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Autonomy not Automation: Using Metacognitive Skills in ESL/EFL Classes

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Abstract : In order to have ELLs take responsibility for their own learning, it is important that they develop skills to work their studies strategically. The less they rely on the instructor as the content provider, the more they become active learners and have a higher sense of self-regulation and confidence in the learning process. This e-poster proposes a new teacher-student relationship that encourages learners to reflect, think critically, and act upon their realities. It also suggests the implementation of different autonomy-supportive teaching tools, such as portfolios, written journals, problem-solving activities, and strategy-based discussions in class. These teaching tools enable ELLs to develop awareness of learning strategies, learning styles, study plans, and available learning resources as means to foster their creative power of learning outside of classroom. In the role of a learning advisor, the teacher is no longer the content provider but a facilitator that introduces skills such as 'elaborating', 'planning', 'monitoring', and 'evaluating'. The teacher acts as an educator and promotes the use of lifelong metacognitive skills to develop learner autonomy in the ESL/EFL context.

Keywords : autonomy, metacognitive skills, self-regulation, learning strategies, reflection
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