# Junior Students' Self-Regulation Strategies

# in Dealing with Assignments

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**Abstract**

One of the courses in English Language Education Study Program of Sanata Dharma University is Play Performance Course. In this course, students work in groups. Students needs to plan, monitor, and evaluate their works. Those activities are considered as self-regulated activities. This research provides an issue to discuss: To what extent do the junior students use self-regulation strategies in dealing with assignments? This study intends to describe self-regulation strategies used by the junior students of the study program. The researcher used in depth-interview as the medium of data gathering. The participants of the research were the students of English Language Education Study Program of Sanata Dharma University who had taken Play Performance Class in the third year. They came from batch 2015. The result shows that they use four, instead of five, self-regulation strategies. Independence learning as the characteristic of activities played important role in divining such activities in order to enhance their cognitive and other aspects. This research might help the students of English Language Education Study Program to modify their strategies in learning, especially in dealing with their assignments.

**Keywords:** assignments, Play Performance Class, self-regulated learning, self-regulation strategies

**Introduction**

In the fifth semester, the students of English Language Education Study Program of Sanata Dharma University take 8 courses in average. It equals to 21-24 credits of study in one semester. It means that the students have to deal with their tight schedule and other assignments outside classroom. As a result, they need to

arrange their plans and schedules to manage their activities. Besides, they need to do monitoring, whether self-monitoring or being monitored from others. Also, the students do their evaluation towards everything they have done. This evaluation needed to gain better feedback in order to arrange next plan and/or schedule. Those activities are considered as self-regulated activities.

From this phenomenon, students need to plan their schedule and set their goals. In the progress of doing their assignment, they also need to monitor their progress whether it keeps on the "track" or not. Furthermore, if the strategy in achieving the goal does not fit, they have to evaluate why it does not work, then use other strategies to reach their goals. In the end of the progress, they also need to evaluate everything in achieving their targets; what needs to keep, what strategy needs to change if it does not work, what comes into input for the next progress if any, and what value they can withdraw in completing their progress. Self-regulation is a mindful process in which learners use a range of strategies such as self-evaluation, self-monitoring (Watson, 2004), goal setting, time management and organisation (Gibbs & Poskitt, 2010).

Self-regulated learning (SRL) emphasizes autonomy and control by the individual who monitors, directs, and regulates actions toward goals of information achievement, increasing knowledge and skill, and self-development. Zimmerman (2000) said that self-regulation, "... refers to self-generated thoughts, feelings, and actions that are planned and cyclically adapted to the attainment of personal goals" (p.14). For example, students of Play Performance Course have their progress in groups. It causes they have to deal with others' schedule also. Students are able to maintain the process of cognitive and affection sides in certain groups. This capability becomes developed in every single activity held by the groups. This capability is called soft skill. It consists of reasonability, independence, sympathy, sense of belonging, creativity, honesty, open mind, self-regulation, leadership, and team work. Dealing with others demands good self-regulation, because every student has his/her agenda. Moreover, their activities are not only in campus. Many of them are active in other communities outside university. It is clear that they have to deal with so many plans and schedule along the semester.

Self-regulation (or self-regulated learning) refers to self-generated thoughts, feeling, and actions that are planned and systematically adapted as needed to affect one's learning and motivation (Schunk, 1994; Zimmerman, 1989, 1990, 2000, Zimmerman & Kitsantas, 1996). Self-regulation comprises such processes as setting goals for learning, attending to and concentrating on instruction, using effective strategies to organize, code, rehearse information to be remembered, establishing a productive work environment, using resources effectively, monitoring performance, managing time effectively, seeking assistance when needed, holding positive beliefs about one's capabilities, the value of learning, the factors influencing learning, and the anticipated outcomes of actions, and experiencing pride and satisfaction with one's efforts (McCombs, 1989; Pintrich &

De Groot, 1990; Weinstein & Mayer, 1986; Zimmerman, 1994). In trying to mix the various definitions available at the time, Pintrich (2000) described self-regulated learning as: "an active, constructive process whereby learners set goals for their learning and then attempt to monitor, regulate, and control their cognition, motivation and behaviour, guided and constrained by their goals and the contextual features in the environment" (p. 453). This research aims to seek better understanding about self-regulation strategies of the fifth students of English Language Education Study Program to cope with the assignments outside classroom. Every student may have different strategies, since they are dealing with different circumstances of learning.

The writer intended to address one research question in the study, which is "To what extent do the junior students use self-regulation strategies in dealing with their assignments?" This research gives benefit to English Language Education Study Program. It shows whether the materials students have learned is sufficient or not in the real practice. Moreover, this research gives more information which parts are needed to improve based on the students experience. It can be a reference to develop pre-obligatory courses of project-based courses. Also, it gives guideline for the study program to design proper set of curricula. This research is also beneficial for future research who is interested in mixed qualitative-quantitative study. The researcher expects that this study can give additional information regarding to Play Performance Class, self-regulation, and also strategies in developing self-regulated learning.

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Different elements stand out in this definition. First of all, it conveys an active part: students are actively involved and have clear intentions to be engaged in learning. This component links directly to the second element: goal-orientation,

that is, the purposeful focus of learning on the achievement of a goal. The third aspect, the regulation and control of cognition, refers to the use of learning strategies to enhance one's learning (Zimmerman, 1990). The fourth element relates to the context of self-regulated learning. A learning environment can both stimulate and hinder learning (e.g., working in a quiet, orderly space instead of in a chaotic and noisy room). The final element integrated in this definition is student motivation: students have to be motivated to adopt this intense form of learning, in which motivational and cognitive aspects are intertwined (Boekaerts, 1996).

Singer and Bashir (1999) have described self-regulated learning as a *meta* construct defined as 'a set of behaviours that are used flexibly to guide, monitor, and direct the success of one's performance' and 'to manage and direct interactions within the learning environment in order to ensure success' (p.265). Both the theoretical and empirical literature related to self-regulated learning (occasionally referred to as *academic self-regulation*) presents a number of examples which—directly or indirectly—illustrate the relevance of learning style (i.e. preferred ways of responding to learning tasks, including cognitive processes and behaviour, Peterson *et al.*, 2008), perceived academic personal control (i.e. 'beliefs about their capacity to influence and predict daily life events', Perry, 2003, p.3) and student peer assessment and self-assessment (i.e. student evaluation of the academic quality of their peers' and their own work) to self-regulated learning. It is these three constructs then which provide the focus for this article, in which it is suggested that—certainly according to a social cognitive perspective (Schunk, 2001)—each plays a key role in the development and practice of student self-regulated learning.

At the most general level, people's goals centre on who they want to be or what they want to become. For example, a person might be striving to "be independent" or even to "be a good person." Self-relevant goals like these have been studied by numerous researchers (e.g., Emmons, 1986; Klinger, 1977; Little, 1981; Zirkel & Cantor, 1990) and are often the most highly valued goals in life. The second component is preparation for action. Having adopted a goal, people prepare to attain it. This is the second stage in the self-regulation process. Here, people gather information, construct scenarios regarding possible outcomes, and engage in behavioural practice (rehearsal). In short, they design and prepare to implement a plan to achieve their goal. Of course, not all behaviour fits this model. As noted earlier, sometimes people act impulsively without a good deal of forethought. Impulsive behaviour of this type is not considered in this framework (Baumeister, 1994). The last component of the self-regulation process is a cybernetic cycle of behaviour (made up of several component processes) (Markus & Wurf, 1987). Having adopted a goal and formulated a plan of action, individuals set out to achieve it. Generally speaking, success at any activity depends on four factors: ability, effort, strategy, and luck (Heider, 1958).

However, individualised self-regulation does exist, since this form of regulation is tailored towards the individual firm. A first group of five categories of

self-regulation is provided by Bartle and Vass (2005). The researcher lists the five categories below together with their meaning.

1). Co-operative: where they see the category as encompassing "cooperation between regulator and regulated on the operation of statutory regulation";

2). Delegated: this includes the delegation of the implementation of statutory duties by a public authority to self-regulatory bodies;

3). Devolved: this is the devolution of statutory powers to self-regulatory bodies and may include the specification of self-regulatory schemes in statutes;

4). Facilitated: although not directly backed by statute, this category envisages explicitly state-supported self-regulation;

5). Tacit: this category is the closest representation to pure self-regulation.

As stated previously, the researcher focuses on self-regulation strategies. These strategies are described by Chan (2010) in her book, entitled, "Mobile Communication and the Protection of Children". This book is her doctoral dissertation. The researcher found that the theories listed were appropriately used to conduct the study. She states five strategies compiled from other theorists. The strategies are:

### Consensual Self-Regulation Strategy

Ogus (1995) refers to 'consensual self-regulation' by providing an example of what an individualised self-regulation is. Ogus's approach stresses on achieving consensus by open participation of those involved. For example, Ogus posits that at the heart of consensual self-regulation, compliance with general regulatory objectives should primarily be achieved by agreement between employers and employees through consultation and negotiation. According to Ogus, the consultation and negotiation stage must precede the issuance of formal regulations (seen in the terms of codes of practice and guidance notes). Much benefit can be derived from this approach with resulting standards being better tailored to suit local circumstances and conditions. The parties from which protection is devised are themselves involved in a standard setting. Incentives to devise better and perhaps cheaper means of meeting the risks are preserved.

### Enforced Self-Regulation Strategy

A second form of individualised self-regulation is Ayers and Braithwaite's (1992), 'enforced self-regulation'. This form of self-regulation involves negotiations between the state and the individual firms to produce regulations which are particularised to each firm. Self-regulation in this sense is 'enforced' in the following manner: first, each firm is required to propose its own regulatory standards to avoid harsher and less tailored standards imposed by the state – this is the self-regulation aspect of enforced self-regulation. Second, the rules are publicly ratified. This is necessary as in the event the private enforcement of these rules fails, the rules can be publicly enforced. Enforced self-regulation is often used to distinguish it from co-regulation in the sense that in co-regulation the state

initiates the move by establishing parameters or a framework within which the industry works. The state can also be said to support co-regulation by providing prescriptive laws to ensure its due compliance. In this type, self-regulation is understood as how the university plays role in monitoring the students. Of course, it is about administrative matters. For example, when students are trying to borrow some rooms to have practice or meetings, they have to ask for permission to the BSP. Also, this type of self-regulated strategies demands the students to cope with regulations of the university. In this case, the regulations meant are not directly regulating the students. The students also obey them as a basic consensus towards the behaviours inside the university.

### Co-Regulation Strategy

Co-regulation is industry-association or sector self-regulation with some oversight and/or ratification by the state.16 In plain terminology, co-regulation is a strategy where the state sets up the broad parameters of regulation and the industry concerned is then responsible for the development of detailed regulations; these regulations are then approved and administered by a regulatory agency. Co-regulation thus refers to the situation where the regulator and industry stakeholders work together, with the regulator setting the framework to work within. The industry stakeholders may be left to draft detailed rules within this framework and to take responsibility for implementation and enforcement. It also covers the situation where industry develops and administers a code and the government provides the ability to enforce the code by giving it legislative backing in some way.

### Mandated Self-Regulation Strategy

In most circumstances, self-regulation is seen as substitutes for state regulation. As such, the components of self-regulation are not dissimilar to the standard state regulatory process. The regulatory processes include determining governing principles, that is (1) policy making, (2) defining appropriate rules by legislating, (3) enforcing these rules against violators, and (4) adjudication – deciding if a violation had taken place and if so, (5) imposing the appropriate sanction.17 As can be seen, a number of relationships do exist in which the state does have an input. This is seen most clearly in circumstances where self-regulation is the result of government threats (what Ayers and Braithwaite (1992) terms as enforced self-regulation) or where the government's involvement is seen in supporting policy making and in enforcement. These relationships can take the form of mandated self-regulation. The collective group or industry is required to formulate and enforce norms within a framework defined and provided by the state and coerced self-regulation. The industry formulates and imposes the regulations not as a result of their own free will, but rather as a result of threats by the state of statutorily imposed regulations. These relationships are prime

examples of enforced self-regulation.

### *Sanctioned Self-Regulation Strategy*

A lesser form of state intervention is seen in sanctioned self-regulation and voluntary self-regulation. What warrants clarification is whether the term self-regulation implicitly excludes all forms of state intervention. Although the term literally implies that state intervention is excluded, and pure voluntary self-regulation with no state intervention, direct or indirect, does exist, we must admit that these are few. We provide as an example, 'Customer's Charter', where small businesses may develop a charter as a guide to good customer service. In fact, the majority of self-regulations have some form of state input either by way of direct involvement or as a result of governmental pressure. In the sanctioned self-regulation, the regulations are formulated by the collective group or industry. The regulations are then subjected to the government's approval. The latter (as its name implies) is where no active state intervention whether direct or indirect is involved. Thus, despite the argument by Corn Revere (1998) who opines (1) that self-regulation is best promoted by ending all direct and indirect government control, and (2) that the effort to promote government policies by means of threat, indirect pressure, and suggested industry codes are not true self-regulation, we argue in support of Price and Verhulst (2005) that most forms of self-regulation exist with some degree of relationship with the state. (In passing, we admit that individualised self-regulation where the state rarely intervenes does exist. An example of this form of self-regulation is the Customer's Charter). The state's interest may be passive in nature in that the interest may only be activated when circumstances are so dire as to warrant its attention.

### Method

In conducting the research, the researcher used qualitative method. Qualitative method is one in which the inquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e., the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed. with an intent of developing a theory or pattern) or advocacy/participatory perspectives (i.e., political, issue-oriented, collaborative. or change oriented) or both (Mason, 2002). Mason (2002) stated that it also uses strategies of inquiry such as narratives, phenomenology, ethnographies, grounded theory studies, or case studies.

Qualitative research should involve critical self-scrutiny by the researcher, or active reflexivity (Plummer, 2001). This means that researchers should constantly take stock of their actions and their role in the research process, and subject these

to the same critical analysis as the rest of their 'data'. This is based on the belief that a researcher cannot be neutral, or objective, or isolated, from the knowledge and evidence the researchers are generating. Instead, the researchers should understand their role in that process. Indeed, the very act of asking oneself difficult questions in the research process is part of the activity of reflexivity.

One of the methods in qualitative research is interview. The researcher collected open-ended emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data. In this study, the researcher used in-depth interview to gain the data. The interview was conducted after fixing the guidelines/set of questions to quest. The guideline of the interview was set based on the variables of the research questions. In-depth interview was conducted because the researcher intended to have rich information from the participants. The in-depth interview is often described as a form of conversation (Burgess, 1982a, 1984; Lofland and Lofland, 1995). In the process of interview, the researcher made the atmosphere more relax rather than usual conversation with the participant. It aims to build conducive circumstance in order the participants felt comfortable to share the information. It aimed also to gain qualified recording voice from the participants, since the researcher recorded their voice when interviews processing. Kvale (1996) and Rubin & Rubin (1995) state that there are obvious differences between normal conversation and in-depth interviews – their objectives, and the roles of researcher and participant, are quite different. In reality, although a good in-depth interview will appear naturalistic, it will bear little resemblance to an everyday conversation.

Data gaining period was in April until May 2018. Since the researcher used in-depth interview method to gather the data, the researcher conducted interview with the participants in the area of the university. The data gathering was conducted after the guideline of the interview was approved by the supervisor of the research. The researcher did the interview by contacting the participants before. It was necessary to because the researcher needed to ask for permission from the participants before interviewing them. It was also to confirm whether they were willing to be interviewed or not.

The participants of the research were the students of English Language Education Study Program of Sanata Dharma University, who have taken Play Performance in semester 5 academic year 2017-2018. There were 87 students who took the classes, since they were divided into two classes. They fulfilled their work by performing the final project on November 18, 2017. They are from batch 2015, consisted of students from different classes in English Language Education Study Program of Sanata Dharma University.

*Table 1. The Variables of Participants*

| PARTICIPANTS | VARIABLES | | | TOTAL |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Sex/Gender | Academic | Living | |

| | | Achievements | Environment/ Domicile | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Male | High | | Boarding House | 1 |
| | | | With Parent(s) | 1 |
| | Medium | | Boarding House | 1 |
| | | | With parent(s) | 1 |
| | Low | | Boarding House | 1 |
| | | | With Parent(s) | 1 |
| Female | High | | Boarding House | 1 |
| | | | With Parent(s) | 1 |
| | Medium | | Boarding House | 1 |
| | | | With Parent(s) | 1 |
| | Low | | Boarding House | 1 |
| | | | With Parent(s) | 1 |

**Results**

The data shows that this strategy occurred when the participants had their agreement with their groups. This strategy worked when they had group assignments during the semester. In dealing with their groups, they made agreements to match their schedules, job descriptions, and ideas toward the assignments. The participants also said that if they could not afford the meeting, they used their gadget to have their group work. Usually, they used applications which allowed them to have group work in time. They mentioned *Google Drive* might help them in having group work although they were not altogether.

The consensual strategy played big role as the most effective strategy in dealing with the assignments along semester 5. By grouping, the participants built their cooperative-learning. In the cooperative-learning classroom, students meet in small groups to discuss topics, exchange information, and practice new techniques (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1979). Afterward, they return to the larger group to discuss their small groups' experience. The emphasis is on interpersonal contact, and group processes are pervasive (Walker, 1996).

By doing this, the participants set their goals as the purpose of group-working. Slavin (1991) states that group goals are an essential aspect of cooperative-learning approaches. This statement helped the researcher to understand the essential value of group-working done by the participants. Stodolsky (1984) describes a continuum of group works: (a) completely cooperative, with a common group goal and a jointly produce product. The participants collaboratively worked in their groups to produce certain knowledge. They constructed better understanding in order to achieve certain purpose. The participants built their own awareness to maintain good relationships in the

groups, and together they conduct certain product. (b) Cooperative, with a common goal and a jointly produce product developed from different tasks. In the beginning of group-working, the participants divided their job descriptions in order to "lighten" the work itself. They might work in different space and use different techniques. They use different learning strategies to solve the problems and seek richer knowledge in accomplishing the assignments.

Also, based on the data of the interview with the participants, they use enforced self-regulation strategy mostly when they had strong willing to achieve their personal goals. However, they still used this type when the lecturers asked them to fulfil certain standard in learning. They were willing to reach such standard because the requirements of the learning activities. Moreover, the lecturers gave them instructions to have maximal academic performance.

The willingness of self-enforcement came when they faced totally different situation from what they expected. Nevertheless, they wanted to prove others that they were capable to complete the tasks. Both external and internal factors affected their way of thinking in using enforced self-regulation strategy. Dealing with assignments made the participants push themselves to do their best. There are internal and external factors affected them to do so. They are:

### Internal factors

First, the participants were willing to prove themselves that they were able to reach their success on what they did along the semester. When they made their plans in the beginning of the semester, they had chance to discuss their plans with their lecturers. From the discussions, they set their own targets on the study. As a result, they made their goals based on the results of the discussion with the lecturers. It made them set the goals as realistic as possible. Second, some of the participants were underestimated by their own friends in dealing with certain assignments. It made them to force themselves to prove that they could afford to complete the assignments. Third, the participants were lack of time to finish their assignments. As written in the findings section, the several participants attend their jobs inside and outside the campus. Because of lack of time for accomplishing their assignments, they forced themselves to finish their assignments to fulfil the requirements from the lecturers. This factor seems that the participants were considered as "deadliners". Recently, this expression occurs among the participants to call them who finish the assignments in the last minutes.

### External factors

First, the participants had the demands from their parent to receive certain goals. The GPA of the participants plays big role in monitoring the process of the study. When they discuss their process of the study with parents, parents usually monitor the participants' learning progress. In addition, in the beginning of new semesters, parents are able to observe the result of their children's achievements. From the results of the semester, parents have certain standards for their children

to achieve. Second, it was economical factor.

Co-regulation strategy was the favourite strategy used by the participants. This strategy allowed them to deal with other activities outside classroom, although they were dealing with their assignments. The only reason why the participants liked this strategy was they used those activities as refreshing moment. They said that they needed other activities to shift their business in dealing with their own assignments. Those activities included activities in students' activities units in the university, activities with other communities, and activities in working areas. The reasons why the participants joined those activities are; (a) they offered themselves to join those activities. It means that they provided themselves to engage with those communities. (a) There were social requests which demand them to take roles in those communities. (b) Economical factors which affected them to take certain jobs, (c) the needs of getting socialized.

Social responsibility is defined as adherence to social rules and role expectations (Ford, 1985; Ford, Wentzel, Wood, Stevens, & Siesfield, 1989). These rules exist by virtue of social roles that define rules for group participations, as a reflection of broad social and cultural norms, or as a result of personal commitments to other individuals. Based on this definition, the participants took roles in those communities without denying their personal roles as students. They experienced those activities with fully awareness, in spite of joining them by force.

Making time-table was also essential technique to the participants. In dealing with co-regulation strategy, the participants made the time-table to arrange their schedules. For them, it worked so much. As a result, they could manage their time to plan their activities. The participants felt that making time-table enhance them to deal with their activities, inside and outside college. They needed to fulfil requirements from their society. Whether to take parts of social roles or to fulfil their needs, the participants were able to manage themselves. They liked to do the strategy because they had also opportunities to avoid boredom in completing the assignments given.

Furthermore, the participants also dealt with responsibilities during semester 5 in Play Performance Class. This class demands the students to fulfil requirements which are different from other classes. In this class, students prepare themselves to hold performances as a result of their progress along the semester. The participants had different responsibilities in conducting the performances. They were divided based on job descriptions for each division. The participants realized that they had different responsibilities. Since they took Play Performance Class in semester 5, they struggled to pass the semester successfully. For them, semester 5 meant the semester which is full of demand and requirements.

Empirical work suggests that the development of social responsibility is a valued educational objective. In a recent study, several hundred parents, teachers, and students were asked about desired outcomes for students to achieve by age 198 (Krumboltz et al., 1978). Goal statements reflected five academic domains

(verbal, math, science, social studies, and fine arts) and five non-academic domains (attitudes, interpersonal competence, moral development, health, and career development). Social responsibility in the form of consideration and respect for others, interpersonal competence, and moral development was consistently nominated as a critical outcome for students to achieve, over and above academic achievement (1978). In fact, goals concerning social responsibility were generally regarded as being of greater importance for students to achieve than goals representing any of the academic domains included in the study.

Finishing responsibilities asked by the society without denying their main responsibility; studying, was such affordable achievement for the participants. High demand situations, in which an individual's self-regulatory system is taxed or stressed, provide opportunities to observe how individuals' handling of problems and pressures is shaped by their "ways of coping" sensitivities (Caspi & Moffit, 1993; Cox & Ferguson, 1991; Wright & Mischel, 1987). Thus, the researcher states that it is not just that personality talked about self-regulation, it is that understanding how people self-regulate is essential to understanding personality itself.

## Conclusion

The researcher found that there were five types of self-regulation strategies appeared in the study: (1) consensual self-regulation strategies, (2) enforced self-regulation strategies, (3) co-regulation strategies, (4) mandated self-regulation strategies, and (5) sanctioned self-regulation strategies. The students used the first four strategies because they did not use sanctioned self-regulation strategies in dealing with their assignments. Their lecturers demanded them to conduct their independent learning.

The first type of self-regulation strategies was managing the awareness of the students to build willingness and actions based on the agreements they had. The second type was dealing with their motivations to force themselves on completing assignments required. The third type was managing the students to deal with non-academic activities outside classrooms. The fourth type rolled the students in managing themselves dealing with social requirements given. The last type was enrolling students to obey the rules, otherwise they would have punishments.

Students were used the first four types of self-regulation strategies because the lecturers of them did not apply any punishment if the students did not complete the assignments. The students used them to make their plans, monitor their progress, and evaluate the results of their activities. Since self-regulation deals with how a person deals with metacognitive skills, the students applied their strategies on achieving their goals, especially academic goals.

This research is useful reference for future researchers to do a similar study in educational-psychology field. The researcher hopes that there will be other researchers who conduct research on self-regulation strategies with some other aspects. The future researchers can deepen this research. The future researchers may use different method of the study since this research only applied qualitative

method.

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