

# 9th-grade students' competence of out-of-class self-regulated learning: A case study at Nghia Tan secondary school located in Hanoi, Vietnam

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**ABSTRACT:** *Through the data survey (using the questionnaires promoted by Nguyen and colleagues, 2014) with one hundred and fifty 9th-grade students at Nghia Tan secondary school located in Hanoi city of Vietnam, the paper describes the practice of their competence of self-regulated learning (specified in their off-class time). The limitations in the 9th graders' competence of self-regulated learning in out-of-class time are also revealed and pointed out, including such extents as students' low reading speed, lack of taking notes skill, their not-well-oriented revision. Since then, the current paper provides recommendations on the role of secondary school teachers in forming and promoting their learners' competence of out-of-class self-regulated learning, specifically teachers' classroom guidance and their ways to support students' learning.*

**KEYWORDS:** Competence; self-regulated learning; out-of-class self-regulated learning; secondary school students.

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## 1. Introduction

The challenges of globalization and modernization in the contemporary world have been setting new requirements for the learning process and the learners in every education level of the national education system. In recent years, increasing attention has been paid to such competencies as self-directed learning (Xuan et al., 2018; Bonk and Lee, 2017), communication skills, and intellectual and moral qualities (Sanford, 2015). The competence of self-regulated learning determines success in students' achievement and is also one of the fundamental factors for lifelong study (Sanford, 2015). Students' self-regulated learning has become especially relevant due to the shift from the traditional instructional paradigm to a constructivist learning one, where learning activities would be provided for learners in an intensive independently individualized way (Hamilton et al., 1998, Rupšienė and Mažionienė, 2011). We may find it understandable that one of the factors which impact students' learning process is their competence of self-regulated

learning. It has not yet come to literally a unanimous opinion about what should be considered as self-study. In the formation of learners' autonomy as their personal quality and their competence of self-regulated learning, it is necessary to create the conditions that would naturally promote one to act independently (Rajeckas, 1999; Saadet, 2017). An important role is played by teachers who are to encourage their learners' self-regulated learning (Harding, 2015); otherwise, it can be viewed by learners as not compulsory. As emphasized by Jovaiša (2007), learners' independence is inseparable from motivation, while teachers' role is to enhance students' motivation to independently look for the ways to perform, applying their own knowledge, independently posing research problems, and giving them the solutions.

Becoming increasingly independent has been a mission targeted to student; however, the competence of self-regulated learning is not about solitary learning. Meanwhile, self-regulation does not necessarily suggest independent learning. Indeed, it might be

highly interdependent, collaborative, as well as cooperative (Llagoso, 2017). Furthermore, it is the fact that learners in a given context will likely have varying levels of competence and confidence with self-regulated learning, especially those who spent years in a learning context that was dominated by a teacher-directed approach (Nguyen, et al., 2014, Llagoso, 2017). It has been shown practically that even for students with significant confidence, a self-regulation approach does probably not devalue the role of experts, mentors, coaches and guides. For short, self-regulated learning means “academic skills through which learners can take active roles in their own learning processes” (Saadet, 2017, p.135). Self-regulated learning is more about how people learn and creating an environment that means of their ways, their methods. Thus it elevates the role of the learner, recognizing that learning happens when individually, the learner takes ownership for her own learning process. A teacher or mentor is able to play a valuable role as one engages in self-directed learning (Hamilton et al., 1998).

Self-regulated learning is normally supposed to be divided into two forms: an in-class form and an out-of-class form. Thus, the competence of self-regulated learning in out-of-class time refers to the ability to apply the perceptions of activities and their own skills to achieve maturity and results of self-study and actions. As Saadet mentioned that out-of-class learning meant “learning activities undertaken beyond the classroom” (2017, p.135). In spite of the fact that existing international studies also show numerous ways to build up competence of self-regulated learning and divide it into many different sub-skills, the studies in Vietnam on this issue are rare. Besides, the studies have only initially focused on university students but not yet in high school students (which includes junior and senior high school students) (Nguyen, et al., 2014).

In this paper, students’ competence of out-of-class self-regulated learning is probably classified with such sub-skills as self-regulation planning,

skills of reading, taking notes, revising and self-assessing. This paper focuses on describing the frequency of performing Grade 9 students’ competence of out-of-class self-regulated learning in Nghia Tan secondary school, Hanoi, Vietnam. Accordingly, those issues should be clarified the following issues: (1) Amongst the sub-skills that constitute the competence of out-of-class self-regulated learning, what the most popular or least commonly practiced skills by Grade 9 students in Nghia Tan secondary school are; (2) The main obstacles to the practice of Grade 9 students’ competence of out-of-class self-regulated learning in Nghia Tan secondary school. Based on the research results filtered, we the authors would like to give recommendations on the role of teachers in order to form their students’ competence of self-regulation as well as support them to overcome those identified obstacles.

## 2. Methodology

The questionnaire by author Nguyen Thi Thu Huyen and colleagues (2014) was revised accordingly to put into usage and collecting survey data. The scale of students’ out-of-class self-regulated learning is divided into the following five sub-items:

- Self-regulated study planning skills: 9 items
- Reading skills: 18 items
- Recording skills: 9 items
- Revision skills: 11 items
- Self-examination and self-assessment skills: 7 items

The scale is designed as a 5-levelled Likert scale: 1 point - Never, 2 points - Rarely, 3 points - Transient, 4 points - Frequently, 5 points - Very often. Cronbach’s Alpha reliability of full scale equals 0.820. Cronbach’s Alpha factor of the scale when removing each item does not exceed 0.820.

The sample of one hundred and fifty 9th-grade students in Nghia Tan secondary school in the school year 2018 - 2019 was selected by the random sampling method to take part in the survey.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. The overall practice of Grade 9 students' competence of out-of-class self-regulated learning at Nghia Tan secondary school

Surveying the status of students' competence of out-of-class self-regulated learning shows that most of the sub-skills tend to be performed by the 9th-graders of Nghia Tan secondary school with an occasional frequency ( from 2.99 to 3.37).

Skills related to goal-setting and testing and re-evaluating the implementation of self-study goals are proved that are most frequently performed by the 9th-grade students. Meanwhile, key reading, writing and revision skills are less frequent. In other words, according to the students' summary by themselves, their skills of "Operating skills" are run with less frequency than "Input" and "Output" skills with the self-study process.

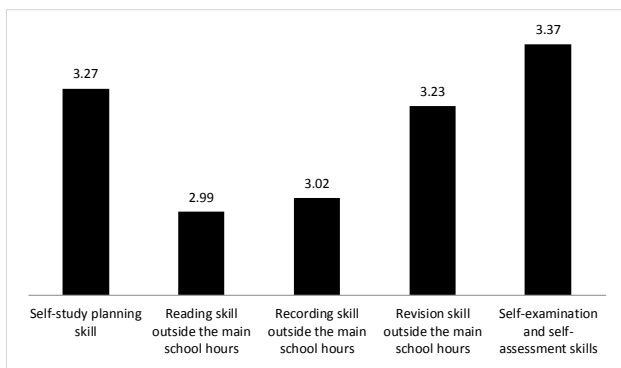


Figure 1: Students' competence of out-of-class self-regulated learning

#### 3.2. The practice of self-regulation planning as a sub-skill of the 9th-grade students' competence in off-class time in Nghia Tan secondary school

Surveying the practice of students' planning skills of out-of-class self-regulated learning shows that most of the sub-skills tend to be performed by the 9th-graders of Nghia Tan secondary school with an occasional frequency (from 2.88 to 3.45).

Among the 9 manifestations of self-study planning considered as a sub-skill of self-regulation competence, the more common frequency of students' performance is often related to the development of self-study planning skill (crucially as listing activities, categorizing jobs, determining time, determining job requirements). Meanwhile, the expression is

related to adjusting the plan in accordance with the reality, determining the reasonableness of the plan and the influencing factors, reminding oneself that self-regulated learning activities must be done and less learned. 9th-grade students performed more.

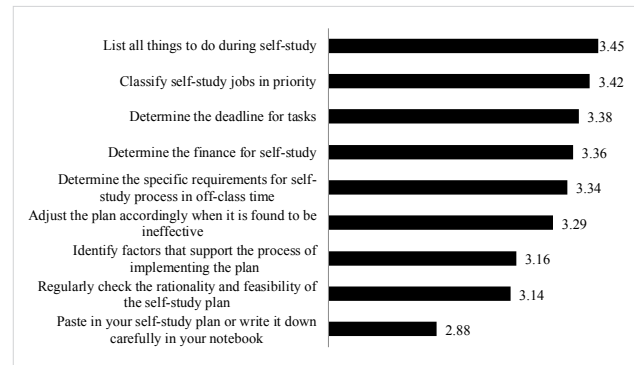


Figure 2: Self-study planning skill of students

This shows that for planning skills as the sub-skill of students' competence of self-study, 9th-grade students of Nghia Tan secondary school has initially implemented activities in planning but with high practicality, feasibility and well-done strategies of maintaining the plan. Provedly, this practice has not been paid attention to with equivalent mode.

#### 3.3. The practice of 9th-grade students' reading skill in out-of-class time in Nghia Tan secondary school in Hanoi, Vietnam

Surveying the practice of students' reading skill in out-of-class time shows that this sub-skill tend to be performed by the 9th-graders of Nghia Tan secondary school with a frequency of "sometimes" (from 2.75 to 3.11). In particular, manifestations related to the selection of suitable locations for reading tend to perform at a rare level.

In the expression of reading skills in off-class time in Nghia Tan secondary school, it is said that the sub-skill of scanning a book is made with higher frequency (= 3.11) than the others. In particular, 9th-grade students are especially interested in the author's style, as well as the introduction of the book. According to the in-depth interviews, students showed that these contents of the book made them feel that they had a strong connection with the book. A book

may be useful by itself, but the tone is probably hard, or academic or not close any more, then the students might decide not to continue reading.

For reading skills, it can be seen that 9th-graders have a way to capture book information based on; keywords. It is these keywords that also support their memorization of the book information; accordingly, they also initially give their personal opinions about the book. Through in-depth interviews, it can be seen that the majority of the students who engaged in this survey have just wondered “Is the book good or bad?”, “Is the book easily understandable?”, “Is the book useful for myself?”. However, whether a critical thinking about the author’s views in

the book is appropriate to the secondary school students’ point of view or not, it is not expressed by a child or teenager. Besides, they have difficulties in reading speed.

In terms of choosing books, 9th-grade students often choose books for their purpose of looking for information for themselves (= 3.49, the difference with of other bases is 0.52 - 0.71). In-depth student interviews show that, in fact, students still have not had much information about reputable authors or reputable publishers in the field they are seeking.

For the choice of reading places, 9th-graders often choose to read books at home rather than at bookstores, especially the library is less likely to

**Table 1: The 9th-grade students’ reading skill in out-of-class time in Nghia Tan secondary school**

Expression	Mean	General Mean
A. Selecting appropriate reading locations		
1. Read books at the library	2,32	
2. Read books at home	3,32	2,75
3. Read books at bookstores	2,60	
B. Choosing books are suitable for themselves		
4. Before reading about a problem, look up the database and then select the book to read	2,99	
5. Choose a book based on the reputation of the publisher/source of information	2,97	
6. Choose books based on publication time	2,78	3,02
7. Choose books based on the author’s reputation	2,86	
8. Choose a book based on the purpose of finding your own information	3,49	
C. Scanning skill		
9. When reading, I first noticed the preliminary information of the book	2,98	
10. When reading books, after the preliminary information about the book, I read the book introduction	3,15	3,11
11. When reading books, after preliminary information and book introduction, I read the table of contents	3,03	
12. When reading books, I read some pages to know the author’s style and then read them carefully	3,27	
D. Reading skill		
13. I read every word and move my lips	2,80	
14. I read and reread some words	3,13	
15. I just read and underlined the keywords	3,22	
16. I read about 300 words (half an A4 page, size 12) in a minute and still understand the material	2,77	3,03
17. I ignore the preliminary information of the book and the introduction that always reads the table of contents and the content I need	2,84	
18. I often give comments and evaluate what I read	3,42	

be found by them. The students have shared that mostly they found that the library was unable to provide enough books and also their favorite books. Besides, students supposed that they had spent most of the time studying at the school, so if you have time to play, you will use it to relax rather than going to the library to read. Therefore, students are often more likely to maintain the habit of reading at home.

Through this figure, 9th-grade students in Nghia Tan secondary school have initially performed their competence of reading. However, their competence of reading just implemented to meet an immediate need (such as at their teachers' requests, to look for information at that moment, etc.) but has not yet formed an active habit contributing to learners' competence of self-regulated learning at home.

**3.4. The students' recording skill in off-class time as their sub-skill of self-regulated learning in Nghia Tan secondary school**

Surveying the practice of students' recording skill in out-of-class learning time shows that this sub-skill tend to be performed by 9th-graders of Nghia Tan secondary school with an occasional frequency (from 2.65 to 3.38). In particular, the ideas related to "Using loose paper for taking notes" and "Textual copy of the entire document content" tend to perform at a rare level.

In terms of students' competence of taking notes, it can be assumed that 9th-graders in Nghia Tan secondary school have initially taken the information noted by focusing and highlighting important keywords of the replacement materials for recording the entire reading contents. However, their using tools to support visual recordings has not been widely used by students with the summary of the contents of the material read by the diagram with = 3,08.

Along with that, 9th-grade students in Nghia Tan secondary school also consciously recorded the resourcing materials with their selection with = 3,09. However, the sytematic source extraction has not yet been done popularly by students like the idea "Recording basic information of documents (document name, author, publisher, ...)" has = 2,97.

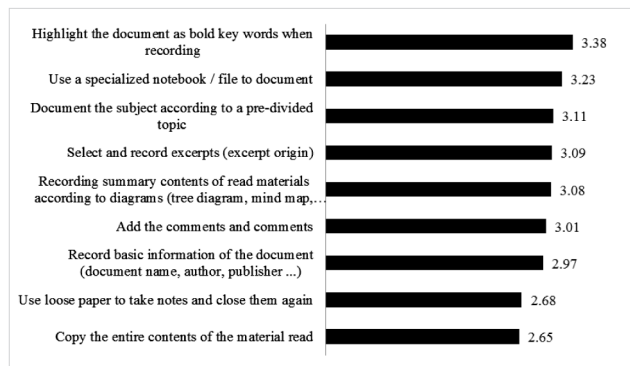


Figure 3: Students' recording skill in off-class time

Thereby, the 9th-grade students in Nghia Tan secondary school have initially been aware of recording information extracted from reading materials. Recording information is done primarily by taking notes or highlighting important keywords that have been done without the support of visual memorization tools. The students were aware of the resourcing materials. However, this skill has not been built popularly and methodically for them. This is supposed by a hypothesis that there is a lack of their teachers' instruction.

**3.5. Grade 9th students' revision skill in off-class time in Nghia Tan secondary school**

Surveying the expressions of 9th-graders' revision skills in out-of-class time shows that most of them tend to be performed with an occasional frequency ( from 2.97 to 3.58).

In terms of time for revision, the students were conscious of conducting revision regularly during the learning process with = 3.21 of which we regarded as a good point. However, their main habit is to "Review lessons right before that lesson in class" with = 3.55. That means they develop revision plans accordingly based on their school schedules with little independence and their self-regulation. This figure is strongly consistent with the students' timetable in school. Ideas shared through in-depth interviews have been revealed that in addition to studying at the school, the children also go to extra classes in off-class time. This makes their time for revision a day reduced. So, when there is a subject on the next day, students will revise it the previous day.

Regarding the revision method, mainly 9th-grade students in Nghia Tan secondary school in Hanoi focused on learning by heart, remembering the events than developing thinking, finding the sentences, asking to expand the problem (by such ways as rewriting the content in your own language, answering more questions in the book, exploring other related issues). There was a considerable number of students who have consciously exchanged revised content with friends (= 3.36). Sharing in in-depth interviews, the students said that they mainly revised with friends in the natural subjects by exchanging the completed homework, recording its results and giving more explanation if those were not the same. They also shared that there were classmates who gathered in groups to sit at the table to solve the exercises. Thus, we educators might probably get information about many different forms of 9th-graders' study group with their peer friends.

**Table 2: Revision skill in off-class time by the 9th-grade students**

Expression	Mean
A. Revision time	
1. Revision the lesson before going to that class	3,55
2. Revision takes place regularly in the learning process (Revision lessons only when preparing for exams) *	3,21
3. Revision the lesson right after returning home	2,97
B. How to revision	
4. By reading carefully, trying to understand and remember the main idea	3,58
5. Exchanging edited content with friends	3,36
6. Self-writing (not looking at the document) the content in your own language	3,27
7. When revision, giving more additional reading information	3,22
8. When revision, answering questions, assignments in books or given by teachers	3,17
9. Revising alternative subjects	3,08
10. I review each content at least three times	3,08
11. When revision, I find more relevant questions and exercises myself	3,01

*Note: \* is an item to be reversed when processing*

Through the figure, the students are likely to be conscious of conducting regular revisions during their studies. Their revision mainly takes place just before class, so it depends on the main class schedule at school. In terms of revision, 9th-graders of Nghia Tan secondary school mainly revise with the ways of remembering and recalling knowledge they have learned, more than to develop thinking, and explore the questions that extend the problem. The students have a habit of exchanging and studying in peer groups in their out-of-class time.

**3.6. The 9th-graders' self-assessment skill for out-of-class self-regulated learning in Nghia Tan secondary school**

Surveying the practice of students' self-assessment skill in off-class time shows that most of the sub-skills tend to be performed by the 9th-graders of Nghia Tan secondary school with an occasional ( from 3.28 to 3.52).

Although there is no significant difference, 9th-graders of Nghia Tan secondary school tend to self-test and evaluate according to their own internal criteria (= 3.38) rather than criteria given by their teachers and friends (= 3.36). Regarding the internal criteria, the students focus mainly on their learning results got in every subject rather than their efforts in the process. In other words, the students tend to prefer final results (with scores) to evaluating the whole process. Meanwhile, in terms of the external criteria, 9th-graders are likely to get information to self-evaluate through their friends' comments and teachers' scores rather than comments, suggestions given by their peers. One of the very important sharing made by the students, that definitely should be considered, is that the teachers usually hand over the homework and ask their students to complete homework; however there is no clear orientation to their home-study methods as well as the detailed requirements of learning tasks.

We could see that the 9th-graders of Nghia Tan secondary school tend to self-evaluate according to their own internal criteria rather than external criteria from teachers and friends. In addition, their self-evaluation tended to prefer the learning outcomes (scores) to rather than evaluating the

whole process considerably. Students mainly collect information to evaluate through their friends' scores and teachers' comments.

**Table 3: The 9th-graders' self-assessment skill for out-of-class self-regulated learning**

Expression	Mean	General Mean
A. Students' self-assessment basing on the internal criteria		
1. By looking back your own progress in school subjects	3,40	3,38
2. By watching your current self-study results with the original goal of yourself	3,39	
3. By watching the efforts by yourself	3,35	
B. Students' self-assessment basing on the external criteria		
4. Reconciling one's self-study results compared with school and teachers' requirements	3,28	3,36
5. Compare one's self-study results with classmates'	3,52	
6. Regard your friends' comments about your progress	3,28	
7. Regard your teachers' comments about your own progress	3,38	

#### 4. Discussions

The issues that are considered as obstacles to 9th-graders' competence of self-study can be mentioned:

- Restrictions on students' reading speed.
- There is not much information about reputable authors or reputable publishers in the field the students want to learn, or to choose a suitable book.
- Lack of facilities and interesting books in the school library that prevents the students from forming the right habit of visiting and reading at the school library.
- Shortage of using visual memorization tools (tree diagram, mind map, etc.) when 9th-grade students record information.
- There is little skill to write down information or take notes.
- The students' revision has not been aimed at developing thinking or exploring questions to expand the problem.

- There is no clear orientation made by teachers on home-study methods as well as the requirements of learning tasks in need completing in out-of-class time.

Based on the analyses, we recommended some solutions to help students improving their competence of self-study.

#### 4.1. Practice "self-regulated learning"

If the students are expected to have self-regulated learning, the same might be expected from teachers. Due to their own professional development, for instance, they tend to have better capabilities of understanding their students' learning strategies, as well as recognizing and coping with their students' needs, obstacles and difficulties that the students may face with. Moreover, teachers with their own experience of self-regulation learning may have a better perception of specific learning and teaching strategies that are associated with self-regulation development, thus may have more awareness of the possible similarities that might be met in teachers' and students' learning processes. Hence, it is speculated that teachers are more inclined to promote strategies of which they previously experienced the effectiveness.

#### 4.2. Provide resourcing materials for students supporting their self-regulated learning

The teacher helps provide an accessible and available variety of content and resources that will benefit every individual learner. Those might be in forms of digital, traditional text, artifacts, experience, assistance in visits or interviews, or it might simply be conversational (i.e. content acquired through dialogue with the teacher, peers or others). Besides, teachers might instruct secondary school students to look for information by introducing resourcing materials. Using online search engines to seek ideas may be helpful, but there are various other alternatives to explore a topic. The teacher can help learners develop these skills in numerous ways, including offering opportunities for learners to share and guide one another (peer-to-peer learning).

### 4.3. Encourage learners' thinking capacities

The teacher provides guidance and outlets for critical thinking, brainstorming, and various types of creative thinking - for example, varied forms of journaling, reflective writing for an audience as may occur with blogging or contributing to a wiki, engaging in small group discussions, hosting workshops, etc. In such ways, the teacher offers spaces for learners to explore specific mind developmental tools.

### 4.4. Guide on how to get feedback

The teacher helps learners engage in an evaluative process, assisting them as they identify ways to check their progress towards certain goals, and formulate ways to evaluate achievements and limitations of their learning. This can start with feedback as each learner

establishes a learning contract.

## 5. Conclusions

Those figures and analyses shown in this paper reveal that the skills of “operating” their out-of-class self-regulated learning (as reading, recording and revision skills) are implemented with less frequency than the “Input” and “Output” skills which related to setting goals and self-assessing the implementation of their self-study goals. Teachers play an important role in guiding students' self-regulation process. To do this well, secondary school teachers need to practice their own self-regulated learning, orienting the quality sources of information for students, promoting learners' thinking capacities of students and guiding their students on how to get feedback.

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