



## LEARNER AUTONOMY IN DEVELOPING CRITICAL THINKING AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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### Abstract

The aim of this article is to ascertain the connections between secondary school students' perceptions of language learning courses' critical thinking tendencies and their support for their own autonomy. A lot of research on this subject, and the results showed a significant relationship between autonomy support and critical thinking tendency. Autonomy support was found to significantly predict critical thinking tendency skills in secondary school students taking language learning classes.

**Keywords:** critical thinking, independent learning, evaluate, analyze, self-nurturing, language, autonomy, skill, English, principles, critical thinking, independence, method, education.

### Introduction

Autonomous learning is a skill which has already become one of the important tools in all education fields, including foreign language classes. Learner autonomy means managing your own learning, independent learning. If learners do not know what their duties and tasks those need to be done, it is difficult to see any result in their language learning process. Not being aware of their responsibilities in their class hours can easily decrease their enthusiasm and give negative effect while learning a new skill. Learner autonomy, learner responsibility and motivation are connected with each other as no one can acquire new things if they are not enough motivated. To increase the learner responsibilities and to help the autonomous learners, teachers should know some essential classroom applications. It is hoped that this study will help foreign language educators to prepare different kinds activities in their classes.

### Methods used to implement autonomous learning and increase critical thinking skills

- Setting clear goals. Having understood the instructions and awareness of the things they need to learn, must learn and the ones they have to pay attention carefully will





ease the difficulties and reduces the possibility of failing during the process of self-paced learning. Setting clear objectives of what they are going to learn helps in planning and structuring of various activities and approaches.

- Allowing students to choose how to complete projects and assignments. Offer choices rather than forcing a single option whenever possible. For example, consider having students choose assignments or assessment formats from a menu of different options.
- Asking students to keep a journal (for virtual settings, this could be housed in an online platform or shared file) and reflect each week on what has been going well, what challenges they've faced, and what they might try or want differently the following week. This will ease the teachers' work and enable students to be independent during the classes with making the final decision.
- Maintain a professional distance from students so that they perceive them as learning facilitators rather than individual instructors.
- Promoting learner autonomy so that students are able to find information on their own rather than depending on teachers to hand them the course material.
- Encouraging students to assume responsibility and become conscious of their own learning preferences. Teachers can equip students with the skills to create their own learning methods by showing them various ways to learn and take notes.
- Promoting peer-to-peer education. In many situations, peer-to-peer learning has already shown to be at least as successful as teacher-to-student instruction. Teachers can create environments where students collaborate with classmates to learn by designing classrooms that are built on learner autonomy. As a result, this can then provide them with the platform they need to study entirely independently.

### **Characteristics of autonomous learner**

After being confessed what learner autonomy is and why learners need it, the question naturally arises in every student as to what are the characteristics of an autonomous learner. Many studies have shown that independent learners share certain traits. According to Candy (1991), autonomous learners have the following attributes: methodical and disciplined; logical and analytical; reflective and self-aware; curious, open and highly motivated; flexible, interdependent and interpersonally competent; persistent and responsible; venturesome and creative; and self-sufficient, information seekers, knowledgeable and skillful about learning process and critical thinkers.





Similarly, as Dickson states (1993), when many participants are understanding what was going on in their classrooms, independent students are able to recognize what has been conveyed. They can develop their own learning outcomes in partnership with the teacher or as a separate activity from what the teacher is doing. Furthermore, independent learners may intentionally choose and execute suitable learning tactics, as well as track their own progress.

## Results

The phrase "think outside the box" or "critical thinking" has recently gained popularity in second language instruction. It should be regarded as one of the skills needed to acquire a second language, according to the majority of educationalists. According to William and Burden (1997), critical thinking is a cognitive process that actively encourages students to use their mental faculties to actively observe, consider, critically analyze, and evaluate the material presented. It cultivates in students the capacity to draw logical inferences and come to wise choices on their own. Numerous observational studies support the importance of critical thinking in learning a second language. According to Liaw (2007), critical thinking is a key factor in linguistic proficiency. By encouraging critical thinking in the language classroom, instructors can empower students to take control of their own thinking and to effectively monitor and assess their progress. Additionally, it improves the educational process and gives them a deeper understanding of what they are learning.

The success of language instruction is greatly influenced by students' attitudes of responsibility. According to Mercer (2018), effective language learning necessitates the active participation of students who are self-reliant, despite the fact that these factors can be achieved only by providing a suitable environment and providing worthwhile input. All schools of higher learning anticipate that their students will develop into independent thinkers and producers of knowledge. They must possess the necessary aptitude, wisdom, articulation, and initiative. These objectives are accomplished through their challenging educational experience, which adequately prepares them to contribute effectively to the changing world in which they labor and live. Additionally, if all the students do is memorize information or reduce themselves to servile imitation or repetition of textbooks and instructors, the learning experiences cannot be challenging.

Being independent and accountable of oneself is essential to effective language learning. Both learner autonomy and learner responsibility necessitate active participation and a high degree of motivation, so they are related. According to Yagcioglu (2015), learner autonomy is the freedom and capacity to manage one's





affairs, which includes the right to make choices. According to Binu (2021), learning is an active and beneficial process in which students actively seek out new knowledge and connect it to what they already know. But only when students are able to work cooperatively can this act of intellectual processing—constructing meaning or creating something new be accomplished.

## Conclusion

In every aspect of a person's existence, motivation and learner autonomy are crucial issues. If someone is motivated well or knows how to encourage themselves, they can accomplish a lot and battle a lot of challenges.

The topic of motivation is crucial for our pupils. If teachers can successfully motivate students using new and modern methods, they will become more engaged and talkative. By developing children's critical thinking with these skills can help students feel better about themselves, they will achieve greater results as learners. Additionally, the philosophy said, the more inclined students are to share their feelings, interests, values, hopes, and dreams, the stronger and more self-confident they will become. Also increasing their responsibility and self-confidence will be very effective. Furthermore, having so many friends can certainly provide a boost for one's ego and according to humanistic theory, the more that you are able to discover about yourself and are willing to share with others, the greater your sense of self-esteem and the more successful you will be in your endeavors, including foreign language learning.

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