

Learner autonomy, agency, and critical thinking

What is it about?

Plurilingual and intercultural education considers learners as social agents who are empowered through the development of the following abilities:

Learner autonomy: the ability to take charge of one's own learning, identifying needs, setting goals, planning learning, managing their study and monitoring results, all in a process of learning to learn.

Learner agency: the willingness and ability to make choices, take and act on decisions, evaluate their outcomes and, as a result, reflect and self-regulate.

Critical thinking: the ability to analyse, evaluate, and interpret information logically and objectively. It involves questioning assumptions, considering different perspectives, and making reasoned judgments to solve problems or understand complex ideas.

Why is this important and what can be done?

These abilities help learners to act in the social world and exert agency in the learning process by exploiting all available linguistic resources in order to communicate and co-construct meaning in interaction.

Curriculum and teaching approaches should prioritise individual and collective agency, promoting learner autonomy and critical thinking. Activities should encourage learners to utilise their language skills to set goals, organise learning tasks, and evaluate outcomes. Collaborative, action-oriented projects can enhance this learning experience, helping learners create artifacts or performances. As social agents they become effective language learners, prepared for lifelong learning and active participation in democratic culture. (See Explanatory Memorandum 5.b.xiii-xiv).

For guidance on related Council of Europe resources, please refer to the full [Toolbox Entry](#)