

Outduction

Enhancing the final year experience



LEARNER AUTONOMY & PDP

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Overview

- Learner autonomy and the final year
- Personal Development Planning
- Final year PDP
- Programme-based strategy for developing learner autonomy.



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Characteristics of an autonomous learner

- As a starting point, we'll explore your own conceptions of this...
 - Take one minute **individually** to reflect on and note what you see as the characteristics of an autonomous learner
 - Take five minutes to pool these with two or three neighbours and discuss **when** a learner might be expected to exhibit them



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Characteristics of Autonomous Learners

- self-aware
- self-evaluative
- reflective
- metacognitive
- positive self regard
- motivated
- critical
- curious
- creative
- responsible
- situated & interdependent
 - institutionally aware
 - discipline aware
 - make connections in knowledge
 - aware of social resources
- skilled in self management
 - formulating own problems
 - setting goals
 - planning
 - reviewing progress
 - research & dealing with information

Hughes (2003)

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Dimensions of autonomy

- **Rational** autonomy: people free to determine own beliefs & practices; critical thinking.
- **Personal** autonomy: emotional maturity, self-reliance, ability to organise oneself and one's life.
- **Relational** autonomy: interpersonal rather than intrapersonal, autonomy may be both enabled and impeded by others.

(Hughes, 2003)



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An Autonomous Learner

- Is self-governing in their learning:
 - Makes choices about own learning.
 - Takes responsibility for own learning.
 - Draws upon social resources for learning.
 - May give up autonomy to achieve certain goals.



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Learner Autonomy in the Final Year

Is the final year:

- a space for students to exercise autonomy in their learning?
- a test of students' autonomy?
- a further stage in the transition of students toward learner autonomy?



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Workshop Discussion

- Discuss examples from your own practice that promote the development of learner autonomy.
- Discuss whether you feel the final year has a particular role in the development of learner autonomy.



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Personal Development Planning (PDP)

- Sector-wide requirement since 2005/6.
- Revised guidance issued 2010.
- Increased use of ePortfolios.
- Institutions invited to roll out Higher Education Achievement Report (HEAR) following pilot.



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Final year PDP

- Initially, a lot of the focus of PDP activities was on the first year, and support of transition into university.
- As practice matures, growing recognition of potential for PDP as 'glue' in life-wide learning and of need to continue PDP practices into final year.



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Workshop Discussion: Final Year PDP

Brief discussion of PDP practices within your own subjects/institutions.

Can you provide any examples of final year PDP? What form does it take?



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Final Year PDP – sector examples

- Business Management at Huddersfield – focus on helping students recognise ‘employability skills’ (Brooks and McKinna, 2011.)
- Bedfordshire: final year project/dissertation supervision recognised as a PDP process (Raiker, 2010).



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Final Year PDP – Outduction Examples

- Challenge Yourself!
- Progress toward developing Kingston and Bradford ‘Awards.’
- Piloting of final year version of SaPRA.
- Use of e-portfolio to support final year project supervision/learning (Ray Sheriff).



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Programme Level Curriculum Design for Learner Autonomy

- What dimensions and characteristics of learner autonomy are:
 - necessary to succeed as a learner in your programme?
 - desirable as attributes for learners completing your programme?



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An outline programme strategy

- isolated and individual innovations are a start, but ultimately need a strategic, department/programme-wide approach
- 3 stage outline approach:
 1. Transition & Capacity building
 2. Letting go of control
 3. Freedom to learn

(Hughes, 2003)



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Stage 1 –

Transition & Capacity Building

- developing the skills to learn
- begin to establish culture of reflection & self-evaluation
- offer some opportunities for negotiated learning
- (but persistent tension with reproducing & developing foundations in the subject/ discipline)



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Stage 2 – ‘Letting go of control’

- reduce emphasis on teacher-led approach
- more opportunity for flexibility, choice & negotiation in learning
- mini-projects and enquiry based learning
- map out the nature & development of the subject/discipline



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Stage 3 – ‘Freedom to Learn’

- much/most assessment contains elements of negotiation
- greater negotiation of subject content
- significant piece of independent work
- challenging subject/discipline assumptions & boundaries (trans disciplinary or ‘undisciplined’)
- co-production of learning



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...Review

- key issues:
 - need an integrated, strategic approach
 - need to start early – don't leave it all up to a final year challenge
 - strike a balance between freedom and structure
 - teacher needs to be progressively less of an instructor, and more a facilitator of learning
 - PDP as glue to life-wide learning, and vehicle for developing self-awareness.



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References

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