

## **PROMOTING AUTONOMOUS LEARNING THROUGH ONLINE DISCUSSION**

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### **Abstract**

An autonomous learning system is being applied to students nowadays. Students are now encouraged and expected to play a more active role in learning. Autonomy learning is intensified to encourage students to be more independent, creative, and responsible for their learning. Through this article, writers explain how to promote autonomous learning. The method used is the library study related to autonomous learning. Writers explain further about the class design to promote autonomous learning and the strengths also weaknesses of this learning system. Based on this article's findings, possible ways are proposed to help and improve the implementation of autonomous learning.

**Keywords:** *autonomous learning, class design, technology.*

### **Background**

In learning autonomy, students are responsible for their learning process. Richards (2020) describes 5 principles for achieving autonomous learning: active involvement of students, providing choices and resources, offering choices and decision-making opportunities, supporting learners, and encouraging the practice of reflection. Teaching can certainly require educators to continue to develop knowledge, mentality, characteristics, and attitudes which will then be given to children. Optimizing children's abilities and intelligence so that they can develop the abilities they have. For that, an educator must have an attitude that can be followed by the students. The abilities and intelligence possessed by each person are different, both in the academic and non-academic fields. Non-academic such as someone who can solve everyday problems and show extraordinary abilities in specific fields. As for the benefits you will get from autonomous learning, such as

teaching someone to be disciplined in managing study time, making someone an independent person because they are used to learning alone, can teach someone to think in new and creative ways, and an attitude of curiosity about something also can make someone will learn self-taught. Everyone needs to learn autonomously, especially in children because when they grow up they will be able to learn independently, get to know the abilities that exist within them, and be able to develop the abilities that exist within them to become an advantage (Putri, C.W. & Hariyanto, O.I.B. 2022).

The more advanced the technology that is today and the more sophisticated the learning media are, it does not rule out the possibility for us to continue learning (Marsevani, M., & Rahman, D.M.,2022). The ever-growing digital media can be used to disseminate information needed in education, such as e-learning. In this regard, e-learning has now become a necessity in learning. With technology, everyone can easily access the media in

electronics. Technology users can also use it anywhere and anytime. With technology that can be taken anywhere such as smartphones, we can access information easily and quickly. The need for information while studying is also very much needed by students. Seeking information by yourself, learning by yourself, and developing your abilities can also be done directly with yourself. Currently, there are many platforms and other media that can be used as learning. Everyone can learn automatically by utilizing the technology they have. Besides that, with technology, it becomes easier for us to communicate and share information with people who are out there, we can connect with foreigners without meeting face to face. When talking about technology there will certainly be no end, technology develops according to the times and the use of technology is also very much, such as helping someone to hone and develop their abilities through existing media.

Nowadays technology allows students to study completely online while still socializing with classmates. Online learning is also often done by students lately. Online learning is usually carried out when a teacher who teaches is not face to face with students directly. Usually, the teaching and learning process activities are always carried out in a place such as in the classroom. However, due to unexpected events such as what is happening at this time, the emergence of Covid-19 in the world which causes everyone to be sent home and learn online. Therefore the use of online learning is one of the best ways that the education system does so that students do not miss learning. As an educator, the teacher must pay more attention to how students can learn well. Teachers can use several e-learning media to support their teaching and learning process to students. The teacher can use several platforms that can be used by students to learn without meeting face to face. Online learning can also help

students to learn more independently by utilizing the free time they have for autonomous learning, they can even learn from e-learning materials that have been provided by their previous teachers. Teachers and students can also use several apps to conduct class discussions such as Zoom, MsTeams, etc. So it is not an obstacle for teachers and students who cannot carry out learning in class because they can also use the online class system in carrying out learning.

In carrying out the teaching and learning process, here we will create activities or learning materials that will be taught to students (Carnando, G. 2020). The learning subjects that we will teach are English lessons, especially those in computer science students. We have conducted several interviews with the person concerned to make the needs of computer science students in learning English such as seniors who have worked in a company. In addition, we have also conducted several interviews with teachers who have experience teaching English in schools. We also conducted several surveys by creating a form containing the questions we needed to create and compile the English learning materials needed by students before working in a company.

In learning something we definitely need technology to be able to find and share information about what we need. MAI (Multimedia-Assisted Instruction) is an activity that can increase learning motivation. The existence of technology support can support someone to learn and motivate them to learn more. The survey shows that MAI can be used as a foreign language learning for people who want to understand the target language. Students will be motivated to follow or do what they have learned from technology, such as using videos, images, graphs, music, etc. as a learning medium. It is not difficult for someone to learn from technological media because multimedia has many types of activities that can be obtained. In other words, MAI allows individuals to learn on

their own. The number of technologies can also help students to know about the background knowledge of a topic. When teaching, teachers can use MAI to help and make it easier for students to understand their lessons, such as providing several topics to study.

Autonomy learning is a learning activity carried out by personal learning which can then absorb better outside learning, this has a good impact on people who want to learn autonomy because they can increase their knowledge and start learning how to do it (Jack C. Richadrs, 2020). Educator Henri Holec said that autonomy students have been around since the 1980s. He also defines that learning autonomy is how a person arranges or makes his own way of learning. However, other authors also define learner autonomy as part of how they learn, where they learn it, the resources they use, and most importantly is how they produce it by themselves. They can identify their learning goals, learning process, and how to evaluate their learning, so they can be motivated to learn (Sheffield Hallam, 2010). They also need partnerships in learning like teachers or other students.

Research shows that the use of video clips in the learning process greatly affects a person's understanding of knowledge. Therefore, it can make it easier for students to understand and remember various things when naturally receiving information. The use of video in the teaching and learning process is not only felt by students, but these benefits can also be felt by the teacher. In 2015 there was a study that said 93% of teachers used educational videos to improve the learning abilities of their students (Kaltura, 2015). (Kuaravadivelu, 2006) Based on the Kuaravadivelu, which states there are two views on autonomous learners. Both of them is a narrow view and the other is a broad view. In this narrow view, someone can only see, follow the lessons, and how they always continue to learn and learn again. Whereas someone who has a broad view is someone

whose knowledge has been understood and studied a lot. By knowing a lot, someone can help and take charge the learner to develop their knowledge, such as a teacher when teaching the students. According to Holec, the definitions of taking charges is how to select methods and techniques when teaching, always mentoring the progress, taking responsibility, and the last is evaluating what has been obtained. Based on the Little (1991), he has a statement that the notion of learning autonomy is not synonymous. If interpreted the word "autonomy" will mean "self-study". But this synonym will make people misunderstand because at the time of learning we also need someone to guide us while studying. This does not mean that the role of the teacher is not needed in independent learning, but the role of the teacher in learning is needed by students, for example, the teacher provides directions to students, what students have to do is do what is told by the teacher and if there is a misunderstanding in learning, a teacher can tell students to do the right thing.

In providing instruction to students, a teacher has the authority to teach autonomously to students. Breen and Candline divided them into three categories of authority, such as teachers as facilitators, teachers as organizers, and teachers as counselors. To achieve flexible learning, we need a teacher as a facilitator in learning. According to Voller, a facilitator must be able to provide psycho-social aspect development and provide appropriate teaching methods to learners. What is meant by the psycho-social aspect is how a facilitator can motivate the learner not to be afraid and worried about the problem that is happening. While the technical aspect is an aspect that can help the learner to make a plan, find a way out of the problem, help the learner to evaluate themselves from the skills and knowledge they have. Teachers as organizers, it's mean that in a learning system the teacher must have a responsive attitude in creating

and providing an organizer in teaching, such as providing various activities to be carried out by students. Here the teacher's role in giving instructions must also be clear so that students can do it well, such as instruction in the process, working in groups or individuals, etc. so that the goals and benefits of learning can be achieved. The teacher as a counselor means that the teacher who counsels the students educational and personal problems during school. The role of the teacher here is to help students who have problems in learning. Myers said that the meaning of counseling is a relationship between two persons, where this person can help and find solutions to problems faced by clients. Mathias Nkeeto, as a teacher at Green Hills Academy, said that the role of students is to learn what teachers teach students and apply that learning outside the school environment (Lydia Atieno, 2019).

In promoting autonomy, there are various ways to assist students in learning autonomously. Based on research by Cotterall (2000), there are 5 principles that can be used in foreign language teaching teachers. These principles are (1) Provide exercise or practice to students so that students can achieve learner goals, (2) Provide tasks related to a simplified language learning model, (3) Give them tasks with real examples, so that the learner can communicate directly with strangers, (4) A course that combines discussion and practice in learner strategy, (5) The courses can encourage reflection on learning. However, the understanding of foreign language learning is also influenced by students in EFL itself (Lamb, 2004). (Howard, J. and Major, J. 2004) Factors such as personal confidence and competence can be included in the development of learning materials. This can be influenced by the experience of teachers in designing learning materials, there are: (1) Added some activities that have been suggested, (2) Avoid unnecessary activities while doing teaching and learning activities, (3)

Adjusting materials or learning activities with additional material from the text, material from print or electronic media, and additional material made by the teacher. (4) Make learning activities in the form of groups or pairs, so that students can exchange ideas in learning. Students can help each other and work together in doing things such as assignments or projects, so they have the responsibility to complete tasks together. The most important thing is students can learn autonomously.

### **Research Methods**

According to George Betts and Jolene Kercher quoted by Rusman in his book entitled "Learning Models Developing Teacher Professionalism "creates the Autonomous Learner Model (ALM) to encourage self-directed learning patterns for gifted students. The main objective of this model is to facilitate the development of students to become learners independent, independent, with the development of skills, concepts, and positive attitudes in the realm of cognitive, emotional, and social.

This model is designed to accompany students towards roles learners, who can control their learning process, with the teacher as the facilitator. With a flexible approach, this model can be used in classes regular (for all students and across developmental stages), on small groups, on private courses, or specific learning areas or cross-curriculum.

ALM advocates for the development of learning patterns excited-where students are involved in the learning deeper than just covering a broad topic. The main focus of this program is lifelong learning, with a focus on meeting the individual needs of students through the application of activities in the five main dimensions of the model.

The five dimensions of the model include:

1. Orientation - understanding talents and potential, activities group, self / personal development.
2. Individual development - intra / interpersonal understanding, learning skills, technology utilization, university/career awareness, organizational skills, and productivity.
3. Wealth - study, exploration, investigation, activities cultural, community service, excursion, camp.
4. Seminar - small group presentations on issues general, future issues, problematic and controversial issues, or advanced knowledge topics.
5. In-depth Study - individual projects, project groups, mentors, presentations, self-assessments, and others.
7. Provision of opportunities for self-assessment or self-assessment;
8. The provision of opportunities for group work and peer evaluation;
9. Learning and assessment through learning journals or diaries to stimulate reflection;
10. The provision of learning and assessment opportunities to stimulate and assess critical thinking.

Hughes (2003) argues that not all students in higher education have the knowledge, skills, and qualities they need to be able to cope with independent learning. McNair (1997) in Hughes (2003) explains that students enter higher education with varying degrees of autonomy, and has not been encouraged by the many educational processes they have experienced in the past. If the student learning method is adopted in the early stages of college, there are dangers that students will become less autonomous. Hughes (2003) proposes several tools that teachers may use to provide students with autonomous learning opportunities as follows:

1. Simple recruitment and instruction on institutional frameworks,
2. Training and support skills;
3. The provision of opportunities for negotiated learning;
4. Project-based learning;
5. Problem-based learning;
6. Stand-alone, independent study modules;

According to Benson (2001: 109), any practice that encourages and enables learners to take greater control of every aspect of their learning can be considered a means of promoting autonomy. Benson (2001: 111) sees several teaching practices as supporting autonomy. They are:

1. a resource-based approach that emphasizes the independent interaction of students with learning materials,
2. a technology-based approach that emphasizes the independent interaction of students with educational technology,
3. a student-based approach that emphasizes the direct production of behavioral and psychological changes which allows students to take control of their learning,
4. a class-based approach that emphasizes learner control over planning and assessment of classroom learning,
5. a curriculum-based approach that extends the notion of learner control to the curriculum,
6. a teacher-based approach that emphasizing the role of teachers and teacher education in the practice of fostering independence among students.

The difference made in the above classification lies in the focus of the approach. However, these approaches are interdependent and sometimes combined in eclectic ways. Learning independence will be fostered effectively through a combination of approaches.

### **Finding & Discussion**

The design of our class with autonomous learning that we use is concerned with the process in order to accept the desired goals. Actually, at the first meeting in each meeting, the aim is to make students are able to determine basic knowledge of information or material in accordance with the lesson plan, and at this first meeting also uses learning strategies such as Contextual Teaching Learning, Role Playing, and Quiz. Contextual Teaching Learning or commonly abbreviated as CTL is a learning concept that emphasizes the linkage between learning material and the real world, so that students are able to connect and apply competency learning outcomes in everyday life. Then, Role Playing is a learning model that is directed at solving problems related to interpersonal relationships, especially those concerning the lives of students. Finally, quizzes are a method that will indirectly encourage students to study independently outside the classroom. That means, when students will face the subject quiz, it is almost certain that some students will learn material that has previously been delivered in class. In all of the learning strategies that are applied, students are highly required to be able to do autonomous learning even in the classroom. Where after the teacher delivers a little about the topic of the day's learning, students can then study the material more and more deeply through books or laptop computers to get lots of additional information and understand the concept of the material as comfortably as they are.

The second meeting with the same topic as the lesson plan in the previous week was a meeting that focused on deepening the material. This time teacher usually gives assignments, asks students to present the material they learned last week, conducts question and answer sessions between

students, or between students and teachers, and concludes the material being studied so that they can end the topic and can continue other topic next meet. At this meeting, also do an introspection session was held during the learning process session.

As we know, self-guided learning that is properly guided will improve the ability to think, collaborate, be communicative, and be good at interpreting an event. Where they initially learn something, free by choosing learning media from books, or laptops, so they can organize themselves to give their brains free space to capture everything they learn without forcefully entering it so that the knowledge will stick to itself properly. Autonomous learning in school requires supervision and guidance. In this case, the teacher should supervise what students learn, see, and listen to. The teacher must ensure that students get and capture the correct information. When they are free to form groups, the teacher must also be aware of the choice of sources for each group of students who choose, so that they can continue to brainstorm, group debates, or others according to the theme and of course come from reliable and updated sources. Teachers must be paying attention and careful because there are lots of books, and the web that has little or no complete information, the information is not updated, or the source cannot be trusted so that here the teacher must work as a provider of teaching materials at various media, be it the media of books or trusted web links.

In this case, the students themselves are the important determinants of their final outcome. How much effort they put into themselves or the teamwork will determine how much and how far the students progress. However, behind that, all the roles of the teacher are also important, with the teacher's knowledge of the material provided at that time he can help improve between before and after the

implementation of autonomous learning activities by students.

As we said earlier, the second week on the same topic will discuss more deeply the previous topic. For that, in the second-week students can present the homework that was given last week. One of which is where students are asked to make a video on a related topic. Here students are asked to do the best, be as creative as possible in making their homework, and of course, following the rules. The task of making videos is the easiest and most fun thing for students. In addition, making videos also leads to increasingly advanced learning, and students can adapt to technological developments.

Students are also can choose what appearance they want to present in their video. Students can record themselves, make vlogs, conduct conversations such as podcasts, make videos about various responses or reactions from various groups such as their friends or family, or display design animations according to related topics. This frees the student from having to be a pleasure. Instead of having to memorize a topic that is new, foreign, and looks unattractive, by being freed like this, students will find their own way to become acquainted and close to the topic.

Giving assignments by asking students to make video recordings intends to provide them with autonomous learning about many things. This can be seen by the way students summarize the material that will be brought appropriately, train how to deliver, etiquette, choose good words when on air, dress ethics, and add photos or animations. Students also have to know, where they are not only judged on whether or not they have submitted their homework but, they are also judged by their seriousness and creative side.

Autonomous learning without being aware by teachers or parents is very hard to

apply to students in Indonesia. Some of the students in Indonesia find it troublesome to choose between spend their time to learn or compare by time of play or go to hangout. The students' reason are feel hard to choosing autonomous learn at home by themselves because the methods of learning at home are boring and make a confused. Must read the book, certainly not all students like to read something long enough, and understand the content of the writing on the book. Along in Text Books only show some examples does not cover much more information. Most teachers in Indonesia take the learn material from Text Books, also ask students to do homework in writing, and again ask for print out a paper from sharing sources on the internet. Things like this certainly do not make a impressive impression or motivate students because of imperiable or not increasing the adrenaline sense of students. Therefore, teachers should be able to make students have a more passion for learning. The way to make students have a high sense of spirit are to be adaptable to the students' mindset, the teacher adapt to the student's environmental conditions. With the sophistication and the ease of accessing the techniques should provide opportunities for teachers to use it. By making the video as a source of self-studying will certainly make the high level of student interest to independence learning at home. Learning to use video makes students feel more comfortable. The students can freely choose which tutors appropriate to their interests, students can also be free to choose the type of video according to their favorite, students can use various gadgets of their choice, can adjust the learning position as in the living room, bedrooms, at the desk desk, in the mattress, or the terrace of the house, all of this certainly make students do autonomous learning more comfortable and feel like fun.

Whatever learning method, whether it's an independent study or not, of course, has

advantages or disadvantages. The advantages of independent learning are that the knowledge you learn is more and more diverse from the various references available, the knowledge you get is more durable because in addition to learning theory you also practice, can find and create new techniques, be freer in learning, don't feel restrained. Regarding the knowledge that you learn is more and more diverse than the various existing references, if students learn from existing textbooks it will tend to be limited, even though there is a lot of recent information and has changed with those in Textbooks. Then, the knowledge obtained is more durable because, in addition to studying the theory, students also practice indirectly with a broad visual field, this is also because the collaboration between the right brain and the left brain makes you have a strong memory compared to learning through books. More and more new knowledge and information are known and students can take advantage of their combination techniques so that they are suitable for comfortable independent study, ensuring that students can not only be smart but can also create something new, create a new atmosphere for themselves and the environment.

In this case, the advantages of independent study are very dominant. The advantages of independent study in the present era, especially in Indonesia, greatly improve the quality of students. Independent learning has increased due to students who do not feel pressured to learn to be smarter but to know more. In independent learning, there are many variants of information that can be obtained or known, making students unconsciously gain knowledge not only about the subject matter according to the lesson plan, but also get new knowledge besides, also get knowledge with more updated data and sources. It is very beneficial for the students themselves, and of course, makes

the students also able to compete well with their era.

As for the shortcomings of independent learning, among others; takes a long time because there are no mentors to help lead it, if they fail, they will plunge into failure without being able to avoid their only option is to learn from every failure. After that, students can often make the same mistakes or try other methods but fall in the same place, of course, this is due to limited experience so that each method taken must be thoroughly studied. Finally, students often experience prolonged stress because of errors that do not find a solution. Although the symptoms of stress are not visible, the way they make decisions and even give up easily and get frustrated about wanting to quit is the worst thing about self-taught learning. All of this is because students consider the field they are studying outside the limits of their thinking.

In many ways, the factors of strength and weakness of students to be enthusiastic about independent learning are up to the students themselves, where strong enthusiasm and determination are needed. However, providing good support for students can also improve the quality of students' enthusiasm for independent study more diligently. Providing support can be from various parties, namely from the support of the teacher who provides clear materials, instructions and various suggestions, then support from the family such as providing a special place for children to be able to learn independently comfortably lastly, the availability of independent learning equipment such as books, gadgets, and the internet.

### **Conclusion**

Autonomous learning is very important in the field of higher education. Students may have little communication time to learn English, so they may continue to develop their understanding and skills quickly. It is



therefore important for them to become independent language learners who can continue to learn efficiently outside the classroom. Students' expectations of their position as learners are at the core of autonomous learning. Group discussions and face-to-face meetings with teachers will help students appreciate the crucial role they have in their learning in English. Establish that students who are autonomous and dynamic have the potential to learn far more than passive and responsive learners. Independent students can meet their individual needs and make sustainable progress. Autonomy involves students with a variety of learning strategies that can be applied flexibly in different contexts. Teachers can help students develop coping approaches through classroom instruction, and this can take several forms. An important practical step is to raise awareness of how to use self-referencing tools such as English-English dictionaries and grammar books. In the early stages of the course, it will be useful to demonstrate how to use these resources effectively as a class. For example, when reading text in a lesson, encourage students to choose a small number of new words that they can not deduce from the context. Tell them to look at the words in the English-English dictionary. If there is more than one-word

entry, discuss the correct meaning of the context. Take this time to illustrate the specific details contained in the dictionary, such as spelling and word groups. Encourage students to make the most of their dictionary practice by choosing and bringing together important terms in books or a personalized vocabulary list. Assign homework tasks to pupils, such as reading the text of their choosing and studying a variety of words in the English-English dictionary. Encourage them to comment on the class process. It will help students pass knowledge beyond the classroom to become more resourceful to self-reliant learners.

To emphasize the effectiveness of the implementation of autonomous learning in class, always let students explore more about the materials that they interested in. By providing them some applications, websites, or any additional tools will help students to find the materials easily. Besides that, the teacher needs to become a facilitator for students that will guide them while understanding the materials. Although we ask and train them to become an autonomous learner, it does not mean to let them be. Teachers need to facilitate, guide, and monitor students to achieve the best result of autonomous learning.

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