

Evidence-Based Learning (EBL)
The Eight Key EBL Skills

Key EBL Skill 8
Independent Learning



A
15-minute
Teacher Guide

1

This resource first outlines the benefits of developing independent learning in the classroom.

2

This resource then has research that supports using independent learning in the classroom.

Our review of over 200 educational research papers identified eight key thinking and learning skills that have been found in common across this research

Our two-year research review identified these eight key thinking and learning skills:

- Collaborative skills
- Thinking skills
- Peer teaching skills
- Peer assessment
- Self-assessment
- Metacognition
- Self-regulation
- Independent learning

some of these eight skills are needed in different combinations



to develop 21st Century thinking and learning skills



Our two-year research review also identified three key 21st century thinking and learning skills:

- Creative Thinking
- Critical Thinking
- Problem Solving



these three skills need combinations of the skills above

A definition of Independent Learning



Independent learning takes place when learners (and sometimes owls) set goals for their learning and then monitor and evaluate their progress towards these goals.

A definition of an independent learner

Independent learning is a learning process where learners have ownership and control of their own learning.

The independent learner is able to set goals, make choices, and take decisions about how to meet their learning goals.

They will then monitor their progress toward achieving their learning goals, and self-assess the learning outcomes.

*Independent Learning - Livingstone 2012 - Springer Link
Encyclopedia of the Sciences of Learning - link.springer.com*

After all that, they might then need a nap.



Independent learners set their own learning goals



Independent learning is an approach to learning where pupils are given responsibility for their own learning goals, motivations, and development.

It's an important skill to learn and improve upon, developing vital characteristics that pupils will need during higher education and in the workplace.

Independent learners are problem-solvers



Two studies suggested that independent learners work to higher standards, are more motivated and have higher self-esteem.

These learners develop skills that help them further their own learning by using their own ideas to form opinions; solve problems and use a range of strategies in their learning.

*What is independent learning and what are the benefits for students?
Meyer et al 2008 - www.curee.co.uk*

Independent learning takes place when pupils set learning goals, monitor and evaluate their progress towards these goals, and manage their motivation so that these goals are achieved.



Independent learning is a learning process where learners have ownership and control of their learning. Independent learners direct, regulate, and assess their own learning.

An independent learner is able to set goals, make choices, and take decisions about how to meet their learning goals.

Independent learners will take responsibility for their own learning; they will monitor their progress toward achieving their learning goals, and self-assess their learning outcomes.

*How to Become an Independent Learner 2022 - Inner Drive
blog.innerdrive.co.uk*

The road towards independence is often a long and rocky one



Independent learning is not about letting pupils work alone. It is about assisting pupils to develop skills which will help them to become good learners, for them to take responsibility for their learning and for them to be able to apply these skills to any new learning situation.

The road towards independence is often a long and rocky one and learners need considerable support. Teachers should not to try to achieve too much too soon and should not be too hard on themselves if they don't see an immediate change in their pupils.

Learners will need support from others to move from dependent to independent learner

Self-directed, self-motivated and capable of learning without a teacher...

If that doesn't describe me in a nutshell!



One accepted understanding of learner independence is that it ranges across a continuum.

At one end there are dependent learners who have had little opportunity to develop independent learning skills, and at the other end of the continuum there are learners who are self-directed, self-motivated and capable of learning without a teacher.

Good learners can move gradually along the continuum with the help of peers, parents, teachers and appropriate learning experiences.

Independent Learning in your Classroom - Mynard & Sorflaten
STUDYLIB - studylib.net

Dependent or Independent Learner?

Dependent Learners...

like to work when extrinsic motivators
such as grades or rewards are offered



Dependent learners do not reflect on how well they are learning and they cannot identify if they are making progress.

They think that the teacher is wholly responsible for their learning and have no strategies of their own for learning.

Dependent or Independent Learner?

Independent Learners...

are self-motivated and self-driven



There can sometimes be a misconception that independent learning is working in isolation, with no guidance or support. This isn't the case.

Being an independent learner is about taking responsibility for your learning, being self-motivated and being self-driven.

Independent learners...

reflect on the progress they are making and they are aware of what they still need to do

I can nearly say **who's**
I have just got to learn
to say **a pretty boy then**
and then I can apply to
go on *Parrots got Talent*



Independent learners take responsibility for their own learning, they know how to learn and they are aware of different strategies for learning.

Independent learners are intrinsically motivated by making progress in learning.

Independent learning has three key facets



1

The learner has the self-regulation skills to learn on their own.

2

The responsibility for the learning shifts from the teacher to the learner as the learner becomes more active in their learning.

3

The learner is in an environment that enables them to take responsibility for their learning.

Independent learners need to go through these three stages



Stage 1

they must become self-regulated learners



Stage 2

they must become more active in their learning



Stage 3

they must take more responsibility for their learning

Independent learning depends on “internal and external” factors

Internal



The learner develops the skills necessary for them to learn on their own.

The learner uses these skills to take responsibility for their own learning.

External



The learner is in an enabling environment that encourages them to take responsibility for their learning.

The benefits of independent learning include:



- Improved academic performance.
- Increased motivation and confidence.
- Greater pupil awareness of their own limitations and their ability to manage them.

Teachers need to develop the skills for independent learning in learners

An independent learner is a learner who takes the lead in their own learning.

Strategies for Teaching Independent Learners - study.com



Independent learning is about learners:

- Evaluating their use of time.
- Setting their own goals and deadlines.
- Organising themselves and their work.

*Independent learning and the expert learner
The Quality Improvement Agency for Lifelong Learning (QIA) 2008
www.excellencegateway.org.uk*

A definition of Independent Learning



Independent learning is a way of learning in which learners have control and ownership of their learning. Independent learners are able to regulate, direct, and evaluate their own learning.

An independent learner can make informed choices, set goals, and make decisions about how to fulfil their learning objectives.

In addition, an independent learner takes responsibility for their learning.

- **During** the learning, they will monitor their progress toward accomplishing their learning goals.
- **After** the learning, they will self-assess the outcomes of the learning.

Developing Independent Learners



In every lesson, there will be moments when the teacher needs to stand at the front of the room and address the whole class. Although sometimes necessary, these periods of teacher talk should be kept to a minimum, allowing for other forms of engagement that require greater levels of independence.

Here are three alternatives to extended teacher talk:

- Hand out the information that you would have talked pupils through. Ask pupils to work in pairs to analyse the information and to produce three headlines or a summary paragraph explaining what it is about.
- Time yourself as you talk, allowing no more than five minutes to give pupils the big picture. Once you have finished speaking, ask pupils to predict what the rest of the lesson will be about and to discuss their predictions with a partner.
- Instead of introducing the topic through talk, throw pupils straight into a task, explaining that the purpose is to challenge them and to help them to predict what might be coming next.

Summary

Dependent learners...

- Rely heavily on the teacher.
- Cannot make decisions about their learning.
- Are unaware of their strengths or weaknesses.
- Do not connect learning with the real world.
- Do not know the best way to learn something.
- Do not set learning goals.

Independent learners...

- Are self-reliant learners.
- Make informed decisions about their learning.
- Are aware of their strengths and weaknesses.
- Connect classroom learning with the real world.
- Plan their learning before they start work.
- Set learning goals.

The following pages have evidence-based quotes on independent learning.



These extracts can be used for teacher CPD on independent learning.

Evidence on Independent Learning 1



Independent learning is “one the most important skills that a pupil can learn”

Being able to think and act independently remains one of the most important skills that a pupil can learn.

Failure to prepare pupils for the demands of a world where teachers will not be available to provide all the answers is to do them a great disservice.

Evidence on Independent Learning 2



“Every teacher’s dream...”

It’s every teacher’s dream to have a class full of learners who are motivated, confident and, most importantly, independent. Learning, as we know, never stops, and goes well beyond the classroom. As a teacher, my aim was always to build life-long learners.

Independence is a powerful tool that can help to enhance skills and encourage pupils to want to learn without the constant need for validation.

When children explore and develop a sense of inquisitiveness without adult intervention, their learning becomes much more meaningful; therefore, it’s more likely to stay in their long term memory.

*How to promote independent learning in the primary classroom
Patel - April 2022 - doodle - doodlelearning.com*

Evidence on Independent Learning 3



Independent learners have...

- Self-motivation and self-esteem
- Independent judgment
- Respect for peers
- Self-discipline
- Enjoyment of challenges
- Active rather than passive learning
- Good communication skills
- Work of a higher standard
- Greater social skills

Evidence on Independent Learning 4



Independent learning needs to be scaffolded

Scaffolding refers to the supportive structure provided by teachers, which aids pupils in their learning.

The objective is the gradual transfer of responsibility from the teacher to the pupil step-by-step, the teacher responding flexibly to pupils' responses rather than following a predetermined teaching path.