

Some Ways to Help College Students Become More Autonomous in English Learning

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The current paper has dual purpose: To present ways to promote learner autonomy with college students and to argue that autonomy-fostering English-teaching is not only beneficial but also very crucial for most Korean college students to continue becoming better English speakers even after graduation from college.

Followings are ways how one Korean English teacher-researcher have tried to help some Korean college students improve their autonomy in English-learning: (1) helping them exchange English email letters; (2) sharing her experiences to be better English speakers in and outside class; (3) designed and maintained an Internet discussion board; (4) meeting individually after the class to talk about their English study; (5) asking them to keep a learner's diary; (6) asking them to teach English as a paid tutor; (7) asking them to meet other Korean students regularly to practice (mostly spoken) English; (8) asking them to audio-record the meeting and hand in the tape; (9) attending autonomy-focused academic conferences in and outside Korea; (10) having talks with other autonomy advocates, practitioners and theorists; (11) publishing action research reports locally, nationally and internationally.

While applying all these methods to help Korean college students more autonomous at Korean English-learning environments, she has realized that many Korean scholars and teachers are not very sure of the meaning of 'autonomy' in English learning and of the measuring ways of autonomy development. As a result, many of them are not very sure of the benefits of autonomy-fostering in English learning, and claim that most Korean students might not learn English if they do not force them to. One of them even said, "who will ever wants to study English anyway, if we (most Korean learners) do not have English tests at schools, or if teachers do not force us to?"

It seems that teachers' awareness of the importance of autonomy is the starting point to advocate autonomy-fostering English learning. Teachers' own personal experiences are definitely needed to practice new viewpoints of English learning. It is very natural that the writer's recent academic interests have been how teacher autonomy and learner autonomy are related in Korean English education settings,

how to make autonomy more observable, so understandable by most Korean English teachers and how to integrate multimedia into autonomy-fostering English learning.

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