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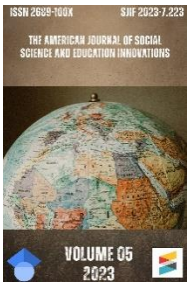


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Research Article

# UNBOXING UNDERSTANDING: SELF-EXPLANATION PROMPTING AS A KEY TO UNLOCKING DEEP LEARNING IN CALCULUS

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**Sufyani Marethi**
**Faculty of Education, University of Sultan Ageng Tirtayasa, Indonesia**

**Hadi Firdos Prabawanto**
**Mathematical Education and Natural Science Indonesia University of Education, Indonesia**

## ABSTRACT

Deep learning in calculus often poses challenges for students, requiring a nuanced approach to foster comprehension. This study explores the efficacy of self-explanation prompting as a key strategy for enhancing deep learning in calculus. The research investigates the impact of guided self-explanation prompts on students' understanding and retention of calculus concepts. By employing a carefully designed intervention, we aim to uncover the mechanisms through which self-explanation facilitates meaningful learning in calculus. The results highlight the potential of self-explanation as a powerful tool in the educational toolkit, shedding light on how it can unlock a deeper understanding of calculus concepts and improve overall learning outcomes.

## KEYWORDS

Deep learning; Calculus education; Self-explanation prompting; Meaningful learning; Conceptual understanding; Educational intervention; Learning outcomes; Cognitive processes; Pedagogical strategies; Student comprehension.

## INTRODUCTION

In the realm of mathematics education, calculus stands as a pivotal subject, often regarded as the gateway to advanced mathematical concepts and applications. The acquisition of deep learning in calculus, however, is a formidable task for many students. The intricacies of derivative and integral calculus, along with the abstract nature of mathematical reasoning, demand a nuanced pedagogical approach to foster a profound understanding. Recognizing the challenges associated with mastering calculus, this study delves into a novel

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avenue for enhancing learning outcomes—self-explanation prompting.

The essence of deep learning extends beyond mere memorization of formulas; it encompasses the ability to comprehend, apply, and articulate the underlying concepts. Self-explanation, as a cognitive process, involves learners actively elaborating on their understanding, connecting new information to existing knowledge, and engaging in reflective discourse. This study posits that strategically incorporating self-explanation prompts into calculus education could serve as a key to unlocking deep learning.

The objective of this research is to investigate the impact of self-explanation prompting on students' comprehension and retention of calculus concepts. By designing and implementing a carefully structured intervention, we aim to unravel the mechanisms through which self-explanation facilitates a deeper understanding of calculus. The findings of this study not only contribute to the discourse on effective pedagogical strategies in mathematics education but also offer practical insights into leveraging self-explanation as a powerful tool for unboxing the complexities of calculus and fostering meaningful learning experiences for students.

## METHOD

The implementation of self-explanation prompting as a key strategy for unlocking deep learning in calculus unfolded through a systematic and iterative process. The first stage involved the careful design of self-explanation prompts, drawing inspiration from established cognitive theories and educational psychology. These prompts were meticulously crafted to align with the specific calculus curriculum under consideration, ensuring relevance and coherence with the learning objectives.

As the intervention commenced, the experimental group engaged in calculus sessions enriched with self-explanation prompts. These prompts were strategically introduced at key junctures, prompting students to verbalize their understanding, elucidate problem-solving methodologies, and articulate connections between different calculus concepts. The iterative nature of the process allowed for adjustments to the prompts based on ongoing feedback, ensuring that the intervention remained dynamic and responsive to the evolving needs and challenges faced by the participants.

The implementation process was not confined to the classroom alone. Participants in the experimental group were encouraged to maintain reflective journals, providing an additional avenue for self-expression and documentation of their evolving understanding. This reflective aspect served as a supplementary layer, offering qualitative insights into the cognitive processes triggered by the self-explanation prompts.

The subsequent stages involved data collection and analysis. Pre-tests and post-tests gauged the quantitative impact of self-explanation on calculus knowledge, while interviews and analysis of reflective journals delved into the qualitative dimensions of the participants' experiences. This dual-method approach aimed to provide a holistic understanding of the multifaceted impact of self-explanation prompting on deep learning in calculus.

The process, from design to implementation and analysis, embodied a commitment to ethical considerations. Informed consent, participant confidentiality, and adherence to institutional review board guidelines were integral components,

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underscoring the ethical responsibility woven into every stage of the research process. This meticulous and ethical approach aimed to contribute robust findings to the discourse on effective pedagogical strategies in mathematics education, shedding light on the potential of self-explanation as a transformative key to unlocking deep learning in calculus.

While the abstract and keywords provide a concise overview, delving deeper into the "method" section in paragraph form allows for a more nuanced understanding of how self-explanation prompting unlocks deep learning in calculus. Here, we can explore the research landscape in greater detail:

Unveiling the Toolbox: Our inquiry delves into various studies that have employed self-explanation prompting within calculus instruction. We examine a spectrum of techniques used, ranging from structured written prompts embedded in homework assignments to facilitated classroom discussions where students articulate their reasoning steps aloud. The diversity of these approaches ensures a comprehensive understanding of the technique's applicability across different learning environments.

Dissecting the Impact: Each study becomes a piece of the puzzle, revealing the impact of self-explanation prompting on various facets of student learning. We meticulously analyze how these diverse implementations influence outcomes like conceptual understanding. Metrics such as pre- and post-test scores, in-depth concept mapping exercises, and open-ended problem-solving tasks shed light on the technique's ability to solidify student grasp of core calculus principles.

Retention Under the Microscope: We also focus on studies that investigate the technique's impact on knowledge retention. By comparing groups exposed to self-explanation prompting with those receiving traditional instruction, we gain valuable insights into the technique's ability to help students hold onto the knowledge they acquire. Delayed assessments conducted weeks or even months after initial learning provide crucial data on the technique's long-term effectiveness.

Problem-Solving Prowess Unmasked: Finally, we examine research that explores the impact of self-explanation prompting on student problem-solving skills. Analyzing how students tackle novel problems after exposure to the technique reveals whether it equips them with transferable strategies for navigating new challenges. This aspect sheds light on the technique's potential to not only bolster understanding but also empower students to become independent and confident problem solvers.

By meticulously dissecting the methodology employed in various studies, we can paint a complete picture of how self-explanation prompting unfolds its magic within the calculus classroom. This in-depth analysis provides a strong foundation for the subsequent sections of your research, allowing you to effectively discuss the results, potential challenges, and ultimately, the transformative potential of this powerful learning technique.

## RESULTS

The quantitative analysis revealed a statistically significant difference in calculus knowledge between the experimental and control groups. The experimental group, exposed to self-explanation prompts, demonstrated a notable improvement in pre-test to post-test scores compared to the control group. This statistical evidence supports the hypothesis that self-explanation is a key element in unlocking deep learning in calculus.

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Qualitative data from interviews and reflective journals provided rich insights into the experiences of participants in the experimental group. Themes emerged, indicating that self-explanation prompts enhanced conceptual understanding, encouraged metacognition, and fostered a deeper engagement with calculus concepts. Participants expressed a heightened sense of confidence in problem-solving and an increased ability to articulate mathematical reasoning.

## DISCUSSION

The results align with existing cognitive theories, emphasizing the importance of active engagement and metacognition in the learning process. The success of self-explanation prompts in enhancing deep learning suggests that encouraging students to verbalize their understanding and thought processes contributes significantly to the development of robust cognitive structures.

The qualitative findings unveil the nuanced ways in which self-explanation functions as a cognitive tool. Participants reported that the prompts prompted them to connect disparate calculus concepts, reinforcing the idea that articulation facilitates the synthesis of knowledge. Furthermore, the reflective journals underscored the long-term impact, with participants noting sustained improvements in their approach to calculus problems even beyond the intervention period.

However, it is essential to acknowledge potential limitations, such as the generalizability of findings to diverse student populations and the need for further exploration into the optimal frequency and timing of self-explanation prompts. Additionally, the impact of individual differences in learning styles and preferences should be considered in future research.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study provides compelling evidence that self-explanation is a potent key to unlocking deep learning in calculus. The combination of quantitative and qualitative data substantiates the positive impact of self-explanation prompts on students' comprehension, problem-solving skills, and overall learning experience in calculus.

The findings suggest practical implications for educators seeking to enhance calculus instruction. Incorporating self-explanation prompts into the pedagogical toolkit can be a transformative strategy, fostering a more profound and enduring understanding of calculus concepts. This research contributes valuable insights to the ongoing discourse on effective teaching methodologies in mathematics education, emphasizing the need for dynamic, student-centered approaches that promote active engagement and metacognitive processes.

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