

DEVELOPING STUDENTS' AUTONOMY: FOSTERING LEARNING AUTONOMY ATTRIBUTES TO TEACHER-TRIGGERED STUDENTS

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Abstract: *Learning autonomy (LA) refers to learners' responsibility for their own learning. It has been believed that LA plays an important role in students' success in learning. Therefore, it is advisable that teachers help learners foster or develop their autonomy. It can be done by fostering the LA attributes to teacher-triggered students which means helping them develop their autonomy. Taking advantages on teachers' authority in class becomes the key in developing students' autonomy. In other words, teachers become the main key who should foster LA attributes to students in planning, monitoring, and evaluating stage. This conceptual-based paper discusses a systematic procedure in fostering the attributes of LA covering the planning, monitoring, and evaluating stage. The teachers involve the students in each stage so that they will be accustomed to managing their own learning. Then, through teachers' guidance, it is likely for students to be entirely autonomous.*

Keywords: *learning autonomy, fostering learning autonomy attributes, teacher-triggered students*

INTRODUCTION

In English language learning, autonomy has been well-known for its contribution to students' learning achievement. Shown by some studies (Dafei, 2007; Ghorbandordinejad & Ahmadabad, 2016; Myartawan et al., 2013), autonomy becomes one of the factors influencing students' English proficiency. However, autonomy which is well-known as the capacity of taking responsibility for one's own learning (Holec, 1981) has commonly led to another definition that LA refers to independent learning in which students are freely to manage their own learning outside the class without teacher's guidance. Meanwhile, LA does not always relate to learning without guidance from teachers since it has some degrees. The present paper is then aimed at explaining LA in the level of LA development. A systematic procedure to foster LA development is also presented.

LEARNING AUTONOMY DEVELOPMENT

According to Holec (1981), LA put emphasize on students' responsibility in managing their learning. He also explains that when students are ready to take the responsibility, it means they accept that they have to define their learning goals, select learning materials and strategies, monitor the learning progress, and evaluate their learning. Students who are aware of their learning, know how to deal with their study, overcome learning problems, maintain their self-efficacy, and motivation are considered as autonomous students (Çakici, 2015; Suphandee et al., 2018). In accordance to the capacities owned by autonomous students, no wonder that autonomous learning is commonly defined as an independent learning.

In fact, to define LA, some considerations should be concerned since some experts classify it into some levels. For instance, Nunan (1997, as cited in Dang, 2012) proposes that LA consists of five levels, i.e. awareness, involvement, intervention, creation, and transcendence. In the level of awareness, students are encouraged to be aware of their learning goals, materials, and strategies. Level of involvement is the level in which students are allowed to get involved in making choice of learning, such as selecting some learning goals provided. The third level is intervention. In this level, students begin modifying their learning goals, materials, and strategies to be matched into their needs. Another next level is creation. In this case, students are allowed to create their learning without any intervention from teacher. They may define their personal learning goals and decide what to learn. Then, the last level is called transcendence. When students have reached this level, they have been able to take the responsibility in learning outside the class by applying knowledge they get in the class to their life.

Another model of autonomy is proposed by Scharle and Szabo(2000) asserting that it consists of the level of raising awareness, changing attitude, and role transfer. First, students should be encouraged to beware of their learning, such as being aware of the learning goals, learning materials, and learning progress. Second, students have to be able to determine which learning strategies to be used in order to succeed in learning. Because of the change, the second level is called the changing attitude. Then, the third level is transferring role. Since it is the highest level of autonomy, students who have achieved this level are those who are ready to take control of their own learning.

Regarding the levels of autonomy, it can be inferred that it actually takes time for students to be entirely autonomous. Even though Benson (2001) assumes that each students is born with the capacity of being autonomous, not all students are ready to take such great responsibility in learning (Dam, 2011). In Indonesian context, it is true that not all students can be autonomous by themselves since the characteristics of most students including in Asian context are obedient, passive, and teacher dependent (Lengkanawati, 2016; Nakata, 2011). As a result, teachers become the one who are the most powerful in managing the class, starting from planning, monitoring, and evaluating.

EMPIRICAL PRACTICE OF DEVELOPING STUDENTS' AUTONOMY

In its practice, developing learning autonomy can be fostered by sharing roles during learning process between teachers with students as proposed by Dam (2011). In her class, she divides the time into teacher time, student time, and student-teacher time. Teachers have their own time in class when they have to review previous learning materials, introduce a new topic of learning, and introduce some learning activities which should be tried out by students. Students will have their time when they have ready to manage their learning, such as planning a mini project with their classmates. Then, students and teacher will have their time together when it comes to reflection and evaluation process. From the practice conducted by Dam (2011), it is obvious that she tries to share the responsibility of learning to the students which can make students develop their autonomy.

Besides, Benson (2003) helps students develop their autonomy by making them get involved in the learning process through decision making. In the class, he provides a range of various learning choices and resources. He would let his students take the opportunity to make a choice which is based on their interest and needs in learning. Then, he also helps the students reflect on what they have done in learning.

Moreover, in Indonesian context, empirical practice of developing students' autonomy has actually conducted by some senior high school teachers. A study conducted by Maula, Widiati, and Mukminatien (2020), it is found that the teachers help students develop their autonomy by encouraging their students to understand the assigned learning goals; have initiative to look for learning resources and opportunity by utilizing internet; have effort to make progress in learning English by suggesting the students to access some supplementary materials in particular websites or other textbooks provided in the class; concentrate on learning in which the teachers use some ways to make students involved in learning; and collaborate and interact with classmates and teachers while learning English.

In short, the practice of fostering LA to help students develop their autonomy can still be fostered in Indonesian context despite the characteristics of most Indonesian students who are obedient, passive, and dependent on teacher. When it comes to developing autonomy, teachers should share their work in teaching the students and work collaboratively with students in managing the learning process in the class (Dam, 2011). Providing students with various choices of learning, giving support to students' choices, and encouraging them to reflect on their learning are also helpful for students to develop their autonomy. In the class where most students are teacher-triggered, fostering this kind of autonomy can train students to be autonomous as long as teachers use their authority in class to provide opportunities for students to be autonomous step by step (Feryok, 2013).

FOSTERING LEARNING AUTONOMY

In developing students' autonomy, an opportunity to encourage them to get involved in learning process should be provided by teachers. Classified by Dang (2012), there are three stages in fostering LA, i.e. planning, monitoring, and evaluating stage. She further reveals that each stage contains of some

attributes that can be fostered in the class. The attributes in planning stage relates to determining learning goals, making lesson plan, and creating an opportunity for learning. In the monitoring stage, the attributes relate to the use of the learning strategy, implementation of the lesson plan, and some ways to conduct the learning process. Then, in evaluation stage, the attributes relate to the evaluation on what has been conducted from the beginning until the end of the learning process, such as the use of learning strategies, learning progress, and learning outcomes. In this paper, the attributes of LA that will be used to develop students' autonomy are proposed by Khotimah, Widiati, Musthofa, and Ubaidillah(2019). The attributes in each stage are presented as the following.

PLANNING STAGE

Understanding Learning Goals

The simple step to help students develop their autonomy is by encouraging them to understand the learning goals. In formal educational context, the learning goals can be determined by other parties. For instance, in Indonesian context, the learning goals generally have been set by the government cited in the decree of Ministry of Education and Culture No. 24 of 2016 concerning the Core and Basic Competence of English. In this case, the teachers might be able to define any learning goals that should be achieved by their students while learning a particular topic. However, they have to put the decree as the reference in making the learning goals so that the assigned goals stated in the decree can be fulfilled.

In accordance to the aforementioned explanation, teachers play a pivotal role as the bridge connecting students with the demand from the government. Understanding learning goals to be achieved can make students more engaged in the learning process (Ibrahim & Al-Hoorie, 2019; Moeller et al., 2012). It is said so because once students have already known what to achieve, they will only focus on doing relevant activities that can support achieve the goals and put effort on the goals attainment (Locke & Latham, 2013).

During the practice, this attribute can be conducted by explicitly stating the learning goals at the beginning of the learning process. Teachers are allowed to carry out some different ways in encouraging students to understand the learning goals, such as providing a short video relating to the topic of being learned, giving questions to the students about what they get from the video, and then correlating the topic in the video with the learning goals. However, explicitness in delivering the learning goals should be also concerned by the teachers since it can influence students' students' learning. Through the explicit learning goals, students will be more motivated to reach the goals; thus, they will find various ways to be able to achieve them (Ikeda et al., 2012; Locke & Latham, 2013).

Having Personal Learning Goals

In formal educational context, allowing students to define their personal learning goals while learning a particular topic might be less considered by teachers since they have to follow the decree in order to achieve the assigned targets or goals. However, one of the principles in fostering LA is to put students as the center of the learning from which teachers provide learning activities that can encourage them to be actively involved in the learning process (Dam, 2011). Stated by Bruhn, McDaniel, Fernando, and Throughton(2016), allowing students to set their personal learning goals can cause great changes to students' performances in learning since they are more motivated to attain the learning goals. The correlation between students' personal learning goals and students' performance is logical since when they have set their learning goals, they will push themselves to find out some effective ways which can support them reach the goals they set, and they will avoid doing some activities which have no relation with the goals.

A simple thing which can be carried out is to give an opportunity for students to reveal what they want to achieve after learning particular learning materials. Asking them directly to determine what they want to achieve before learning will encourage them to learn better and find some ways to support them in achieving learning goals they have set. Since the learning goals are based on students' interests and needs, the learning can be more meaningful since they can use their knowledge obtained from the class to be implemented in their daily life.

Making Learning Plan

After understanding what to achieve, students should also be given a chance to make their own learning plan. Passing responsibility to make a learning plan to students who are teacher-dependent might be the most difficult thing to do. Moreover, rigid schedule that should be followed by teachers and students causes the opportunity for students to make their own learning plan is limited. As an alternative, allowing students to work in group will be helpful to train them how to make a learning plan (Dang, 2012).

Semi-structured project can be also conducted to train students make a learning plan. Since this is a semi-structured project, the project is collaboratively conducted by teachers and students. Even though its organization is collaborative, according to Symon (2017), students can be more independent because they can still decide learning goals, choose appropriate effective learning strategies, and even evaluate their learning. Utilizing the semi-structured project can be appropriate to be applied in the class in which a syllabus becomes the main decree in conducting the learning. For instance, after asking students to choose their own group member, teachers ask students to do a project which topic is relevant to the syllabus. Ask them to decide what to present, what supporting materials which will be used, how to do the task, decide each member's job, and how to evaluate their work. For the deadline of submission, teacher and students can make a deal. As a result, teachers can follow the syllabus as well as train students to make their own learning plan.

Having Initiative to Look for Resources and Opportunity for Learning

Wide range of choices in learning should be provided by teachers who want to foster LA in their class. Learning resources and opportunity for learning are involved in it. Learning resources and learning opportunity then cannot be only from textbooks even though textbooks can provide them with opportunity to learn English based on particular curriculum (Allen, 2015). However, in the 21st century I which technology develops rapidly, neglecting the benefits of using technology is a great loss. By integrating technology in finding learning resources and learning opportunity will provide wider chances for students to develop their autonomy.

Specifically in Indonesian context in which English as a foreign language, the provision of wide range of learning resources and opportunity will be very beneficial in learning English. Easy access to internet has provided students with wider opportunity to get a lot of learning resources and opportunity; as a result, rich language exposure and input can be richer for the students (Hsieh & Hsieh, 2019). Then, encouraging students to look for learning resources and opportunity in the internet is a good alternative to make them get a lot of information for their English learning besides from textbooks.

MONITORING STAGE

Identifying and Employing Learning Strategies

According to Lazăr (2013), learning strategy use is aimed at helping students deal with learning problems during the learning process. Before encouraging students to employ particular learning strategies, teachers should provide some effective learning strategies for the students. Allow the students to choose some learning strategies you have provided which they think the most helpful for their learning. After that, teach them how to employ the learning strategies because it is important to make students know how to use those learning strategies appropriately while encountering learning problems (Çakici, 2015; Oxford, 1990). In this case, it is essential for the teachers to provide teachable learning strategies besides the effective strategies. When the strategies are teachable, it will be easier for students to implement them in their learning appropriately; and there is a possibility that the students can modify the strategies based on their needs (Griffiths, 2015). Later on, when they get accustomed to learning independently, they will automatically know which learning strategies they should use to face the learning problems.

Selecting Appropriate Learning Materials

Encouraging students to select learning materials that can support their learning goals has given them a chance to get involved in learning process. Illes(2012) states that involving students to decide

learning topics and materials indicates the attempt of fostering LA. Learning materials from textbooks might frequently become the main resources to get learning materials, but utilizing internet to access various authentic learning materials which are based on their interest and needs can be conducted by teachers (Lai et al., 2015). Allowing students to select relevant learning materials, they can learn the materials more enjoyable.

In allowing students to select learning materials based on their interest, teachers should consider the authenticity of the learning materials. In relation to fostering LA, authenticity is one of the principles of LA (Dam, 2011; Lazăr, 2013; Legenhausen, 2011). English learning materials are authentic when they include good input for learning English, cultural information relating to English, students' needs, and support for creative teaching approach (Ahmed, 2017).

Having Effort to Progress in Learning

In encouraging students to make progress in learning English, technology use cannot be neglected. In this case, teachers can provide additional learning materials to be explored by students outside the class. According to Slaouti(2013), supplementary materials are aimed at enriching students' knowledge and develop their ability in learning English which is limitedly obtained in the class (Bayat, 2011). Giving supplementary learning materials to students can be conducted by giving suggestions on some websites which are relevant to the topic learned. As a result, students will make a progress in learning.

Taking Actions or Implementing Learning Agendas

As previously mentioned, the opportunity for students to make their learning plan can be carried out through group work. In this case, the students are allowed to do the learning plan they have set. When students implement the learning plan, teachers play their role as a guide, monitor, and counselor (Alonazi, 2017; Reinders, 2018). Being a guide means teachers should guide students during the learning process. They will guide students who get confused on the project they have. They also have to guide students to have reflection on their learning. As a monitor, teachers have to monitor students' progress in working on the project. Then, as a counselor, teachers help students whenever they get difficulties. Giving feedbacks on their work can also be carried out.

Concentrating on Learning

Encouraging students to concentrate in learning process can be conducted by providing a learning environment which is conducive and supporting. According to Mustapha, Rahman, and Yunus(2010), it is easy for students to get distracted while learning because of learning environment which is not conducive. To overcome those distractions, teachers can provide interesting learning materials (Servatyari et al., 2019). When they find the learning materials are interesting and important for them, they will automatically focus on the learning. Besides, providing interesting learning materials, having various learning activities in class can attract students to focus on learning (Harmer, 2007).

Moreover, encouraging students to get involved in learning, such as asking questions to those who cannot focus on learning regain their focus in learning (Burke & Ray, 2008). Asking some questions to students can also avoid students from daydreaming since they are encouraged to think the answer of the questions given (Tofade et al., 2013). Besides, motivating students to keep focusing on learning can be carried out. Murphy (2011) asserts that letting students to know their achievement in learning and giving positive feedback on their work can motivate them to continue their learning. In other words, maintaining positive feeling of the students can encourage students to concentrate on learning (Jin et al., 2014).

Collaborating and Interacting with Others

In fostering LA, collaborating and interacting with other people, such as students from different class, seniors in school, native speakers, or even teachers, will be helpful for students to develop their learning. In learning English, collaboration and interaction while learning cannot be neglected. While collaborating and interacting with other people, teachers can encourage them to utilize the technology,

using social media to communicate with people abroad, for instance. By taking the advantage of the social media, students can find that learning English is joyful (Lai et al., 2015). Moreover, students will get more language input and train their skills of English which are limitedly found in their daily environment (Bayat, 2011).

Another common and simple way to make students collaborate and interact with other people is by having a group work. In relation to the development of students' autonomy, students can communicate and interact without feeling any pressure, and they can practice to be less dependent to their teacher (Çakici, 2015; Dam, 2011; Lazăr, 2013). Moreover, through group work, students can increase their awareness on learning; as a result, they can be more active and enthusiastic to learn English (Dang, 2012).

EVALUATING STAGE

Evaluating Learning Strategies

As previously mentioned, learning strategies is one of pivotal aspects in learning since it contributes to students' success in learning. As long as students employ appropriate learning strategies to help them learn, they will be able to overcome some difficulties in learning. However, learning strategies should be evaluated regularly to know whether the strategies are effective enough to help students overcome some problems during the learning process (Lazăr, 2013). He further explains that doing evaluation can be the basic of making decision for the next learning plan.

Teachers can encourage students to evaluate the learning strategies they use by asking them to reflect on what learning difficulties they find during the learning process and what learning strategies they use to overcome those problems. Then, they should also describe whether the learning strategies they have used can effectively help them overcome the problems. If it is not effective enough to help them, they may write down that later on when they encounter similar condition, they cannot use the strategies. On the other hand, when the strategies are effective, they should also make a list of learning strategies which are effective to overcome particular learning problems. By having such reflection, students will get some information on effective learning strategies which can be employed outside the class while they have no teachers to help them learn (Clarke, 2018).

Evaluating Learning Progress

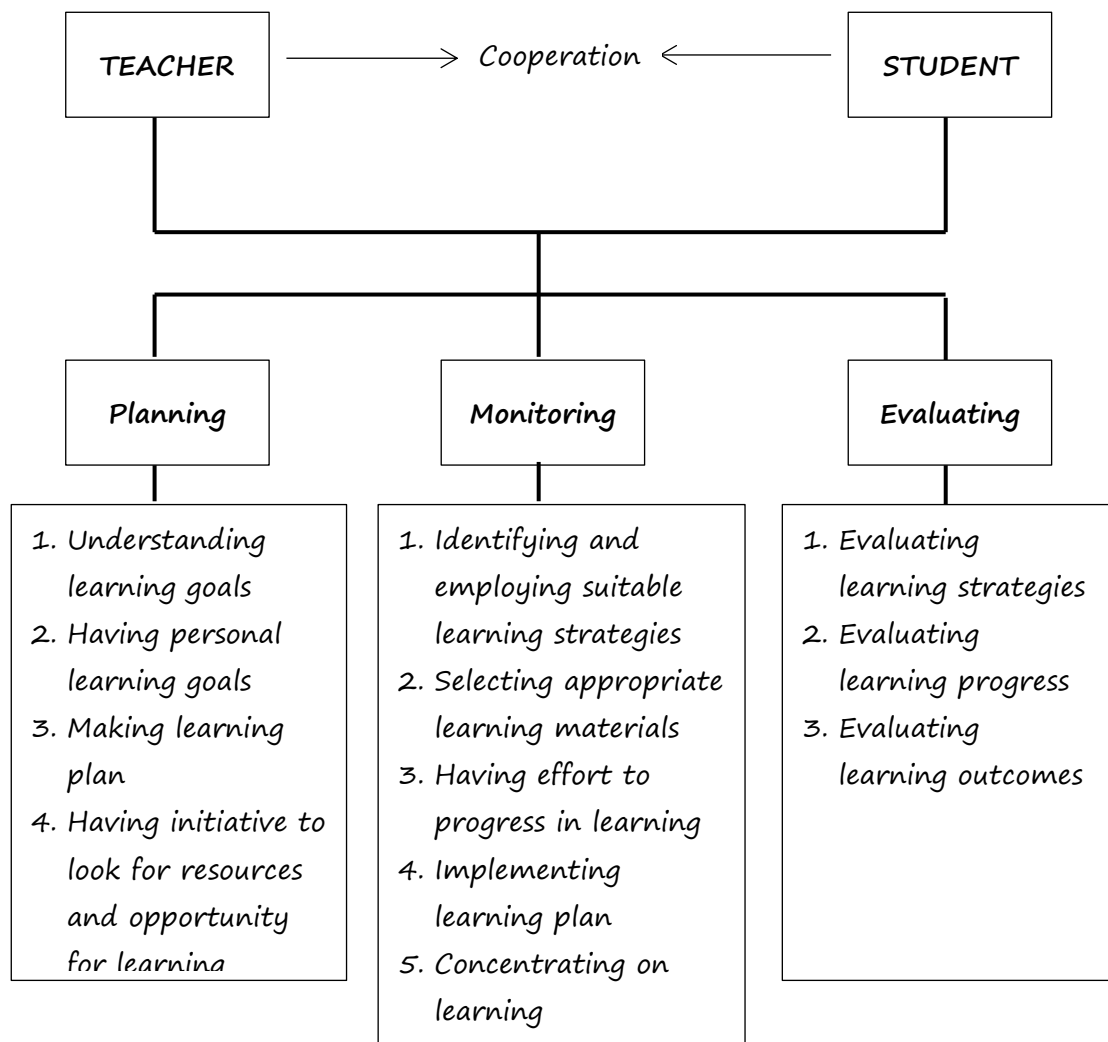
Similar to learning strategy evaluation, learning progress evaluation should also be conducted regularly (Reinders, 2010). In encouraging students to evaluate their learning progress, teachers can utilize feedbacks on students' work. Since it is conducted regularly, teachers should encourage students to identify how far they have made progress in learning English by looking at feedbacks given to their work, whether they are in the form of verbal, written, or increasing score. Through those feedbacks, students will be able to identify their progress in learning (Suen & Li, 2012). Therefore, teachers should always give feedback on students' work since it can be used to identify how far students make a progress in learning.

Evaluating Learning Outcomes

Encouraging students to evaluate their learning outcomes means encouraging students to know whether the assigned learning goals or their personal learning goals can be achieved at the end of learning a particular topic. In this case, teachers can involve them to do a reflection on what they have done during the learning process. First, teachers can ask them to write down some learning goals they have to achieve. Then, ask them to make a checklist on learning goals which they have been successfully achieved. For learning goals which have not been achieved, students should write down some possible reasons why they cannot achieve the goals.

From the reflection process, students will get information on their learning. According to Wharton(2012), having reflection can give students information about what has been occurred during the learning. Based on the information, students can make future learning plan (Miyahara, 2012). As a result, they can reach learning goals and achieve better in learning.

Figure 1. The Framework of Fostering LA to Develop Students' Autonomy



CONCLUSION

In conclusion, developing students' autonomy can be conducted in class only if teachers are supportive enough to provide the opportunity for students to develop their autonomy. In developing students' autonomy, teachers can foster the attributes of LA in planning, monitoring, and evaluating stage. In the planning stage, teachers can encourage their students to understand the learning goals, have their personal learning goals, make learning plan, and have initiative to look for learning resources and opportunity. In the monitoring stage, the encouragement on identifying and employing suitable learning strategies, selecting appropriate learning materials, having effort to make progress in learning, implementing students' learning plan, concentrating on learning, and collaborating and interacting with others should be fostered in class. The last but not least, teachers can allow their students to get involved in evaluating learning strategies, learning progress, and learning outcomes. By encouraging students to manage their own learning from the planning to evaluating stage, students will be more aware that they have to be responsible for their own learning. When they get accustomed to being involved in managing their learning, they can be entirely autonomous. It is then suggested that teachers do research in their own class to develop students' autonomy. Some attributes or indicators of being autonomous can be developed to make students autonomous.

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