Quadrant-I   e-Text

Details of Module and its structure

Module Detail	
Subject Name	**Education**
Course Name	**Contemporary Indian Education**
Course Code	**EDU501**
Module Name/Title	**Learner Autonomy: meaning, extent, nature; Learning as an autonomous act: meaning, opportunities, constraints**.
Module Code	**CIE019**
Pre-requisites	**Learners are expected to be aware of the meaning of Philosophy. It is also expected that the learners are informed about the naturalism.**
Learning Outcome	**After going through this lesson, the learners will be able to** • Analyse the extent of Learner autonomy as per the nature of learner • Explore the opportunities and constraints in autonomous learning
Keywords	**Learner Autonomy , Technical Autonomy, social autonomy, political autonomy, psychological autonomy**

1. Development Team

Role	Name	Affiliation
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Contents

Learner Autonomy: meaning, extent, nature; Learning as an autonomous act: meaning, opportunities, constraints

1.0   INTRODUCTION

Definitions

Autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own learning -Henri Holec

"Autonomy is essentially a matter of the learner's psychological relation to the process and content of learning" - David Little

"Autonomy is a situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all the decisions concerned with his [or her] learning and the implementation of those decisions"- Leslie Dickinson

"Autonomy is a recognition of the rights of learners within educational systems". Phil Benson

If learner autonomy is not merely a matter of organization, does not entail an abdication of initiative and control on the part of the teacher, is not a teaching method, is not to be equated with a single easily identified behaviour, and is not a steady state attained by a happy band of privileged learners, then what is it. Essentially, autonomy is a capacity - for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning. The capacity for autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learner learns and in the way he or she transfers what has been learned to wider contexts in common usage the word "autonomy" denotes a significant measure of independence from the control of others. The concept of learner autonomy similarly implies that the learner enjoys a high degree of freedom.

Littlewood (1999, p. 73) states that if we define autonomy in educational terms as involving student's capacity to use their learning independently of teachers, then autonomy would appear to be an incontrovertible goal for learners everywhere, since it is obvious that no students, anywhere, will have their teachers to accompany them throughout life. One may occasionally hire a tour guide to explain about the

local sights, but then one will be on the road again, to wherever the events and the people you meet take you. Sometimes one go directly to the next town, and sometimes one stop for a drink on the way. Sometimes you go to the museum, and sometimes for a hike in the mountains. Sometimes you read about the history of the sights, and sometimes you just soak up the

atmosphere. Sometimes you have time to prepare and sometimes you rush off to the airport at the last moment. Sometimes you feel great, and sometimes you are homesick. And sometimes, you just need a break. Autonomy, then, is an intimately personal affair. It is about your life, about what you want to achieve, and what you enjoy, in this way, it is the only way to learn successfully in the long term. Because no one knows you better than you do, and no one can make your choices for you, autonomy requires you to get to know yourself better.

Learner Autonomy is, first and foremost, a mind-set. A way of thinking about learning as a journey where you decide where to go, and how to travel

In this you will see learner will keep on asking from himself/ herself many questions like:

- What am I going to Learn? (Objectives of learning is explored)
- How am I going to learn it? (Resources and strategies is explored)
- How am I going to know that I have learned it? (Evidence is explored)
- How am I going to prove that I have learned it? (explore how it will be verified by teachers and peers)

Example

Personal Plans to use in the weeks after a lesson finishes

Aim of the child is to improve the vocabulary

Tasks Read at least 3 magazine articles from Newsweek every week. For each article note down 3 words that I want to know the meaning of. Look up the words. Find the words again in next week's articles and check to see that they
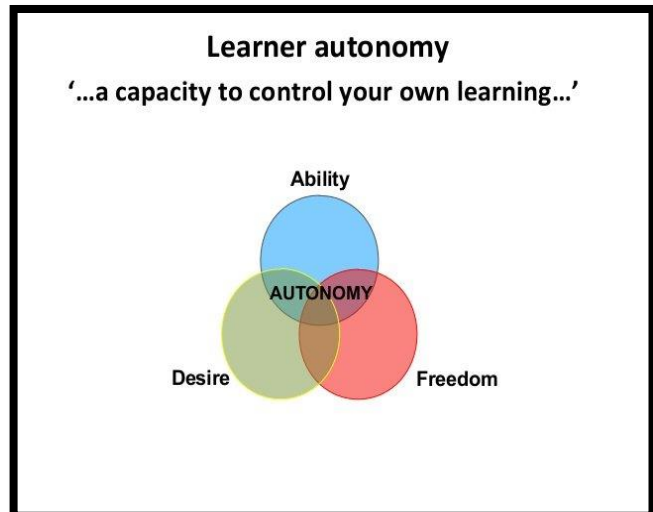
mean the same thing in the new article. Do 1 unit from English Vocabulary in Use every week and check.

Learner Autonomy may be defined as ability to take charge of one's own learning. Main idea behind learner autonomy is that students should take responsibility for their own learning, rather than be dependent on the teacher (Holec 1981) The autonomous learner is one that constructs knowledge from direct experience, rather than one who responds to someone's instruction. (Benson 2001).
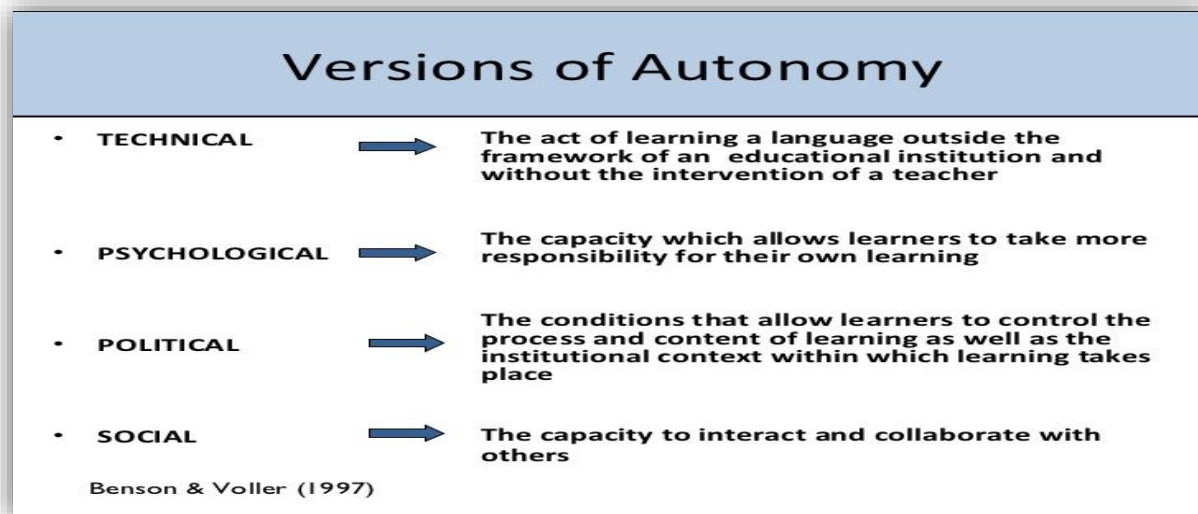
1.1 Extent of Learner Autonomy

1. Technical Autonomy: When we talk about the learner autonomy it includes the actions and activities which leads to the learning of language by the individual by using the others resource excluding the framework or set of environment which is provided in the educational institution, schools and without the intervention of a teacher for acquisition of language by the learner. It focuses on the physical structure for the learning of an individual.

2.**Psychological Autonomy**: As every individual is different or individual difference claims the vivid capabilities, abilities, grasping power, thinking skills so this includes the capacity which allows the learner to take more responsibility for their own learning. It focuses on the characteristic of learning of an individual.

3. **Political Autonomy:** Political autonomy is that state of autonomy which allow the learner to control the process and content of the learning as well the educational institutional context within which learning takes place. It focuses on ideologies, access, and power structure of an individual.

4. **Social Autonomy**: In this autonomy basically it deals with the social interaction, being the gregarious individual one need to interact with the people of the society therefore it is concluded as the capacity to interact and collaborate with others. It focuses on the mediating learning of an individuals. These are also depicted in the figure 1.

Figure 1: Extend of learner Autonomy

Versions of Autonomy

- TECHNICAL → The act of learning a language outside the framework of an educational institution and without the intervention of a teacher

- PSYCHOLOGICAL → The capacity which allows learners to take more responsibility for their own learning

- POLITICAL → The conditions that allow learners to control the process and content of learning as well as the institutional context within which learning takes place

- SOCIAL → The capacity to interact and collaborate with others

Benson & Voller (1997)

1.2 Nature of learner autonomy

1. Psychological base: Leaner autonomy is given to the learner on the grounds of psychological attributes like level of motivation, liking for the subject, interest, level of difficulty in the subject matter, and on the basis of the capability of the learner. These attribute of psychological basis is required to be considered while providing the exposure of freedom to the learner for their learning in optimum and effective manner.

2.Metacognitive Knowledge: It is the learner autonomy only which gives the learner platform, to think about their thinking, to have knowledge about their knowledge, the 'meta' denotes to higher-order cognition about cognition, or 'thinking about one's thinking'. It is often considered to have two dimensions: metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive regulation. Metacognitive knowledge includes the learner's knowledge of their own cognitive abilities (e.g., I have trouble recalling people's names), the learner's knowledge of particular tasks (e.g., the ideas in this article are complex), and the learner's knowledge of different strategies including when to use these strategies (e.g., if I break telephone numbers into chunks I will remember them)

3. Metacognitive regulations: Metacognitive regulation describes how learners monitor and control their cognitive processes. For example, realising that the

strategy you are using to solve a maths problem is not working and trying another approach (Nelson and Narens, 1990).

4. Child centred: Leaner autonomy is a child centred approach where child have freedom to choose method of learning, subject matter for learning, language in which they want to learn, autonomy to interact with other in order to enhance their learning.

5. It is Concept based in natural tendency for learners to take control over their learning. Autonomy may be displayed in different ways and to different degrees depending on each learner and learning situation

6. Self-assessment: learner autonomy facilitates the learner to have self-assessment of his/ her learning, understanding, knowledge, language development which can have scope for the improvement for the enhancement of the learner. Self-assessment leads to set his/her learning goals, identify and develop learning strategies to achieve such goals, develop study plans, reflect on his/her learning which includes identifying problem areas and means of addressing these problems, identify and selects relevant resources and the necessary support, assess his/her own progress and define his/her own criteria for evaluating performance and learning (including strategies, materials, etc)

7. Reflective Learning: when we provide the learner the environment where he/she can use the innate abilities to use them in fullest in a productive way, that moment child is able to analyse the reflective level, as we have three levels of learning i.e., memory level, understanding level and reflective level, Learner autonomy makes the learner to apply the knowledge in practical routines also not to memories the concepts. Reflect on their learning and make decisions about it.

8. Autonomy has both individual and social aspects: Autonomy is often taken, mistakenly we believe, to be a solitary condition, However, more and more writers are stressing the need for interaction and negotiation in the development of autonomy. Leni Dam, for example stresses a social dimension: "learner autonomy is characterized by a readiness to take charge of one's own learning in the service of one's needs and purpose. This entails a capacity and willingness to act independently and in co-operation with others, as socially responsible person".

9. Autonomy inevitably involves change in power relationship: Any changes in terms of responsibility or decision making are directly concerned with the power relationship in the classroom. Students in traditional educational settings have been used to a very unbalanced power relationship as they have little say in what, how, when or even why they learn.

1.3 **Learning as an Autonomous act**

Over the last two decades, the responsibility for learning has shifted from the teacher to the learner with the help of learner autonomy and learner empowerment. While "autonomy" is about people taking more control over their lives individually and collectively, "autonomy in learning" is about people taking more control over their learning both inside and outside classrooms. Autonomy is a structure which makes possible the appropriation of learning by the learner whose independence and the will to learn constitute autonomy of the learner. For their own learning, autonomous learners are able to take responsibility. Benson (2001) emphasized that autonomy is an attribute of the learner's approach to learning rather than a method of teaching or learning. In the process of autonomous learning, the learner makes an intentional decision to assume the responsibility for goal setting, planning, and action in a learning situation. In other words, the learner is in control of the learning. Littlewood (1999) defined autonomous learning as "involving students' capacity to use their learning independently of teachers," and "a capacity to communicate autonomously". Holec defines autonomous learning as "the capacity to take charge of one's own learning". Thus, learner autonomy is a capacity, attribute, and attitude and can take different forms in different contexts, and to different degrees as a result of the characteristics of each learner. In other words, it is a matter of degree. Even giving students' freedom to choose materials is not only compatible to the theory, but also satisfies learners' needs. A better understanding of the theory would stimulate learners' interest and motivation to practice autonomous learning. Thus consciousness raising was chosen as the first measure to implement the innovation. To transfer the responsibility of selecting materials to learners is supported by (Hollec, 1987, Vitori, 1995), because it stimulates their interest, enhance the do-it-yourself ability. To my own experience engaging learners in activities of selecting, preparing and presenting materials could be considered creative because these activities involve problem–solving and decision–making.

Autonomous learning, also called student–centred learning relates to the change in focus in the classroom from the teacher to the student or from the teaching to the learning. This is based on a constructivist theory of learning

1.3.0 Opportunities

When we provide the platform for the learner where they have autonomy for their learning it gives them ample number of opportunity to excel in their field as all individual are the flower in the garden which tends to bloom in their own way with its own pace and gardener like teacher will act as care taker of the garden with flowers.

- It is the autonomous learning environment which tends to make the learner efficient autonomous themselves. Where the learner act as a mentally prepared individual for their own learning by seeking the responsibility for the learning and assume responsibility for his learning

- As every individual is different in itself, they can contribute different ideas, with the autonomy the learner will able feel likeliness towards taking the initiative.

- Somehow it brings the Vidal range of transferable skills among the learner which they acquire from different agents for their learning it may be from the tutor or the other students, which is able to make a pretty positive transfer.

- Every learner sees independence as challenge in order to learn and led to enrich the educational experiences for the growth and development

- It gives the learner the feeling of succession when they learn by themselves which allow them to make decision if the decision is working productively it makes the learner feel sense of belongingness in the respective environment.

- It gives the learner opportunity to perform self-assessment which come up with way to generate positive self-concept among the learner.

- It gives the exposure to have, and to hold the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning, i.e. determining the objectives; defining the contents and progressions; selecting methods and techniques to be used; monitoring the procedures of acquisition properly speaking (time, place etc.); evaluating what has been acquired by the learner.

1.3.1 Constraints

- Validity of student assessment: As in the autonomous learning there is scope for the learner for the assessment to address this by providing clear learning objectives and marking criteria, to ensure have more than one assessor for each piece of work; build in teacher moderation

- Debate about whether peer assessment should be used for formative assessment only, or can be used summative.

- Students may allow friendships, rivalry etc., to affect their objectivity some of the students may have good social interaction with their peer so friends will always do the assessment in the favour of the

- Involving students in assessment practices may increase an obsession with grades

- Wittiness is required on the part of teacher to ensure the learning of the student, as sometimes the student can go out of track which can led to complexity in the subject matter or can further extent to loss of interest of student in the learning it is the rigorous duty of the teacher to monitor whether the student is learning as per level or not or they are able to accomplish the objectives of learning.

- Autonomy requires conscious awareness of the learning Process: This implies that maximum language skills can only be attained if learners develop language-learning awareness so that they can make use of all opportunities to learn, both in the classroom and out. Hence, we need a pedagogy that includes continuous reflection. Students are expected to evaluate their own progress and enable to explain the basis of their evaluation.

- The state of autonomy is essentially unstable: The degree of autonomy in an individual varies according to a number of factors such as type of task involved, their personal attitudes and motivation, their mood, their history, their reaction to the particular situation. Students must be allowed the freedom to choose their level of dependence. Similarly, there may be external restraints on the level of autonomy attainable. We have had to be aware of our particular institutional context such as time limits, group size, credit systems and so on. However, we also believe that there should be no situation where some degree of autonomy cannot be achieved, and that we can all work

within those limitations. No system will be transferable as such to another context but teachers should be able to develop an approach which fits.

1. Autonomy requires supportive, both internal and external: In the pursuit of autonomy teachers can only provide circumstances, frameworks and structures which will encourage students to take control of their learning.

1.4 Conclusion

Learner autonomy will include learner's willingness and ability to take responsibility to plan, implement, monitor and evaluate his/her learning in tasks that are constructed in negotiation with and support from the teacher. For teachers, to foster learner autonomy, they must have an understanding of the concept and an understanding of what strategies would effective for them to use to foster the development of learner autonomy. Furthermore, teachers must have a belief that learner autonomy is worth incorporating into their pedagogy. Little (1991) describes five potential misconceptions about the learner autonomy. It stated that "the most widespread misconception is that autonomy is synonymous with self-instruction, self- instruction means learning without a teacher or learning without direct control of a teacher, it is misconnected as self- access learning, self- directed learning, independent learning and self-regulated learning. Another misconception is that learner autonomy is synonymous with the teaching method that the "teaching does to their learners" that is, that teachers have all the control and students are passive receivers of lessons taught. One more thing which is very important is the subcomponents which one must possess with themselves is knowledge, skills, motivation, and confidence. These are components be honoured in the development of learner development.

Quadrant-III   **Learn More / Web Resources / Supplementary Materials**

Ajideh, P. (2009). Autonomous learning and metacognitive strategies essentials in ESP Class. *English language teaching, 2*(1), 162-168.

Benson, P. (1996). Concepts of autonomy in language learning. *R. Pemberton, E. Li, W. Or, & H. Pierson. Taking control. Autonomy in language learning*, 27-34.

Benson, P. (2001). Autonomy in language learning. *Harlow: Longman.*

Littlewood, W. (1999). Defining and developing autonomy in East Asian contexts. *Applied linguistics, 20*(1), 71-94.

Nelson, T. O., Narens, L., & Bower, G. (1990). The psychology of learning and motivation. *Metamemory: A theoretical framework and new findings.*

Links

https://www.pulib.sk/web/kniznica/elpub/dokument/Strakova2/subor/Horvathova.pdf

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kYBsbHLxLl8

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EFgPzek8IvM

GLOSSARY

- **Learning Autonomy**: Learner Autonomy may be defined as ability to take charge of one's own learning
- **Psychological Autonomy** includes the capacity which allows the learner to take more responsibility for their own learning. It focuses on the characteristic of learning of an individual.
- **Political autonomy** is that state of autonomy which allow the learner to control the process and content of the learning as well the educational institutional context within which learning takes place

- **Social Autonomy** in this autonomy basically it deals with the social interaction, being the gregarious individual one need to interact with the people of the society

QUADRANT IV   Self-Assessment

1. Autonomy is a recognition of the rights of learners within educational systems stated by
   a. Phil Benson
   b. Leslie Dickinson
   c. Henri Holec
   d. David Little

2. learning of language by the individual by using the others resource excluding the framework or set of environment is an example of
   a. Technical Autonomy
   b. Psychological Autonomy
   c. Political Autonomy
   d. Social Autonomy

3. the capacity which allows the learner to take more responsibility for their own learning comes under
   a. Technical Autonomy
   b. Psychological Autonomy
   c. Political Autonomy
   d. Social Autonomy

4. It allows the learner to control the process and content of the learning as well the educational institutional context within which learning takes place
   a. Technical Autonomy
   b. Psychological Autonomy
   c. Political Autonomy
   d. Social Autonomy

5. the capacity to interact and collaborate with others is
   a. Technical Autonomy
   b. Psychological Autonomy
   c. Political Autonomy
   d. Social Autonomy

True / False
1. Learner autonomy is the autonomous learning environment which tends to make the learner efficient autonomous themselves. (   )
2. Leaner autonomy is a Teacher centred approach ()
3. learner autonomy doesn't not facilitate the learner to have self-assessment of his/ her learning ()
4. It is the learner autonomy only which gives the learner platform, to think about their thinking ()
5. Metacognitive regulation describes how learners monitor and control their cognitive processes ()

Answers
1. A 2. A 3. B 4. C 5. D 6. T 7. F 8. F 9. T 10. T