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Promoting self-directed learning in the new curriculum: Training new teachers

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Abstract

In the new curriculum being implemented for the 4-year curriculum at The University of Hong Kong, an important emphasis is being placed on out-of-class learning which, in many parts of the curriculum, may contribute up to two-thirds of the students' learning hours. In the new English academic literacy courses being developed by the Centre for Applied English Studies, a major component of the out-of-class learning will be self-directed learning. To enhance its impact, self-directed learning is being directly integrated into many of those new courses as a tangible component that will be monitored by teachers and will contribute to success in the assessment of other parts of the course. However, boosting the profile of self-directed learning in the courses also brings to the fore the issue of teachers' familiarity with it and their competence and confidence in promoting it. This paper talks about a pilot project to construct and implement a training package to raise the awareness of teachers who are less familiar with self-directed learning but will find themselves teaching on courses in which it is a major component. The paper reports on data collected from pre- and post-implementation questionnaires and focus groups conducted to investigate the impact of the training package on teachers new to self-directed learning.