Forced to autonomy: Are there ever ideal conditions for development of learner autonomy?

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Hectic semester start?

reflection
Ideal conditions x limitations

• institutional level (university / faculty / language centre)

• interpersonal level (colleagues / students)

• personal level (me)
reflection / poll

Ideal conditions x limitations

1. At which level do you feel the most limitations?
   A) institutional (university, faculty)
   B) inter-personal (colleagues, students)
   C) personal (me)

2. What are the most limitations connected to?
   A) (lack of) time
   B) (lack of) money
   C) (institutional) requirements
   D) peer pressure
   E) students´ needs
   F) other issues
Institutional level

Masaryk University

requirements Mgr. B2, Ph.D. C1
financing based on teaching hours, number of exams, extra funding for research, Erasmus quotas
time most teachers full-time
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional level</th>
<th>MU Language Centre</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>requirements</td>
<td>academic/specific focus, standardized exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>financing</td>
<td>group size limits, practicality of exams, research support, Erasmus cooperation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>time</td>
<td>lecturers / assistants</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
No teacher situation

last minute NO
NO places in other courses

teacher assistant NO contract, NO experience
No teacher situation

MU / Language Centre

requirements: B2 with academic focus (materials), standardized exam (not delayed)

financing: no teaching costs

time: admin
No teacher situation

18 students
5 respondents
compulsory course 4/5
meetings attendance 3-4/18
Were you happy when you were told that there are no regular classes in your group?

5 odpovědi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NOT AT ALL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2 (40%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1 (20%)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>2 (40%)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Were you happy with the course materials?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Was it easy for you to prepare for the exam individually?

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
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<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Which of the exam components did you find the most challenging?

- Listening: 75%
- Reading: 25%
- Grammar: 
- Writing: 
- Presentation: 

4 responses
Please, check the exam components that you would like to work on with other students:

4 odpovědi

- **listening**: 4 (100%)
- **reading**: 0 (0%)
- **grammar**: 1 (25%)
- **writing**: 0 (0%)
- **presentation**: 1 (25%)
Were you able to find additional / alternative materials?

4 odpovědi

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NOT AT ALL</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (25 %)</td>
<td>2 (60 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 (25 %)</td>
<td>0 (0 %)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 (0 %)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

survey
Please, check the exam components that you would like to work on with a teacher / assistant:

5 odpovědí

- 60% listening
- 20% reading
- 20% gramiex
- 20% writing
- 20% presentation
Tell us more about the presentation:

• The presentation you can able to handle on the full number of points, if you follow the criteria.

• It wasn’t very clear to me from the materials what kind of presentation should I do. I think that was the most difficult thing.
Average score of this group presentations: 20.5 / 25
• „...for me, it was not good "work at home". Actually i didnt know what to do and how. There was non communication with clasemates or teacher. And at the end of semester i didnt know how will be the test looks like or what the presentation has to contain. Thats a pity for me."
Discussion forum – 13 contributions, 1 very active student, English / Czech
# Learning Diaries

## School Calendar

|      | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 |
|------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|----|
| **Sep** |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| **Oct** | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| **Nov** |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| **Dec** |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |   |

### Notes:
- Stay in the environment with native speakers (full days)
- Reading and translating
- Writing
- Exerts
- HW 1
- Class 1.5
- HW 2
- HW 1.5
- HW 2.5

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MUNI Language Centre

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96 hours
Sounds
• HW – Arguments
• Study materials – I read the discussion questions
• I watched a TED talk about negative impact of noise on our lives and about general effect of noise on people
• I did the vocabulary section
• I completed the reading section
• I did the grammar exercises and I practiced the difference between little and a little
• I did the listening

WEEK 9:
• I’ve read the work paper
• I did homework for this week
• I started working on my presentation for this course
No videoconferencing device situation

last minute FAILURE MATCHING groups sizes / levels / needs

LIMITED teachers’ communication
Facebook as replacement for VC

• active interaction
• natural groups
• peer learning
Negotiated (process, flexible) syllabus

• “a shared detailed understanding between teacher and students of what is going on, what needs to be done, and how it will be done”.

(Boomer, 1992, p. 287)
„This is my analysis of two videos from the course. For the first video, I chose the short video from Facebook, where I was talking about mystery object. Firstly, from body language perspective I can see I was trying to hold the eye contact but I also severely looked down at the object. It was ok when I was opening the knife but then I did that several times again and it resulted in the weird presentation. Secondly, major mistakes in word order and tenses – said choose instead of chosen; „it´s this shape of small fish“ – rather say it looks like small fish; „I get it as a gift“ – I was given.“
No videoconferencing device situation

SUCCESS
students INVOLVED in planning, monitoring, reflection, peer assessment, self-assessment, authentic communication
2 reading modules situation

• English Autonomously – elective course, no exam, choices for teachers and students, negotiations
• Academic content, group size limits, rooms available...
reflection

2 reading modules situation

• EA team cooperation problems
• personal preferences x personal development
Who was responsible for selecting the class (reading) materials?

- Teacher: 1 (12.5%), 1 (12.5%), 1 (12.5%), 1 (12.5%), 1 (12.5%), 1 (12.5%), 1 (12.5%), 0 (0%)
- Students: 0 (0%), 0 (0%), 0 (0%)
EA mini survey

Who was responsible for selecting the class (reading) materials?

2018

Who is responsible for selecting the class (reading) materials?

2017
Can I choose which materials to use in my classes?

- Yes: 34
- Yes and No: 14
- No: 2
- No response: 0
As a teacher, I enjoy:

- possibilities to plan classes according to my preferences
- developing a session and seeing that students have learnt something and feel fine about it...
- ...interaction with students....
- planning classes and designing activities
- watching students’ styles of thinking, finding new ways ...
- deciding content and speed of the class
- variability of methods and teaching styles I can use to achieve individualised approach / tailoring sessions
- creating dynamics
- when students are having fun
- watching students „grow“
- intellectual excitement
- diversity of audiences and their reactions
As a teacher, I do not like:

- big groups
- mixed levels
- hurry
- lazy students
- students who are not motivated
- when I am bored
- when students are not interested
- when students are silent
- when I feel I cannot manage everything what I want
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EA mini survey

Who was unsure of what is going to happen next?

Tell me what you listen to module (replacement for Reading 2)
I would like my students to see me as:

- teacher – (excellent, competent, their, good …)
- friend
- colleague
- facilitator and motivator
- mentor
- expert
- partner
- inspirational and knowledgeable person
- mediator and coordinator of group activities
- provider of the best they can learn
- help
- motivational factor and source of interest to language

**Survey**

**Openness**

**Respect**

**Curiosity**

**Support**
summary

• real impact of organisational settings and external factors?
• different types of courses - different types of autonomy?
• involving students – planning, choosing materials, reflecting on their learning, communication, assessment
• personal limitations – teacher´s beliefs, feelings and fears
Autonomy is “a state of mind, an attitude to life... It has to do with the belief in one’s potential, self-esteem, open-mindedness, self-respect and respect for others... At the same time it has to do with the development of the ability to act autonomously and the ability to learn...”

(Sampedro, 2008, p.129)
• Benson, Phil. (2001). *Teaching and researching autonomy in language learning*. Harlow: Pearson Education.