structured emotional support from lecturers; practically, SDL-aligned strategies were shown to help students become more reflective, confident, and actively engaged in their learning. The implications suggest that lecturers should more deliberately integrate SDL strategies into lesson planning and classroom practice, institutions should provide professional development to strengthen lecturers' capacity to cultivate metacognitive awareness and learner ownership, and future research should explore students' perspectives across broader contexts to ensure more consistent and sustainable SDL development in higher education.

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