TEACHER INTO COUNSELOR:
ARE YOU READY FOR THE TRANSFORMATION?

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Abstract

Teachers have a number of roles to play in the teaching and learning process. However, our role as counselors or advisers in helping facilitate learner independence in a self-access learning center may have not been fully realized nor practiced by many teachers. The aims of this paper are to discuss the teacher's role as a counselor in a self-access learning center and encourage teachers to contribute more to the development of learner autonomy. First, the key concepts of autonomy, the role of self-assessment, and self-access learning center are discussed. Next, the teachers' role as a counselor is proposed, and the stages in setting up counseling sessions are provided. Finally, the transformation of the teacher's role as a counselor in order to provide learner support and foster learner autonomy in a self-access learning center is emphasized.

Introduction

English has been regarded as the international language of the present time (Baker, 2003) as well as "the dominant language of world communication" (Crystal, 2002, p. 7). In Thailand, the role of English is significant in both academic and social contexts

as it is the most widely taught foreign language in Thai schools and universities (Foley, 2005; Wiriyachitra, 2002). Despite the prestigious role English has in Thai society, the actual competence of Thai learners does not equate to the amount of time and effort that they have spent in education (O'Sullivan & Tajaroensuk, 1997). This is reflected in Thai students' relatively low TOEFL scores in comparison with other countries in the same region (Baker, 2008).

With the formation of ASEAN Community in 2015 Thailand, as well as other member countries, will experience tremendous changes both economically and socially. In the Thai context, one consequence that the arrival of the ASEAN community will bring is the free movement of labor across all the ASEAN regions, which will result in a competitive job market, with English playing an even more important role as the lingua franca in these parts of Asia. Being competent in the subject areas alone without a proper command of English may not guarantee new graduates the job they apply for. As Wiriyachitra (2002, p.4) speculates, "Thailand will lag behind in the competitive world of business, education, science and technology if the teaching and learning of English is not improved."

At the tertiary level, most language instructors are now left with questions of how and what they can do further to best prepare graduates with the language skills required to cope with the impending changes in the environment. Perhaps most importantly, how we can implement the principle of continuous lifelong learning, an objective that has been proposed as one of the key policy guidelines in the National Education Plan (Office of the Education Council, 2004).

White (2008, p. 3) points out that independence and autonomy are key concepts highly valued in language education. Valuing these concepts results in a move towards more learner-centered approaches in which individual learners can "develop

and exercise responsibility for their learning" based on their needs and rights.

Self-access language learning centers are widely accepted as educational facilities designed for students who are motivated to learn outside the classroom. Some believe that if they are properly used by students, it will help them improve their language proficiency and gradually enable them to become autonomous or self-directed learners (e.g., Reinders 2007a; Victori, 2007). Consequently, a number of self-access learning centers have been established in many parts of the world over the past few decades.

However, a number of key figures in the literature raise concerns that the logical relationship between self-access facilities and autonomous learning cannot be established and that learners will need some support in order to help them develop the skills and capabilities that are necessary for them to become autonomous, independent and self-directed in their language learning (e.g., Benson & Voller, 1997; Dickinson, 1987; Holec, 1981).

In order to help learners acquire the knowledge and self-directed skills to manage their own learning, some self-access language centers have incorporated learner support, through counseling or advisory services, into their existing self-access learning system (Rubin 2007). According to Reinders (2007a, p. 93), self-access and language counseling "hold strong potential as learner-centered and highly flexible approaches". Further, Reinders (2008, p.1) perceives language counseling as "an increasingly popular form of learner support".

According to Voller (1998), teachers, teaching assistants and trained advisers are among those best qualified to work as language counselors. Lee (1998), however, believes classroom teachers are the most appropriate counselors to work with

students in a self-access center, as they can relate to students enabling supportive relationships to be more easily established.

The article begins by discussing the key terms used in this field which include autonomy, self-assessment and self-access learning center. Next, it lists the duties counselors undertake and their counseling practices. After that, it provides the stages involved in setting up consulting sessions. The paper ends by stressing the emerging needs that are being demanded of teachers, who must begin to balance their roles as teacher and counselor in helping learners to acquire autonomous skills. This is considered to be one of the ultimate educational goals to pursue both inside and outside class at all levels.

Autonomy

The practices of language learning and teaching have undergone drastic changes over the past few decades. There has been a gradual move from teacher-led classroom activities to a more learner-centered approach where learners are encouraged to take more responsibility for their own learning. These changes have brought about the new concept of self-access language learning, which helps to complement the more traditional way of classroom teaching (Morrison, 2008). As proposed by Gardner and Miller (1999, p. 8), the terms "self-directed learning, self-instruction, independent learning, and self-access learning" all refer to the approaches that help learners to become independent from the teachers in their learning and use of language. 'Autonomy', which supports the active role learners have in their learning both inside and outside classroom contexts, has been a major focus in ELT for a number of years. It is used interchangeably with the terms, 'self-directed learning', 'learner independence' and 'learner self-direction' (e.g., Thornbury, 2006; Voller, 1998). Although different interpretations of 'autonomy' and 'self-directed learning' may exist, it is beyond the scope of

this article to elaborate on these issues here (see also Benson, 2001; Holec, 1981; Smith, 2008).

Holec (1981, p.3) defines autonomy as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning". According to Holec, an autonomous learner take responsibility for a number of aspects including knowing how to: (a) determine the learning objectives; (b) define the contents and progressions; (c) select what methods and techniques should be used; (d) monitor the acquisition procedure; and (e) evaluate what has been acquired.

Holec's definition suggests learners have considerable freedom in taking the learning process in their own hands. It focuses on learners who are able to make their own decisions about what, how and when to learn as well as how to evaluate the gain from learning. Both Gardner and Miller (1999) and Little (1991) agree that ideal autonomous learning is difficult to establish due to diverse requirements placed upon autonomous learners. In addition, Gardner (2000) suggests that the levels of autonomy vary according to a number of factors including time, learning contexts and learners' moods.

However, the idea of learner autonomy is highly valued and various support measures have been put in place to promote autonomous learning. Benson (2001) proposes that students who succeed in autonomous learning will become "better language learners" (p. 1). This is in line with Voller (1998) who points out that autonomy does not limit itself to the freedom of learners in making their own choices about their learning, but also concerns whether learners are making progress or being successful in their learning. Some characteristics of autonomous language learners specified by Littlewood (1996, p. 431) are those who have "... the ability to engage in independent work (e.g., self-directed learning) and ... the ability to use appropriate learning strategies both inside and outside the classroom". As summarized by Cotterall

(2000), autonomy should be set as the major goal for all types of learning.

The Role of Self-Assessment

Autonomous learning entails a number of responsibilities learners have to take or initiate throughout the learning process (i.e., defining learning goals, doing self-assessment and monitoring their learning progress). During these long-span stages of the learning process, some learners may find it difficult to maintain their engagement in self-reflection and self-evaluation of their own learning goals or progress. This may result in low motivation to continue autonomous learning.

Among many, Dickinson (1987; see also Gardner, 2000; Holec, 1981) believes that self-assessment has a key role to play in providing learners with feedback on their achievements so that it can help motivate and direct the students' learning experience. Moreover, self-assessment is found to be an effective tool, especially on large-scale or institutionalized assessments in which learners may have diverse learning needs. In support of the benefits of self-assessment in conjunction with Holec's definition of autonomy, Gardner (2000) draws analogies as follows:

> If... "autonomy is the ability to take charge of one's own learning", then self-assessment is a tool which supports those with that ability. Autonomous learners decide what to learn, when to learn and how to learn. Self-assessors decide what to assess, when to assess it and how to assess it. Autonomous learners take responsibility for their learning and this includes taking responsibility for monitoring their progress. Self-assessment provides an opportunity to self-tailor an assessment regime which can parallel a self-tailored study regime. (p. 51)

Gardner and Miller (1999) list five types of assessments that can be used in a self-access learning center: teacher-prepared assessments, generic assessments, collaborative assessments, learner-prepared assessments and portfolio assessments. The results of the assessments help facilitate the learning process in a number of ways. In addition, there are some benefits in building learner's confidence. That is, it increases their motivation as well as enables them to reflect on their learning.

Harris (1997, p. 12) describes self-assessment as "one of the pillars of learner autonomy". According to Harris, the significance of self-assessment is widely accepted to enhance autonomous language learning in both formal education and self-directed learning.

Regarding the formal context, self-assessment helps learners realize the active role they have in the learning process as well as focus their perceptions of progress in the classroom setting. Self-assessment can be used with all language skills or even as a complement to teacher assessment. This can be done through diagnostic activities, through which learners are required to think about their own strengths and weaknesses and what they will do to overcome the problems they have in class.

Next, under the context of self-directed language learning, self-assessment also plays a key role in enabling learners to monitor their own progress in accordance with their individual needs. With reference to Holec's (1981) definition of autonomy, the opportunity for the learners to assess and reflect on the progress of their learning helps them to improve upon and have a positive contribution on their learning.

Under the context of foreign language learning, Dickinson (1987) considers self-assessment on one's own performance to be a crucial skill to enforce upon learners as it helps them to become autonomous and continue learning the language

independently. Self-assessment has many facets and different degrees of involvement which can be used for summative and informative purposes. As Dickinson concludes:

> Self-assessment is desirable since it is essential for a learner preparing for autonomy to be able to make some kind of judgment about the accuracy and appropriacy of her performance, and also because self-assessment emphasizes learning, the process, rather than the results, the product (p.151).

Self-Access Learning Center

The establishment of self-access learning centers is in response to the belief that learner autonomy needs to be promoted and supported (Gardner & Miller, 1999; Sheerin, 1991). As defined by Cottarell and Reinders, "A Self-Access Centre consists of a number of resources (in the form of materials, activities and support), usually located in one place, and is designed to accommodate learners of different levels, goals, styles and interests. It aims to develop learner autonomy among its users" (2001, p. 2). According to McMurry, Tanner and Anderson (2010), various types of autonomous learning activities should be offered to learners in a self-access learning center. Without proper facilities to promote learner autonomy, a center loses its meaning as a self-access learning center and may be merely considered as a computer lab or library.

A self-access language center can serve many purposes and is beneficial to learners and teachers in a number of ways. Cottarell and Reinders (2001) acknowledge the great potential they have in: promoting learner autonomy through a wide range of facilities and resources they provide to cater for different learners' learning styles and helping to raise learners' awareness of the learning process. Alternatively, a self-access center can

also be complementary to classroom teaching in situations where learners' backgrounds are too diverse to cope with in normal classroom practice (Reinders, 2007b).

In addition to this, Morrison (2008) proposes that one of the major roles they should have is to provide learner support. This is in line with Little (1991) who believes that in spite of the benefits a self-access language learning center has, it is an unfamiliar concept for many students who generally need guidance during the early stages, and may be inexperienced when it comes to setting their own learning objectives.

Cotterall and Reinders (2001) also suggest that exploring learners' beliefs about learning and providing on-going support are some of the measures that can be taken to promote the effectiveness of self-access learning centers. Victori (2007) perceives the significance of learner support in the form of human resources as vital in facilitating learners while embarking on a self-directed approach. More discussion on how to provide learner support through counseling will be discussed in the next section.

The Teacher's Role as Counselor

Language counseling or language advising has emerged out of the needs of language administrators and teachers to find a more effective way of enhancing language learning. Harmer (2007) points out that, in a typical classroom context, teachers play a number of roles, such as controllers, prompters, tutors, organizers, and performers. A counselor's role, by contrast, may be akin to that of consultant, facilitator, helper or adviser (Gardner & Miller, 1999).

It is quite obvious that counseling is different from teaching in many aspects. While a teacher places more emphasis on teaching language skills, a counselor focuses more on the learning process and learner independence. Therefore, if a

teacher can help learners acquire self-directed skills, they will enable learners to know how to manage autonomously (Dickinson, 1987; Reinders, 2008; Rubin, 2007). Voller (1998) sees counseling as a great tool for learners both to improve their language skills and to become autonomous learners.

Reinders (2007b) proposes that consulting sessions consist of a meeting between a student and a counselor to discuss learning goals, develop a study plan and discuss appropriate learning strategies to be used. In practice, the description of the teacher's role as a counselor entails considerable duties that have to be performed at different stages of the learning process. For example, Victori (2007) lists three distinguished roles that are performed by counselors: facilitator, guide and assessor. First, counselors facilitate the learning process by helping learners to set up realistic goals which match their learning objectives. Second, counselors guide learners along the learning process to enable them to make full use of the available learning resources. Finally, counselors assess on-going progress and also measure students' final achievements. As Karlsson, Kjisik and Nordlund (2007) conclude, the counselor's role includes setting goals and objectives in addition to reflecting and evaluating on the outcomes.

Although Sheerin (1997) sees the preparation and support provided by the teachers as an essential component for all learners along their path towards autonomy, Gardner and Miller (1999) raise some concerns that this might be a drastic change for most teachers. Therefore, counseling training is required so that teachers are better prepared for their new role. Karlsson et. al. (2007, p. 52) see this as "a process of professional growth" which is part of teacher development rather than technical training. Darasawang (2010) agrees that both learners and teachers should be made aware of their new roles and

responsibilities both inside and outside the classroom learning environments.

Counselor Practices

Counselors have a major responsibility to provide sufficient support in order that learners can be responsible for their own learning. As research and practice in the field of second/foreign language learning have typically been classified into two main streams: self-directed learning and learner strategy training, scholars and researchers have adopted the consulting practices in accordance with their beliefs about language learning. This difference is also evident in the different terms they use and approaches they practice. Next, the views of the teacher's role and practice will be discussed.

Regarding the first type of practice or self-directed learning, Holec, who supports the notion that autonomy is learned indirectly, proposes *deconditioning* and *acquiring* processes which need to work in parallel in order to take learners from "a non-autonomous state to an autonomous one" (Holec, 1981, p. 22). Dickinson (1987) coined the terms *psychological* and *methodological* preparation as an alternative to Holec.

Dickinson (1987) views psychological preparation as a 'deconditioning process', which takes learners away from the rigid concepts and ideas they have towards traditional classroom learning. Dickinson's proposes three components for the psychological preparation period: (a) persuading learners to try self-instruction; (b) reducing learners' negative attitude towards language learning; and (c) boosting self-confidence in working independently. All of these are crucial components in preparing learners to develop learner autonomy. On the other hand, methodological preparation is defined as "the process of acquiring the abilities and techniques he [the learner] needs to undertake self-instruction" (Dickinson, 1987, p. 122). It seems

similar to Holec (1981) who views it as a know-how process, in which learners need to make use of available references and resources to help them acquire new knowledge.

As discussed above, from this perspective the teacher's role as counselor involves both psychological and methodological aspects. Therefore, teachers need to be prepared both psychologically and methodologically before they can become counselors. With respect to psychological preparation, Dickinson (1987) acknowledges that the three psychological components relevant for learner preparation are also applicable to teachers; albeit in the opposite direction. For instance, teachers need to be convinced that self-directed learning is a practical concept to work with. They need to help learners during the learning process and learn to adopt new roles in providing guidance. For methodological preparation, teachers are expected to assist learners through concepts in self-directed and related learning skills that are required during the learning process.

In relation to the second approach of learner strategy training, Wenden (2002) suggests that the educational focus of early work on language strategies placed on a good/successful learner. Some of the early studies (e.g., Naiman, FrÖhlich, Stern & Todesco, 1978; Rubin 1975) focused on documenting the strategies of good/successful language learners with the hope that implications could be drawn and guidance could be given on how less successful language learners could improve their learning skills. To quote from Wenden (2002):

> ... successful language learners...deploy a variety of strategies to deal with the learning problems they encounter. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to help students learn to use learning strategies – to attend to incoming information to be learned, comprehend it, and to store and retrieve what is learned. (p. 36)

Based on systematic research within the theoretical framework of information processing theory, O'Malley and Chamot (1990) propose a framework of learning strategies which can be divided into the three distinctive categories of metacognitive, cognitive and social/affective strategy depending on the level or type of processing involved. Descriptions of metacognitive and cognitive strategies are as follows:

> metacognitive strategies, which involve executive processes in planning for learning, monitoring one's comprehension and production, and evaluating how well one has achieved a learning objective.

> cognitive strategies, in which the learner interacts with the material to be learned by manipulating it mentally (as in making mental images, or elaborating on previously acquired concepts or skills) or physically (as in grouping items to be learned in meaningful categories, or taking notes on important information to be remembered).

> (O'Malley & Chamot, 1990, p. 197)

As summarized by Benson (2001), metacognitive strategies make use of the knowledge of cognitive processes to control the learning process, while cognitive strategies are operations carried out directly to process the material to be learned. In order to achieve autonomy, learners need to know how to organize their learning through the use of metacognitive strategies (e.g., self-monitoring, self-evaluation) and make use of cognitive strategies (e.g., note-taking, summarizing) in order to manipulate the input.

Anderson (2008, p. 99) identifies five components of metacognition relevant for learning. These include: (a) preparing and planning for learning; (b) selecting and using strategies; (c)

monitoring learning; (d) orchestrating strategies; and (e) evaluating learning. In application to counseling practices, it is highly beneficial as it is advantageous for learners to be aware of metacognitive and cognitive techniques to help them reflect upon their learning so that improvements can be made.

In order to implement learner strategy practice, teachers need to familiarize themselves with the concepts involved in learning strategies as well as strategy training itself. Anderson (2008) believes that understanding each type of skill is crucial for both teachers and learners. As quoted, "If we want to develop metacognitively aware language learners, we must have metacognitively aware teachers" (p. 99). At the very beginning stage, autonomous learners can experience many problems regarding setting goals as well as choosing what learning strategies to be employed. Therefore, language counselors have a central role to play in bridging the gap and making the transformation period a smooth one.

Setting up Counseling Sessions

Gardner and Miller (1999) propose two ways in which counseling sessions can be established: appointments and drop-ins. Additionally, online advising is one of the latest channels being used to keep regular contact with learners about their learning experience. However, special e-literacy skills on the part of counselors and learners may be required (Mozzon-McPherson, 2007).

Before setting up language consultation services, as raised by Rubin (2007, p. 7), the main factors to be considered are, "Who adopts what, where, when, why, and how?" Likewise, Voller (2011) lists a number of issues to be considered, some of which include the location for the counseling service, the service hours, and the equipment that might be required. There are also some important decisions to be made regarding the choices of the type

of counseling employed (one-to-one or small group-based), the counselors (teachers, teaching assistants, trained advisers, or student helpers), the language to be used (target language or mother tongue), and the nature of the counseling service (voluntary or attached to a language course).

Voller (1998) suggests that learners should be informed of the purpose of the consulting session before it actually takes place. With respect to one-to-one counseling, the five basic elements in the first consultation are: (a) goal setting; (b) focusing or narrowing down those goals; (c) time planning; (d) study management; and (e) giving advice. The process of consultation can be seen as a process of negotiation between a counselor and a learner in order to help the learner set realistic goals so that proper resources can be recommended by the counselor. Therefore, these elements can be recursive until a final agreement can be made (see Figure 1).
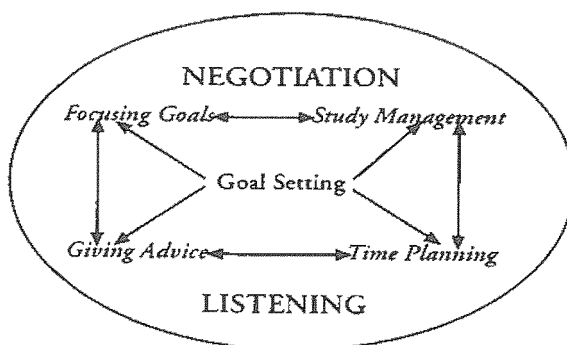

Figure 1: The Five Elements of the First Consulation (Voller, 1998, p. 7)

Voller (1998) stresses the significance of the listening component as this is how the counselor can come to terms with the learner's needs, ensuring that appropriate advice can be given. As supported by Karlsson et al. (2007, p. 52), "the role of the counselor is not that of a questioner knowing the right

answer, but a participant in a dialogue looking for a joint answer." The sub-skills for active listening include summarizing, paraphrasing, eliciting information, clarifying problems, and remaining silent.

The subsequent consulting sessions are usually followed by the "feedback loop" (Voller, 1998, p. 10). Generally, the procedure involves following-up on the progress made and asking the learner to reflect on what they have done. This is considered crucial because the learner will have a chance to reflect upon and assess their own progress. At the same time, the counselor can also help to identify problems encountered and provide advice for further study.

Although the nature of counseling sessions may vary from place to place, there is a common format, as proposed by Reinders (2007a; see also Vasuvat & Intratat, 2010), in which certain elements and features are shared. For example, Reinders (2007a) lists common procedures for an initial session in which a counselor:

- explains the purpose of the advisory sessions
- elicits from the student the main reasons for their visit
- asks the student to fill in a needs analysis
- works out the student's problematic areas
- recommends appropriate materials and activities
- makes a follow-up appointment

In the subsequent session (s) to follow, a counselor and a student:

- discuss progress made and problems experienced
- identify strategies used on particular sub-skills
- discuss alternative strategies
- revise learning objectives (if required)
- suggest resources

According to Mozzon-McPherson (2007), a number of tools such as needs analysis, study plans, learning contracts, logbooks/journals, and audio-recording of advising sessions should be employed during consulting sessions to serve as self-reflection on a learner's experience and for referencing purposes. Alternative counseling services can be achieved through email messages, learner journals, learner-groups, and conversational exchanges (Gardner & Miller, 1999).

Finally, it is apparently true to say that not every teacher will naturally become a language counselor. This is in line with Rubin (2007) and Victori (2007) who recommend training on how to conduct a consulting session before one actually works as a counselor. Some of the suggested practices could include: mock advisory sessions, video with sample advisory sessions and peer feedback sessions. Karlsson et al. (2007) suggest that knowledge and skills in providing methodological or psychological support are also required in the training. This will help counselors to improve the quality and the practice of counseling greatly.

Why the Transformation and Why Now?

To date, there are a growing number of self-access language learning centers in various educational institutes all over the world, particularly in Asia, Europe and America. This suggests that the concepts of learner centeredness and autonomy have been realized and put into practice (Gardner & Miller, 2011). The benefits in enabling learners to become more effective in autonomous learning are promising as supported by numerous scholars mentioned in this article (Karlsson et. al., 2007; Mozzon-McPherson, 2007; Reinders, 2008; Vasuvat & Intratat, 2010; Victori, 2007).

In the Thai context, promoting learner autonomy in tertiary institutions has been practiced widely to a varying degree. Most educational institutions have established self-access

learning centers, which are usually equipped with learning materials and advanced technologies. For example, a self-access learning center in the Faculty of Commerce and Accountancy, Chulalongkorn University, which claims to be a model for the university, allows the students to have full access to both instructional media and electronic resources. Different institutions have also proposed different measures of encouraging more frequent visits to the self-access language learning centers, so that students can make full use of the learning resources/materials available. Many tertiary institutions in Thailand make it compulsory for students to access self-access learning centers, by keeping records of their language learning through worksheets or portfolios. Attendance can then be converted to points which contribute to the overall requirement of the English courses. Apart from the provision of learning materials, some universities do provide learning support. For example, KMUTT self-access learning center, which is renowned for its pioneering contribution towards the practice of autonomous learning, offers four different types of counseling sessions: (a) drop-in, (b) tailored courses, (c) generic curriculum, and (d) certificate courses.

While it can be said that a lot of effort has been made in many institutions, it is also clear that there is still much more to be done in terms of improving and maintaining the quality of learning materials/resources as well as the implementation of language counseling within self-access learning centers. This would appear to be one of the crucial elements in assisting learners to know how to learn and, most important of all, be able to carry on life-long learning even in the absence of the teacher's presence.

With or without the arrival of the ASEAN Community, the needs for English are always on the increase due to its growing role as the global language. However, the emergence of the

ASEAN Community intensifies the demand for English across many countries in the ASEAN region. In comparison to other countries such as Singapore, Malaysia and the Philippines, with their strong ESL backgrounds, Thailand with its strong EFL influence is at a disadvantage. One of the obvious consequences will be new graduates seeking employment, especially those with low proficiency in English skills as they will find it difficult to compete with those who possess a good command of English. The immediate needs will probably concern how to get a job and how to live up to the expectations that arise when working with international firms. However, the needs for the use of English at work are endless and preparation in a classroom alone cannot prepare graduates sufficiently in all aspects that they will require in the future. Clearly, this is when the benefits of autonomous learning will be most widely felt. There is no other better time for teachers to act than now.

The transformation can be initiated right from the classroom where both teachers and learners should accept their new roles and learning objectives, which should be geared more towards autonomous practice. In a typical classroom, learners need to accept that they have to take more responsibility in the learning process, while teachers need to work on balancing the different roles between being a knowledge provider and a facilitator (Harris, 1997; Holec 1981).

Although Chan, Spratt and Humphreys (2002) reveal that Asian students generally have positive attitudes towards autonomy, they may not be willing to take control of their own learning due to their lack of motivation. As a consequence, it is strongly recommended that teachers play a major role in helping students take the initiative for their language learning. Further, the teacher should increase student motivation to learn autonomously by drawing connections between what they are learning and how they can make use of it in their daily lives. As

suggested by Karlsson et al. (2007, p. 47), "learning languages autonomously should not mean learning alone." Counseling sessions create an opportunity for direct contact between a counselor and student. The dialogue will also help bring up issues such as emotions and motivation, thus helping learners reflect about the problems they have in language learning.

Conclusion

As reflected by Reinders and White (2011, p. 3), "Autonomy is ultimately about learners' ability to take control over their own learning, but the quality of the input, the quality of the syllabus, the quality of the support and the materials provided by the teacher are crucial in its development", it is clear that both learners and teachers have active roles to play in the process of learning. Nevertheless, the success of autonomous learning cannot be fully realized without teachers' enthusiastic support and guidance which will help learners to enhance the learning experience in a positive way both now and in the years that follow.

Perhaps, it is time to reevaluate our role as teacher and ask ourselves if we have done enough to contribute to learner autonomy by preparing our learners for a more active and responsible role both inside and outside classroom contexts.

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