The Role of the Teacher in Creating Autonomous Learners

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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 doe 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


Questions