

# Increasing student autonomy inside and outside the classroom

## Webinar handout

by Jorge Chacon

Learner autonomy is about empowering learners to be responsible for and take actions on their own learning inside the classroom or independent of it (Thornbury 2006:22).

Scharle & Szabo (2009:9) propose three stages for developing learner autonomy: **raising awareness**, **changing attitudes**, and **transferring roles**.

Below you will find some activities to develop learner autonomy based of the aforementioned stages.

### Raising Awareness

	<b>Group work analysis</b> (Scharle & Szabo (2009:40-41))
<b>Aim</b>	To develop group cohesion and cooperation
<b>Language Focus</b>	Reporting, past simple
<b>Procedure</b>	As a follow up to an activity with disorganised group work, as learners to put a number as an answer to the following questions:  How many of you: 1.spoke only in English? 2.took notes? 3.asked questions? 4.answered questions? 5.made suggestions?

	Ask learners which question got the lowest / highest figure. On the whiteboard, fill in a chart with all the results per group and get students to reflect on why these actions are important for groupwork. Do this activity every now-and-then to check on their progress.
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## Changing attitudes

	<b>Discussing common interests</b> (Scharle & Szabo 2009:71)
<b>Aim</b>	To share ideas and develop group cohesion
<b>Language Focus</b>	Expressing feelings and preferences
<b>Procedure</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Group students based on their common interests (e.g., music, video games)</li> <li>2. Announce that they are going to play a game.</li> <li>3. Students choose a group leader. T gives leaders a list of names.</li> <li>4. T gives leaders a topic and leaders direct a group discussion to find out what their group mates have in common.</li> <li>5. Groups present their findings to the class</li> </ol>

## Transferring roles

	<b>Hot-cold-lukewarm</b> (Scharle & Szabo 2009:97)
<b>Aim</b>	To encourage learners to consciously set objectives in their language learning.
<b>Language Focus</b>	Adjectives, future forms
<b>Procedure</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ask learners to think of themselves from the point of view of a teacher and gives them a skills checklist (e.g., fluency, listening, grammar, lexis, writing, pronunciation)</li> <li>2. Students list three strengths which they have and write the opposite of it at the other side. Learners write three language skills they would like to develop.</li> <li>3. Students write activities they will do on their own to achieve their aims.</li> </ol>

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## Bibliography

Borg, S & Al-Busaidi, S (2012) ***Learner Autonomy: English Language Teachers' Beliefs and Practices***. British Council

Scharle, A & Szabo, A (2009) ***Learner Autonomy: A guide to developing learner responsibility***. CUP

Thornbury, S (2006) ***An A-Z of ELT***. MacMillan Books for Teachers

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A recording of Jorge's webinar for World Teachers' Day 2023 can be watched here:

<https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/news-events/world-teachers-day-2023/world-teachers-day-2023-thursday-5-october>