

## Measuring Learning Independence and Transition through the First Year in Architecture

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**Abstract :** Students in higher education are expected to learn actively and independently. Whilst quite work has been done to understand the perceptions of students' learning transition regarding independent learning, to author's best knowledge, it seems relatively few published research on independent learning in studio-based subjects such as architecture. Another major issue in independent learning research concerned the inconsistency in terminology; there appears to be a paucity of research on its definition, challenges, and tools within the UK university sector. It is not always clear how independent learning works in practice, or what are the challenges that face students toward being independent learners. Accordingly, this paper seeks to highlight these problems by analyzing previous and current literature of independent learning, in addition, to measure students' independence at the very beginning of their first academic year and compare it with their level of learning independence at the end of the same year. Eighty-seven student enrolled in 2017/2018 at Cardiff University completed the Autonomous Learning Questionnaire in order to measure their level of learning independence. Students' initial responses were very positive and showed high level of learning independence. Interestingly, these responses significantly decreased at the end of the year. Time management was the most obvious challenge facing students transition into higher education, and contrary to expectations, we found no effect of student maturity on their level of independence. Moreover, we found no significant differences among students' gender, but we did find differences among nationalities.

**Keywords :** autonomous learning, first year, learning independence, transition

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