

Autonomy and Strategizing in Self-directed Language Learning

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Autonomous language learning requires not only initial planning of self-directed study efforts, but also modification and improvement of strategies after such efforts begin. As language teachers consider how best to support students in their early experiences with autonomous modes of language learning, and also how to help learners become more effective strategy users, a deeper understanding of the early phases of self-directed study efforts is valuable because it helps teachers know how best to offer support. This paper reports on a journal study that examines the experience of a group of language learners in China as they design and carry out self-directed language learning projects. The study concludes that, for a significant number of learners, the process of adapting and modifying their plans is not completed during the first few weeks, which suggests that support over longer periods may be valuable. The study also concludes that combining strategy instruction with a language learning task results in more serious attention to strategizing on the part of students.