

Promoting the Autonomy of Taiwanese EFL Learners in Higher Education by Using Self-Assessment Learning Logs

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Abstract

This study revealed how the classroom teaching practice of self-assessment learning logs helps to promote the autonomy of L2 learners in the context of higher education in Taiwan. L2 learners completed a self-assessment learning log entry on a biweekly basis, reflecting on what they had done outside of the classroom to improve their English. These learners then shared their learning log entries in class approximately once a month. Data from 30 participants were collected using a questionnaire containing both closed and open-ended questions. The results indicated that most participants believed that learning logs facilitated language learning; in particular, sharing what they had done with their classmates was a strong motivation to continue out-of-class learning activities. This paper offers specific suggestions for teachers regarding effective techniques for promoting learner autonomy.

Keywords

English learning, learner autonomy, learning logs, out-of-class activities, college language learners

1. Introduction

Recently, the concept of learner autonomy is receiving considerable attention in language learning. Many researchers, such as Benson (2006, 2011), Dickinson (1987, 1995), Little (1995, 2004), and Ushioda (1996, 2011) have focused on learner autonomy. Learner autonomy is a broad concept with various definitions. Despite its complexity, various theoretical definitions of learner autonomy share several crucial characteristics: learners control and are responsible for their own learning, execute their own decisions regarding the learning process, determine goals, reflect on their learning, identify their resources, monitor their progress, and develop personal learning strategies (Benson, 2011; Dickinson, 1987; Holec, 1981; Little, 2004; Ushioda, 2011). However, the levels of autonomy that language learners are expected to exhibit, and the various forms of the autonomy that can be demonstrated are under scrutiny among researchers (Benson, 2007). Whereas learner autonomy can take numerous forms, such as taking a distance learning course, attending a self-access learning center, or following a

self-instruction program, this study focused on promoting learner autonomy by using out-of-class learning activities. Out-of-class learning refers to “activities that supplement classroom learning” and that are not directly related to classroom materials (Benson, 2011, p. 138). The relationship between out-of-class learning activities and learner autonomy is identified in the literature (Chan, 2011; Hyland, 2004; Pearson, 2004). Studies have indicated how learners take responsibility for their learning by choosing types of out-of-class activity, evaluating their progress, and reflecting on the effectiveness of their learning behaviors, which are steps necessary to become more autonomous. As Ushioda (2011, p. 224) concluded, “fostering students’ willingness to take responsibility for regulating their motivation and learning behaviours” is the core reason why teachers should promote learner autonomy. Encouraging language learners to participate in out-of-class learning activities is an example of assisting them in becoming more autonomous.

This study explored how self-assessment learning logs help develop autonomy in L2 learners. L2 learners maintained a self-assessment learning log on a biweekly basis. In this learning log, learners reflected on the out-of-class learning activities in which they had engaged to help improve their English. Learners then shared their learning log entries with their classmates approximately once a month. This paper presents the following key purposes of this teaching practice:

- a) Determining whether using self-assessment learning logs benefits L2 learners in becoming more autonomous.
- b) Exploring how self-assessment learning logs promote language learners’ ability for autonomous learning.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Learner Autonomy

Most learner autonomy researchers do not deny the importance of learner autonomy in language learning. Learner autonomy is crucial for L2 learners for several reasons, one being the connection between autonomy and L2 motivation. The relationship between autonomy and motivation is identified in the literature, either theoretically or empirically. As Ushioda (1996, p. 2) stated, “autonomous learners are by definition motivated learners”. Research has also shown an additional connection between autonomy and motivation. The empirical studies of Chan (2001) and Spratt, Humphrey, and Chan (2002), conducted in Hong Kong, support and develop the statement of Ushioda (1996) that motivation is essential for fostering autonomy. In Chan’s (2001) study, which sought to measure how prepared Hong Kong learners are for learner autonomy, research participants described autonomous learners as possessing high motivation. When asked why they did not engage in more autonomous activities, learners indicated a lack of interest and motivation. In another study, Spratt, Humphreys and Chan (2002) explored the relationship between autonomy and motivation, also showing similar results. These studies indicate that whether we regard autonomy as a foundation for developing motivation or as a by-product of motivation, autonomy and motivation are highly interrelated, forming a virtuous

cycle.

In addition to the connection between autonomy and L2 motivation, another reason why learner autonomy is essential is that language learning is supposedly a lengthy process during which a teachers' presence is not consistent. Thus, training language learners to become more autonomous and preparing learners to be responsible for their own learning is an essential task for language teachers. This is particularly imperative in an Asian context, because Asian learners are often described as passive and reluctant to openly challenge teachers' authority (Pierson, 1996). Some other studies have also shown the contrast between the traits of Western learners and Asian learners are apparent. For instance, Hammond and Gao (2002) point out that Chinese learners tend to listen and follow the teachers' instructions while Western learners engage in discussions and contribute to the process of creating knowledge. Similar discussion can also be found in Cortazzi and Jin's (1996) work, where the research participants in their study list "obeying to the teacher" as a characteristic of good language learners. It appears that with these traits, one could wonder whether Asian language learners could embrace the notion of learner autonomy successfully. Before attempting to answer this question, it is important to note that there is a debate among scholars on setting up these cultural binaries. Biggs (1999) and Littlewood (2001) offer similar viewpoints that these cultural stereotypes could only create bias and may only be partially true. There are too many variables in a cultural setting that no one culture should be judged differently from others. While it is true that "in every country there was a wide range of individual differences" (Littlewood, 2001, p. 3), there are indeed some cornerstone of learning philosophical assumptions that could shape learners' different preferred learning approach. Cortazzi and Jin (2013, p. 1) refer this as "culture of learning"—"Members of different cultural communities may have different preferences, expectations, and interpretations, values and beliefs about how to learn or how to teach". Bringing out issues whether Asian learners could be autonomous learners or not does not imply that they are somehow deficient than Western learners. In fact, several studies do show that Asian learners can demonstrate autonomous behavior. Learners in studies performed by Aoki and Smith (1999) and Mineishi (2010) in Japan, Chan (2011) in Hong Kong, Zong (2010) on Chinese language learners in New Zealand, and Lo (2010) in Taiwan all exhibited a positive response to becoming more autonomous learners. Learners in these contexts demonstrated levels of acceptance of autonomy in language learning, such as sharing decision-making responsibilities in the classroom, engaging in out-of-class learning, or attending self-access learning centers. The discussion of culture here is simply to examine possible ramifications that could occur due to different cultures of learning and better prepare for such possibilities. As Littlewood (1999) proposed, a reactive autonomy that might work more favorably among Chinese learners where teachers help to set up a direction of learning to which learners react by choosing preferred styles or strategies, materials, and goals. Littlewood (1999, p. 75) explained that reactive autonomy might be a preliminary step toward proactive autonomy, the form of autonomy that is "usually intended when the concept is discussed in the West", whereby learners control learning, including their goals. Considering the type of dependence

Chinese learners have on their teachers, it might be difficult for learners to become fully autonomous immediately, as supported in Lo's (2010) study on Taiwanese students. However, by reacting to a teacher's help, encouragement, and gradual shifting of responsibilities, Chinese learners seem able to become autonomous gradually. This paper supports this thought process and proposes a teacher-initiated teaching practice of self-assessment learning logs for training learners gradually to become more autonomous.

2.2 Out-of-Class Learning Activities

Out-of-class learning is an opportunity for engaging in activities that individual language learners seek to participate in outside class, intending on improving their language ability. As Benson (2006, p. 26) described, these out-of-class learning activities require learners to extend their learning experiences from classroom-based language courses to "find opportunities for language learning and use outside class". In addition, Benson (2011, p. 139) listed several key characteristics of these out-of-class activities:

- a) Exhibiting no direct relationship to schooling;
- b) Using authentic resources;
- c) Involving pleasure and interest;
- d) Aiding language learning.

Several researchers have indicated that participating in out-of-class learning activities is how language learners demonstrate their willingness to become autonomous (Benson, 2011; Little, 2004; Oxford, 2003). In addition, several empirical studies (Chan, 2011; Hyland, 2004; Pill, 2001) have identified that Asian language learners tend to choose out-of-class learning activities that are receptive (e.g., listening, reading) rather than productive (e.g., speaking, writing). Hyland (2004) explained that the reasons might be both the individual factor of lacking confidence and the social or political factors of negative judgment from the public. Despite the constraints, these studies also illustrated language learners' overall positive attitudes toward out-of-class learning activities and how these activities promoted their L2 motivation, thus further promoting their level of autonomy.

In addition, these studies (Chan, 2011; Hyland, 2004; Pill, 2001; Suh et al., 1999; Wu, 2012) also indicated popular out-of-class activities in which language learners like to engage in an Asian context. Such activities include:

- a) Surfing the Internet;
- b) Engaging in online communication;
- c) Watching movies or TV programs;
- d) Reading newspapers or magazines;
- e) Listening to songs or radio stations.

This study determines whether these activities will be mentioned by the research participants or if language learners in Taiwan also engage more in receptive out-of-class learning activities than in productive activities.

2.3 Self-Assessment Learning Logs

In this study, the research participants engaged in out-of-class learning activities and maintained a record of what they had done and learned in the self-assessment learning log (Appendix A) on a biweekly basis. Learners then had opportunities to share the content of their log entries in a small group (3-4 people) in class. Using in-class discussions, these L2 learners reflected on their own learning progress, listening to what other classmates had done to improve their English, and they identified other potentially beneficial learning resources. In addition, writing self-assessment learning logs helped the L2 learners to understand the concept of responsibility for their learning, and thus, gradually control their learning. The benefits of this teaching practice are indicated as the characteristics of autonomous learners in the literature (e.g., Benson, 2011; Dickinson, 1987, 1995; Little, 1995, 2004; Ushioda, 1996, 2011.) Furthermore, this teaching practice combines the two core methods of autonomous learning inside and outside the classroom. As Benson (2006, pp. 26-27) summarized, two major aspects of autonomy are (a) how autonomy is exercised beyond the classroom (e.g., self-access, distance learning), and (b) how autonomy is supported in the classroom (e.g., selecting learning materials, setting learning objectives). This teaching practice is an innovative method combining these two aspects of autonomy. Whereas students exercised their autonomy by engaging in out-of-class learning activities, they were required to share what they had done during class time. They had interactions with the teacher and their classmates concerning the type of out-of-class activities in which they had engaged and what they had learned from participation in these activities. This interaction adds another dimension to their out-of-class learning experience, which might otherwise be primarily independent.

This section reviewed the literature on learner autonomy, how it forms a virtuous cycle with L2 motivation, how Asian students, using the appropriate guidance of a teacher are prepared to learn autonomously. The role of out-of-class learning activities in learner autonomy and the features of self-assessment learning logs were also discussed.

3. Research Method

3.1 Research Questions

In this study, two research questions were proposed:

- 1) Is the use of self-assessment learning logs beneficial to L2 learners' language learning? If so, what are the benefits?
- 2) Does the use of self-assessment learning logs promote L2 learners' learner autonomy? If so, how is their autonomy promoted?

This study explored how using self-assessment learning logs (Appendix A) facilitates L2 learners' autonomous learning. A questionnaire comprising both Likert-scaled and open-ended questions was designed and administered to 30 foreign language learners at a language college in Southern Taiwan. The goal of the questionnaire was to determine the extent to which these learners viewed the role of self-assessment learning logs and how these learning logs facilitated learning.

The advice of several experts (Bryman, 2001; Dörnyei & Taguchi, 2009) was followed for designing the questionnaire. For example, this questionnaire had a desirable appearance, appropriate length, simple and clear language, and detailed instructions. Using ambiguous words, double negative statements, double-barreled questions, and complex or irritating questions was avoided. To avoid misunderstandings of the meaning of certain English words or phrases by the questionnaire respondents, a bilingual version (using both English and Chinese) of the questionnaire was used.

The questionnaire (Appendix B) consisted of 10 Likert-scale questions. The research participants were required to rate statements from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*). Five questions were related to the participants' general attitudes toward self-assessment learning logs. Sample statements were:

- a) Filling out the learning logs motivated me to use English in my free time;
- b) Filling out the learning logs was a waste of time.

The other 5 Likert-scale questions were related to the experiences of the learners during class sharing time regarding their self-assessment learning log entries. Sample statements are:

- a) I enjoyed listening to my classmates discussing the contents of their learning logs;
- b) I felt the sharing time was boring. I was not interested in what others had to say.

In addition to these Likert-scale questions, the questionnaire also comprised open-ended questions, such as "What difficulties did you experience while completing the learning logs? Please share your experiences" and "What did you learn from the sharing time? Please give some specific examples". The participants shared their ideas in more detail in these open-ended questions.

3.2 Participants

Thirty sophomore non-English major students from a language college in Southern Taiwan participated in this study. This is a convenient sample because the researcher was employed at this college at the time of the research. These students gathered three times per week to attend a compulsory 5-hr integrated skills English class. Students are divided into various classes (Levels 1-7) relative to their English proficiency level. Level 1 classes comprise students with the lowest English proficiency level according to their College Student English Proficiency Test (CSEPT) score obtained by students at the beginning of the semester. The participants were Level 2 students. Thus, they possessed a low English proficiency level, and spending more time improving their English outside of class was vital for their learning.

3.3 Research Administration

This study had two phases. Phase 1 required the participants to complete self-assessment learning logs (Appendix A) on a biweekly basis. The participants did not need to answer all the questions in the log every time. They could just select 1 or a few questions depending on what they did at that time. For each question, most participants usually wrote in key phrases indicating the out-of-class activities they engaged in. For some students, they might write more details on exactly what they had learned. Take question (b) "What have I done outside of class to improve my English reading skills in the past month (e.g., read articles in an English magazine, read something online in English)?" as an example,

participant No. 9 and 28 wrote in one entry of their self-assessment learning log:

Participant No. 9: read *Studio Classroom* magazine¹,

Participants No. 28: read an article online about Tom Cruise².

For the same question, another participant, No. 24, wrote:

I read an article on the Internet. It's about a singer I like very much. Her name is Taylor Swift. The article is about her new songs. I learned that her new album will come out soon³.

The self-assessment learning logs were collected bi-weekly. Before submitting the self-assessment learning logs in class, a 10-15 minutes discussion period was provided for sharing their entries with their group members (3-4 people per group). Learners shared what was written in their learning logs and what they had learned during the previous 2 weeks. During this time, the participants could talk in Chinese or English, depending on what they felt most comfortable with. The participants took turns sharing what they wrote in the self-assessment learning logs. For instance, one learner could talk about a fun English learning website that she visited while another learner could share a nice English song that she listened to and the words she learned from the song. During the sharing time, the teacher's role was supportive. She went to join different groups to listen to what the participants said, showed interest and support. She did not stay in one group more than 3 minutes to avoid the participants' awkward feeling of being watched. Most of the time, the atmosphere during the sharing time was relaxed, loud, and sometimes with some laughter.

Self-assessment learning logs' data collection period lasted from October 2012 to January 2013. Three to six entries (several research participants missed several entries) from the learning logs were collected from each participant. What these participants wrote in their self-assessment learning logs was not evaluated, nor would it affect their grade in the class. All the research participants were informed of this and they understood that participation in the study was voluntarily.

In Phase 2, the questionnaire was administered to the participants in April 2013 for the learners to reflect on their feelings and experiences regarding the learning logs. After the raw data were collected, the researcher and her research assistant analyzed the raw data. The answers from the Likert-scale questions were entered into SPSS for statistical analysis. The data from the open-ended questions was then translated into English. The data analysis stage followed.

¹ Original in Chinese, translated by the author into English.

² Original in Chinese, translated by the author into English.

³ Original in Chinese, translated by the author into English.

4. Research Findings and Discussion

4.1 Research Question 1

1) Is the use of self-assessment learning logs beneficial to L2 learners' language learning? If so, what are the benefits?

Overall, the descriptive data from the closed questions in the questionnaire indicated that the research participants maintained positive attitudes toward the self-assessment learning logs. The descriptive data (Appendix C) indicated that most statements (8 out of 10) had means higher than 3.00 (out of 4.00). The highest mean score (mean = 3.33, Std. = .577) was for the statement "During the sharing time, I learned from my classmates some other things I could do to improve my own English". Remarkably, sharing time received the most positive evaluation from the research participants. This result was additionally supported by what the participants wrote in response to the open-ended questions. Examples mentioned by research participants are as follows:

During the sharing time, I learned:

- a) Clearly expressing what I had done.
- b) How others used creative ways to learn English (e.g., viewing funny English learning videos on Youtube).
- c) How others' English learning methods differed from mine.
- d) Several relaxing ways to learn English (e.g., learning English song lyrics).

In addition to what they learned from their classmates during the sharing time, the participants expressed that the idea of sharing in class motivated them to participate in out-of-class activities:

- a) I enjoyed the sharing time. Because of this, I felt more motivated to improve my English in my free time. I didn't want to have nothing to say during the sharing time.
- b) Sharing time was fun and important. I felt more motivated to engage in English learning activities because of this. I looked forward to trying the activities my classmates had shared.
- c) Sharing time motivated me to do some activities to learn English. Otherwise, I would have had nothing to say in class.

It appears that the sharing time created peer pressure, which transformed into a positive motivational source, encouraging students to engage in out-of-class learning activities. The positive group norm (students engaging in out-of-class learning activities) influenced other students to participate. This situation was indicative of how group behavior exerted an influence on individual students within the group.

The second highest mean score (mean = 3.24, Std. = .539) was for the statement "Filling out the learning logs motivated me to use English in my free time". This result indicated that the learning logs encouraged students to study English outside of class. More specific illustrations of how completing the learning logs motivated students were provided in response to the open-ended questions:

- a) It motivated me to spend more time studying English in my free time.

- b) It provided a more specific direction and motivation for studying English.
- c) The learning logs motivated me to continue learning.
- d) The learning logs helped me to maintain a good habit and motivated me to study.

The learning logs provided a direction for students to follow regarding out-of-class learning activities. By completing the learning logs, they had to cultivate a positive record-keeping habit, and this served as an effective reminder to perform out-of-class English learning activities. This reminder transformed into a motivational source that students identified and reacted to.

To summarize, the data from the questionnaire indicated that completing the learning logs was beneficial to these L2 learners' language learning in various ways:

- a) Completing the learning logs acted as a motivational source, encouraging students to participate in out-of-class language learning activities. The learning logs provided a direction, reminding students to cultivate a regular language learning habit.
- b) Sharing what they had written in the learning logs with their classmates was another motivational source to ensure the engagement of students in out-of-class learning activities, because students wanted to avoid having nothing to share with their classmates.

4.2 Research Question 2

2) Does the use of self-assessment learning logs promote L2 learners' learner autonomy? If so, how is their autonomy promoted?

In the questionnaire, the participants were required to rate the statement "I will continue to perform tasks I wrote in my learning logs even when I no longer take English classes". The mean of this statement was 3.19 (Std. = .602) out of 4.00. This indicated that the research participants maintained positive attitudes toward the learning logs and would continue maintaining their learning records, despite no longer attending English classes, which is a characteristic of learner autonomy. This fact is further supported by their answers to the open-ended questions. Several answers to the question regarding what students had learned from completing the learning logs indicated features of autonomous learning, such as self-regulation, self-evaluation, and self-awareness:

- a) It helped me cultivate a regular English reading habit in my free time and expanded my vocabulary more effectively.
- b) It helped me try various ways to explore English by myself.
- c) It helped me notice English more in my daily life.
- d) It helped me understand that English is around me all the time.
- e) It helped me realize that I haven't spent enough time studying English. I should spend more time doing more English-related activities in my free time.

In addition, several research participants commented that they would continue using the learning logs, even when they no longer attended compulsory English classes:

- a) I'd like to continue with this [the learning log], because it's already a habit for me now.
- b) Even though it is troublesome to keep the records, I can find out what I've been doing, and what I've

learned, so it's very helpful.

c) I'll keep filling out the logs because it motivates me to study English.

To summarize, the data from the questionnaire indicated that completing the learning logs was effective in promoting the L2 learners' autonomy as follows:

a) It helped the students be more aware of their learning condition and provided an opportunity for reflecting on their progress.

b) It helped the students to understand various methods for practicing English in their free time and indicated how much they can accomplish individually.

c) It motivated the students to develop the habit of engaging in out-of-class English learning activities.

5. Overall Findings and Discussion

Overall, the students in this study maintained positive attitudes toward learning logs and they valued the benefits of the learning logs. The data also indicated that the learning logs were effective in promoting these learners' autonomy, which can contribute to the following reasons. First, by using self-assessment learning logs, teachers provided a specific direction for students to participate in out-of-class learning activities in their free time. Due to the Confucian cultural influences, Chinese or Taiwanese students may prefer teachers telling them what to do and they follow suit (Cortazzi & Jin, 2013). Thus, expecting these learners to take the initiatives to learn autonomously might be unsuccessful. As Jin and Cortazzi (1993, p. 25) suggest, it is important to understand and appreciate the students' background. Hence, "adaptation, rather than assimilation, is emphasized". This paper presents an excellent example of how language learners' adapt the way that they inspire learner autonomy from Taiwanese students. Teachers provided self-assessment learning logs for students to record their learning. This acted as a reminder for students to practice English in their free time. A monthly completion deadline was also imposed because of the class sharing time. This motivated students to accomplish tasks for sharing in class. All these steps are examples of how teachers adapt and how their guidance facilitated these students to learn more autonomously. This finding echoes the findings from the studies of Lo (2010) and Yang (2003), in which the importance of teacher guidance and facilitation was emphasized. As Chan (2003, p. 510) efficiently explained, to successfully help students learn more autonomously, teachers must play diverse roles, such as "resource person", "instructor", and "facilitator".

Furthermore, through the sharing time in class, students' motivation for participation in out-of-class learning activities was sparked. Autonomous learning is occasionally viewed as individual and independent from others. However, recent studies have discussed the importance of social mediation (Ushioda, 2006), in which an autonomy-supported environment is vital for inspiring language learners' aspiration to be more autonomous. From the self-assessment learning logs, these learners were able to share out-of-class accomplishments in class. Speaking and listening in relation to their autonomous acts motivated these learners to become autonomous. This might be particularly critical in an Asian context

where students value group opinion and evaluation. As Oxford (2003) indicated, the context of how autonomy is supported is as imperative as how individuals exercise it. Recognizing this trend, Benson (2006, p. 34) called for the emergence of critical perspective on language teaching and learning as a social process, as he believes that “there should be more interaction between autonomy and sociocultural theory”. The self-assessment learning log is an attempt to create an opportunity for language learners to become more autonomous through their own behaviors coupled with interactions with their peers. Based on the learners’ comments, the attempt seems successful and the sharing act stimulated these learners’ desire to be more autonomous.

In addition, from the content in the learners’ logs, some popular out-of-class English learning activities were:

- a) Reading English magazines or websites.
- b) Listening to or singing English songs.

These two activities appeared frequently in the learning logs of numerous students. The result is similar to a study by Wu (2012), in which he indicated that the top three out-of-class activities were watching films and television, reading books, and listening to English songs. It also coincided with other studies (Chan, 2011; Hyland, 2004; Pill, 2001) which mentioned that Asian students engaged in out-of-class activities that were receptive (reading, listening) rather than productive (speaking, writing). The result was not surprising because of the popularity of the Internet and smart phones; it was easy for students to engage in receptive out-of-class English learning activities by themselves. Because activities related to receptive skills were individual-oriented, individuals felt unashamed of their English skills, whereas productive skills typically require interactions with others; hence, if students lack confidence in their English skills, they might not feel comfortable engaging in English speaking or writing activities (Hyland, 2004).

6. Conclusion

This study was used to explore language learners’ attitudes regarding out-of-class learning activities and how using self-assessment learning logs promotes their learner autonomy. Thirty non-English major college students in Southern Taiwan participated in the study. The results indicated that students maintained positive attitudes toward out-of-class learning activities, and engaging in these activities benefitted their language learning. However, to inspire them to continue, it seems critical for teachers to create opportunities for students to share accomplishments during class time. This sharing time created an autonomy-supportive environment that motivated students to continue practicing English in their own time. The balance between individuals’ participation in out-of-class activities and social interaction with peer groups was why the self-assessment learning logs were successful in promoting these learners’ autonomy. This correlates with the reports of Benson (2006, 2011) and Ushioda (2006) regarding promoting language learners’ autonomy through socially mediated processes in the classroom.

In addition, the contents of the learning logs revealed that these students enjoyed reading English magazines or websites to improve their vocabulary or reading skills and listening to English songs to improve their listening skills. This result highlighted that students engaged in out-of-class learning activities that were related to receptive skills (reading and listening), not productive skills (speaking and writing). This result was similar to studies conducted by numerous researchers, such as Chan (2011), Hyland (2004), Pill (2001), and Shen et al. (2005). Their studies regarding Chinese students in Hong Kong and Taiwan indicated that language learners worked on their reading and listening skills more regularly outside the classroom. Language teachers can spend more time on creative or enjoyable speaking and writing activities (e.g., English lyric writing competitions or English corner chat groups as suggested by Wu, 2012) in class to spark students' interest in out-of-class activities related to English speaking and writing. Teachers can also focus more on English speaking and writing during class time, considering that students have greater opportunity to improve their reading and listening skills in their free time. Overall, the research participants seemed interested in engaging in out-of-class English learning activities to improve their English, which demonstrated that they maintained positive attitudes toward learner autonomy and were becoming be autonomous learners. Using several teachers' guidance to direct them, the students' willingness to participate in out-of-class learning activities is a valuable addition to their overall English learning experience.

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Appendix A

English Learning Log Sheet

FROM ___ / ___ TO ___ / ___ NAME _____

Have I improved my English skills in the past month?

a) What have I done *outside of class* to improve my English *vocabulary* skills in the past month (e.g., learned the meaning of and *used* new words)?

b) What have I done *outside of class* to improve my English *reading* skills in the past month (e.g., read articles in an English magazine, read something online in English)?

c) What have I done *outside of class* to improve my English *grammar* skills in the past month (e.g., recognized and corrected a grammar error which I found difficult)?

d) What have I done *outside of class* to improve my English *speaking* skills in the past month (e.g., improved speaking fluency, improved conversation style, increased time talking in English outside of class)?

e) What have I done *outside of class* to improve my English *listening* skills in the past month (e.g., improved listening vocabulary, listened to various English accents, increased time listening to authentic English programs)?

Appendix B

Questionnaire (English Version)

Self-Assessment Learning Logs Questionnaire

First of all, let me thank you for your time and cooperation concerning this questionnaire. Your valuable opinion will help my research a great deal. The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore your opinions about self-assessment learning logs. The information you provide in this questionnaire is totally CONFIDENTIAL and only the researchers have access to this questionnaire. Information identifying the respondent will not be disclosed under any circumstance. Please fill out the questionnaire at ease.

During the last semester, you filled out a self-assessment learning log every 2 weeks. Please feel free to express your opinions regarding this learning log below.

(1) *Please share your thoughts when you filled out the learning logs. Please rate the following statements from 1-4 according to your true feelings.*

1 = strongly disagree;

2 = disagree;

3 = agree;

4 = strongly agree.

a) ___ Filling out the learning logs is helpful to my English learning.

b) ___ Filling out the learning logs is troublesome.

c) ___ Filling out the learning logs motivates me to do things with English in my own free time.

d) ___ Filling out the learning logs is a waste of time for me.

e) ___ I'll continue to do things I wrote in my learning logs even when I no longer take English classes.

(2) *What are some difficulties you've experienced while filling out the learning logs? Please freely share your experiences.*

(3) *What are some things you've learned from filling out the learning logs? Please freely share your experiences.*

(4) *During the class, you got a chance to share the contents of the learning logs with your classmates. Please rate the following statements from 1-4 according to your true feelings.*

1 = strongly disagree;

2 = disagree;

3 = agree;

4 = strongly agree.

- a) ___ I enjoy sharing the contents of my learning logs with my classmates.
- b) ___ I enjoy listening to my classmates talk about the contents of their learning logs.
- c) ___ I feel the sharing time is very boring. I'm not interested in what others have to say.
- d) ___ I feel the sharing time is not productive. My classmates never really share anything useful with me.
- e) ___ During the sharing time, I learned from my classmates some other things I could do to improve my own English.
- (5) *What are some things you learned from the sharing time? Please give some specific examples.*

(6) *Overall speaking, do you have any comments or suggestions regarding filling out the learning logs? Please feel free to share your ideas.*

Appendix C

Questionnaire Descriptive Statistics

Table 1. Questionnaire Descriptive Statistics

Questions	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Q1a	29	2	4	3.05	.510
Q1b	30	1	4	2.43	.746
Q1c	30	2	4	3.24	.539
Q1d	29	1	4	3.10	.700
Q1e	30	2	4	3.19	.602
Q4a	30	2	4	2.95	.384
Q4b	30	2	4	3.14	.478
Q4c	30	2	4	3.14	.573
Q4d	30	2	4	3.14	.573
Q4e	30	2	4	3.33	.577