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# ORGANIZING INDEPENDENT LEARNING THROUGH FICTION READING IN THE CREDIT-MODULE SYSTEM

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**Abstract**. The article examines the theoretical and pedagogical grounds for organizing students' independent learning in the credit-module system through the systematic reading of fiction. The transition of higher education institutions in Uzbekistan to the credit-module model has significantly increased the share of independent work in the total academic workload, which requires new, meaningful forms of its organization. The article proposes a conceptual model for integrating fiction reading into independent learning, including stages of selection, guided reading, reflection and credit-based assessment.
**Keywords:** credit-module system, independent learning, fiction reading, self-regulated learning, reader response, higher education, ECTS, reflective competence.

**Аннотация.** В статье рассматриваются теоретические и педагогические основы организации самостоятельной работы студентов в кредитно-модульной системе посредством систематического чтения художественной литературы. Переход высших учебных заведений Узбекистана на кредитно-модульную модель значительно увеличил долю самостоятельной работы в общей учебной нагрузке, что требует новых, содержательных форм её организации. В статье предлагается концептуальная модель интеграции чтения художественной литературы в самостоятельную работу, включающая этапы отбора, направляемого чтения, рефлексии и оценивания на основе кредитной системы.
**Ключевые слова:** кредитно-модульная система, самостоятельное обучение, чтение художественной литературы, саморегулируемое обучение, читательский отклик, высшее образование, ECTS, рефлексивная компетенция.

**Annotatsiya.** Maqolada kredit-modul tizimida talabalarning mustaqil ta'limini badiiy adabiyotni muntazam o'qish orqali tashkil etishning nazariy va pedagogik asoslari ko'rib chiqiladi. O'zbekiston oliy ta'lim muassasalarining kredit-modul modeliga o'tishi umumiy o'quv yuklamasida mustaqil ishning ulushini sezilarli darajada oshirdi, bu esa uni tashkil etishning yangi, mazmunli shakllarini talab qiladi. Maqolada badiiy adabiyot o'qishni mustaqil ta'limga integratsiya qilishning konseptual modeli taklif etiladi. Model tanlash, yo'naltirilgan o'qish, refleksiya va kredit tizimiga asoslangan baholash bosqichlarini o'z ichiga oladi.
**Kalit so'zlar:** kredit-modul tizimi, mustaqil ta'lim, badiiy adabiyot o'qish, o'z-o'zini boshqaruvchi ta'lim, kitobxon munosabati, oliy ta'lim, ECTS, refleksiv kompetensiya.

## INTRODUCTION

The modernization of higher education in Uzbekistan in recent years has been accompanied by a fundamental shift in the organization of the educational process. The Concept for the Development of the Higher Education System of the Republic of Uzbekistan until 2030 set the task of gradually transferring higher education institutions to the credit-module system, which is oriented toward the student's individual educational trajectory and the growing role of independent learning [1]. Within this system, academic credit measures not only classroom hours but the entire

volume of student effort, including self-study, preparation, reading and reflection. According to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, one credit corresponds to approximately 25 to 30 hours of student work, and a considerable part of this workload is carried out outside the classroom [2].

As a result, independent learning ceases to be an auxiliary component of education and becomes one of its central elements. However, in practice, independent work is often reduced to formal assignments such as abstracts, reports or the reproduction of textbook material, which do not sufficiently develop the student's personal engagement, motivation and capacity for critical reflection. In this context, the search for content-rich and personally meaningful forms of independent learning becomes an urgent pedagogical task. One such form, in our view, is the purposeful reading of fiction. Literary works contain a vast reservoir of moral, social, historical and psychological experience, and their reading requires precisely those qualities which the credit-module system expects from the student: autonomy, responsibility, sustained attention and the ability to interpret and evaluate information independently. M. Knowles emphasized that self-directed learning is a process in which individuals take the initiative in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating goals, identifying resources and evaluating outcomes [3].

**METHODOLOGY AND LITERATURE REVIEW**

The research is based on theoretical methods, namely the analysis, comparison, generalization and systematization of scholarly sources in pedagogy, educational psychology and literary theory, as well as normative documents regulating higher education in Uzbekistan. The first group concerns the theory of independent and self-regulated learning. B. Zimmerman describes self-regulated learning as a cyclical process consisting of forethought, performance and self-reflection, in which the learner actively plans, monitors and evaluates their own cognitive activity [4]. In Russian pedagogy, P.I. Pidkasisty developed a detailed theory of independent cognitive activity, distinguishing levels of independence from reproductive to creative and stressing that independent work must be purposefully organized and guided by the teacher rather than left to chance [5].

Uzbek scholars O'.Q. Tolipov and M. Usmonboyeva, analyzing the applied foundations of pedagogical technologies, underline that the effectiveness of independent work depends on clear goal setting, a well-designed sequence of tasks and transparent criteria of assessment [6]. The second group of sources concerns the nature of literary reading and its developmental potential. L. Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading holds that the meaning of a literary work arises in the interaction between the reader and the text, and distinguishes between efferent reading, aimed at extracting information, and aesthetic reading, focused on lived experience during the act of reading [7]. L.S. Vygotsky, in his work on the psychology of art, showed that the aesthetic reaction to a literary work involves a complex emotional and intellectual transformation which he called catharsis, through which personal experience is reorganized [8].

N.A. Rubakin, the founder of bibliopsychology, argued that each reader projects their own psychological content onto the text, and therefore the selection of books and the organization of reading must take into account the individual characteristics of readers [9]. The third group of sources addresses the cognitive and linguistic effects of extensive reading. S. Krashen, summarizing a large body of empirical research conducted by other scholars, concluded that free voluntary reading is one of the most powerful means of developing vocabulary, grammar, writing and overall literacy [10]. The synthesis of these three perspectives forms the methodological basis for considering fiction reading as a legitimate and productive form of independent learning in the credit-module system.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The analysis of the literature allows us to formulate several interrelated conclusions. First, fiction reading meets the essential criteria of independent learning identified in pedagogical theory. Following Pidkasisty, independent work is genuinely independent when the student performs it without direct teacher participation but according to a task set and structured by the teacher [5]. Fiction reading can be organized in exactly this way: the teacher defines the list of works, the goals of reading and the forms of reporting, while the reading itself is carried out by the student autonomously and at an individual pace. This corresponds to the logic of the credit system, in which the student's out-of-class workload must be measurable and justified [2].

Second, fiction reading naturally activates the cycle of self-regulated learning described by Zimmerman [4]. At the forethought stage, the student plans the reading schedule and formulates questions to the text; at the performance stage, they monitor comprehension and record observations; at the self-reflection stage, they evaluate their interpretation and its connection to the course content. Thus, reading becomes not a passive pastime but a managed cognitive process. Third, the developmental value of fiction lies primarily in its aesthetic and personal dimension. Rosenblatt's distinction between efferent and aesthetic reading [7] is particularly important here: if independent reading assignments are reduced to retelling plots or extracting facts, the specific educational potential of literature is lost. In our view, assignments should encourage students to articulate their own experience of the text, compare their interpretations with those of peers and connect literary situations with professional and social problems relevant to their field of study.

This approach is supported by Vygotsky's understanding of aesthetic reaction as a process of inner transformation [8], which implies that the most valuable outcome of reading is a change in the student's way of thinking and feeling, not merely the accumulation of information. Fourth, the individual nature of reading requires a differentiated approach to the selection of texts. Rubakin's bibliopsychological ideas [9] suggest that a single mandatory list for all students is less effective than a flexible list from which students choose works according to their interests, while the teacher ensures the coherence of the selection with the learning outcomes of the module. This principle is consistent with the idea of individual educational trajectories laid down in the concept of higher education development [1]. Fifth, the linguistic and communicative effects of reading described by Krashen [10] are especially significant in the multilingual educational environment of Uzbekistan, where students study in Uzbek, Russian and foreign languages. Reading fiction in the language of instruction or in a foreign language expands vocabulary, develops academic writing skills and strengthens intercultural competence.

On the basis of this analysis, we propose a conceptual model of organizing independent learning through fiction reading, consisting of four stages. The preparatory stage includes the selection of works by the teacher in accordance with module objectives and the student's choice from the proposed list. The guided reading stage involves reading according to an individual schedule, accompanied by a reading journal in which the student records key ideas, questions and personal reactions. The reflective stage includes writing an analytical essay that connects the literary work with the content of the course and participation in a seminar discussion. The assessment stage presupposes evaluation of the journal, the essay and the discussion according to predetermined criteria, with the results counted toward the credit workload of the module.

Such a model, as Tolipov and Usmonboyeva emphasize regarding pedagogical technologies in general, ensures the reproducibility and controllability of the educational process [6]. At the same time, it should be acknowledged that the implementation of this model faces certain difficulties,

including the decline of reading culture among young people, the limited availability of quality literature in some languages and the risk of formalism in assessment. Overcoming these obstacles requires teacher preparation, cooperation with university libraries and the development of clear yet flexible assessment rubrics.

## CONCLUSION

The transition to the credit-module system has made independent learning one of the key components of higher education, which requires its meaningful and purposeful organization. The analysis of Uzbek, Russian and foreign scholarly literature demonstrates that fiction reading possesses substantial potential as a form of independent learning: it develops self-regulation, critical and reflective thinking, linguistic competence and value orientations of students. The effectiveness of this form depends on its careful pedagogical design, including the purposeful selection of texts, the combination of autonomy and teacher guidance, an emphasis on aesthetic and interpretive reading rather than mere information extraction, and transparent criteria for credit-based assessment. The proposed four-stage model can serve as a theoretical basis for integrating fiction reading into the curricula of various disciplines in higher education institutions of Uzbekistan.

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