

The Role of the Teacher in Creating Autonomous Learners

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Definition

What is Learner Autonomy?

Learner autonomy is described by Holec (1981) as the capacity to take control over one's own learning

How is it cultivated?

Most experts agree that autonomy is not taught or learned, but “it is fostered through initiatives designed to stimulate autonomy among learners” (Henson, 2011)

Autonomy is a capacity that has to be learned.

The road to autonomy is a process.



What does it involve for Teachers

Accepting the rationale for promoting Autonomy

Support and training from the organization is helpful for the teachers to change their beliefs (Deci & Ryan, 1991; & Ryan & Poewelson, 1991)

Cultivating the seed of Autonomy by gradual build up and constant follow up

Remember:

Students can't change fixed abilities, but they can change learning habits and behaviors like effort and persistence. (Barbara McCombs, University of Denver)

Directing Attention





What does it involve for Students

Motivation

Curiosity

Sense of responsibility

Feeling of being in charge

Willingness to plan their own learning

Ability to monitor their own progress

Desire to evaluate their progress

How to keep student's motivation alive?

- Know the student's learning style
- Design activities that best matches their learning style
- Apply Differentiated Learning practices
- Reward success to promote self-reward

– *Encouragement not punishment*

How to Keep Student's Curiosity alive

- Provide activities that:
- provides choices
- Inquiry-based instructions
- Topics of interest

How to promote sense of Responsibility

- Encourage Learning-Community practices
- Provide Task-Based instruction that promotes higher-level thinking
- Design real-life activities that require Critical thinking

How to encourage taking control of Learning

Activities that require collaboration with teacher and peers

Conduct student centered classes

Encourage the note-taking habit, journal writing, and self-reflection

How to promote self-monitoring

Giving feedback

Require weekly or bi-weekly meetings to guide the self-monitoring process.

Developing autonomy requires conscious awareness of the learning process – i.e. conscious reflection and decision-making (Sinclair, 2000)

–Self-reflection is the key

How to increase Student ability to plan

- Implement Open Architecture Curriculum
- Offer Task-Based Instructions
- Assign guided search for related material
- Be flexible to students need for the their topic of choice

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Questions

