The SRL Paradox

How Instructor Presence Fosters Self-Regulated Learning

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Introduction

Context: [TLEF Project](#) (Partnership between FoA, FoS, FoE, CTLT)

Purpose: Engaging faculty in introducing self-regulated learning supports in undergraduate courses to enhance students' ability to take ownership of their learning

What is Self-Regulated Learning (SRL)?

Active, intentional, goal-directed engagement in the context of learning

Empowering learners to know how to successfully navigate learning environments and activities

(Butler, Schnellert & Perry, 2017; Greene, 2018: Zimmerman, 2008)

In this presentation
- Brief examples of **scaffolding** (SRL supportive practice)
- First-year undergraduate courses in three disciplines: Academic Writing, Physics and Sociology
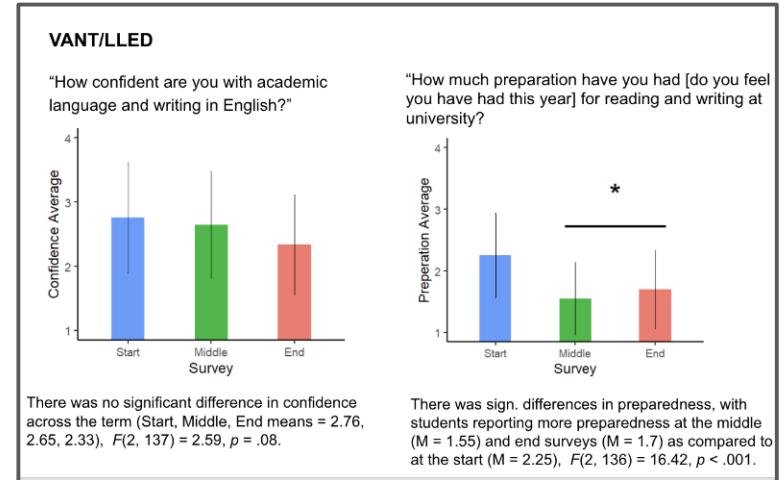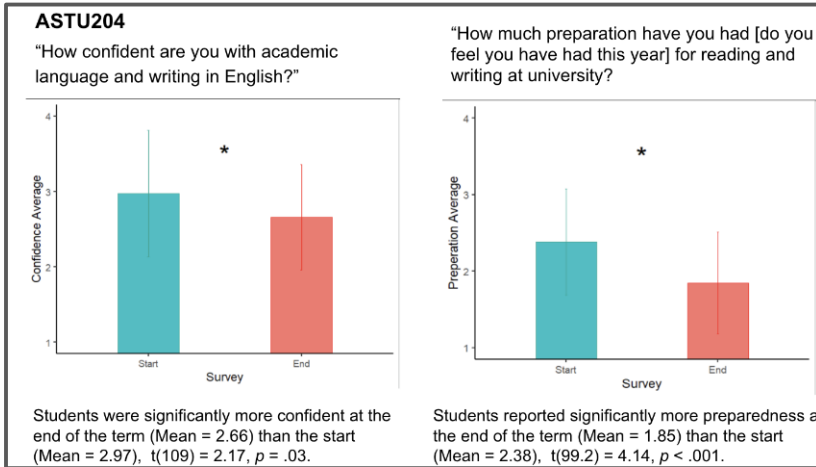
First-year academic language and writing courses

Challenge: different expectations: cultural, institutional; student, instructor

Scaffolding strategies: staging, modelling, peer review & reflection

Goal: foster student agency & mobilization

Effectiveness: increased confidence and preparedness

ASTU204

"How confident are you with academic language and writing in English?"

"How much preparation have you had [do you feel you have had this year] for reading and writing at university?"

Students were significantly more confident at the end of the term (Mean = 2.66) than the start (Mean = 2.97), t(109) = 2.17, p = .03.

Students reported significantly more preparedness at the end of the term (Mean = 1.85) than the start (Mean = 2.38), t(99.2) = 4.14, p < .001.

VANT/LLED

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"How much preparation have you had [do you feel you have had this year] for reading and writing at university?"

There was no significant difference in confidence across the term (Start, Middle, End means = 2.76, 2.65, 2.33), F(2, 137) = 2.59, p = .08.

There was sign. differences in preparedness, with students reporting more preparedness at the middle (M = 1.55) and end surveys (M = 1.7) as compared to at the start (M = 2.25), F(2, 136) = 16.42, p < .001.

First-year introduction to sociology

Challenge: memorization (surface learning) versus application and connection (deep learning)

Scaffolding strategy: Lectures interspersed with structured reflection through worksheets

Sample reflection prompts for lecture on "Medicalization as a social process":

- How would you explain "medicalization" to a friend who skipped class?
- How might medicalization be useful for some people, and harmful for others?
- What is one previous course concept that relates to "medicalization"?

Effectiveness (pre and post-survey): Small gains in students' belief in their ability to succeed in the course, including confidence applying course concepts and taking notes during lecture.

First-year physics: Electricity and Magnetism

Challenge: Getting started on worksheet or 'clicker' questions. Students sometimes not thinking about their 'resources' (from previous sessions, textbook reading, their notes, etc.)

Scaffolding strategy: Additional prompts and hints on worksheets, verbal encouragement to write down everything that seems relevant. Encourage "messy" solutions: use the worksheet space to put down something that can be evaluated/discussed.

Supporting students' SRL: Instructor values all ideas and contributions, models inclusivity. No idea is dismissed as 'incorrect' - students have reasons that are worth exploring. Focus is on how ideas and resources are constructively combined. Instructor models strategies for double-checking and sensemaking.

First result: Students write significantly more on their worksheets and on their exams; perceive class instruction as non-judgemental.

Conclusions

Shifts in teaching practice and perspectives about learning:
- More intentional teaching (design of lecture/activities)
- Focus on process, active learning, and student strategy development

Benefits of bringing SRL supports to undergraduate courses:
- More inclusive classrooms: learning is co-constructed between students and instructors
- Better instructor understanding of student strengths and challenges

Students
- Enhanced awareness about themselves as learners
- Increased willingness to make choices, to experiment/explore
- Better prediction/understanding of expectations
- Enhanced awareness about others as learners

Paradoxes:

SRL is not individual, learning is social

SRL is not a trait, it can be learned and taught
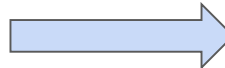
Instructor presence is crucial