Braving paths towards learner authonomy

Article Braving paths towards learner autonomy: make the most of your FEEL lessons! Lenore Gauchely Queries Hartmann Autonomy is understood by many as the ability to take charge of one's own learning (HOLE, 1981). According to this definition, the autonomous learner is the one who is able to take control of and be responsible for his/her learning. This includes decommissioning: when, what, and how to learn as well as how, when, and by whom to be assessed.

Developing this ability is not only a matter ofpersonality, but also a tater of the sort ofeducationand upbringing one has had. Working with autonomy in language teaching entails dealing with a number of constraints: pre-determined syllabus, students used toteacher- centered modes of teaching that value grades to the detriment of their learning, homework done because of marks, different levels ofmotivation, different learning styles, as well as different degrees of autonomy.

Furthermore, the difficulties one may encounter in measuring these degrees of autonomy must be oaken into account: students may feel like' being more autonomous on a given day rather than on another due to reasons which may not always be identifiable. Nevertheless, it is part of a teacher's Job to expose students to a variety of ways of becoming (more) autonomous, to help them discover how they learn best and how they can cope with situations which may be inevitable yet not to their liking. What sort of autonomy can be developed in FEEL classrooms?

This question can only be answered if we go beyond the lassoer settings. Learning is part of life and those who are ready to learn in all situations will

certainly always be one step ahead. Some students have an innate capacity for learning; some need stimulus and/or guidance to get started. Students should be aware of what they can do for their own learning, and how they can do it. The teacher's main concern is how to do that. Ourresponsibilitytowards students is so enormous that becoming aware of this fact is of great importance.