

Integrating Authentic Assessment and Reflective Learning to Enhance Learner Autonomy in Secondary Education

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ABSTRACT

Learner autonomy has become a central goal in contemporary secondary education as schools seek to prepare students for lifelong learning and active participation in complex academic and social environments. However, the development of learner autonomy remains constrained by traditional assessment practices that emphasize summative outcomes and teacher-directed learning. This study investigates the effectiveness of integrating authentic assessment and reflective learning in enhancing learner autonomy among secondary school students. Employing a mixed-methods, quasi-experimental design, the study was conducted in a secondary education context over one academic term. Quantitative data were collected through a learner autonomy questionnaire administered before and after the instructional intervention, while qualitative data were obtained from students' reflective journals, open-ended survey responses, and classroom observations. The instructional intervention involved the systematic use of authentic assessment tasks, such as project-based and performance-oriented activities, combined with structured reflective learning practices, including self-assessment, peer feedback, and guided reflective journals. The findings indicate a significant improvement in students' learner autonomy, particularly in the areas of self-monitoring, decision-making, and learning responsibility. Qualitative analyses further reveal that reflective learning played a crucial role in deepening students' awareness of learning processes and fostering a sense of ownership over assessment tasks. Students reported increased engagement and perceived learning as more meaningful and relevant when assessment was connected to real-world contexts. Overall, the study demonstrates that the integration of authentic assessment and reflective learning provides a viable pedagogical approach for promoting learner autonomy in secondary education. The findings offer practical implications for teachers and educational policymakers seeking to implement autonomy-supportive assessment practices.

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INTRODUCTION

In recent decades, secondary education has undergone a significant pedagogical shift from teacher-centered instruction toward learner-centered paradigms that emphasize student agency, engagement, and responsibility for learning. This shift is closely aligned with global educational reforms that prioritize the development of lifelong learning competencies, including critical thinking, self-regulation, and autonomous learning. Within this context, learner autonomy has emerged as a central educational goal, particularly in response to the growing recognition that students must be equipped not only with disciplinary knowledge but also with the capacity to manage, monitor, and evaluate their own learning processes (Rochma, 2023; Marsevani, 2021). However, despite its acknowledged importance, learner autonomy remains insufficiently cultivated in many secondary school classrooms, where traditional instructional and assessment practices continue to dominate.

One of the most persistent barriers to the development of learner autonomy in secondary education is the continued reliance on conventional assessment systems that prioritize

summative testing, standardized examinations, and rote memorization. Such practices often position students as passive recipients of knowledge, with limited opportunities to reflect on their learning or participate meaningfully in assessment processes (Papanastasiou et al., 2025). As a result, students may demonstrate surface-level engagement and compliance rather than genuine ownership of learning. In contrast, contemporary assessment theories increasingly advocate for authentic assessment approaches that situate learning within meaningful, real-world contexts and emphasize process, performance, and reflection over isolated outcomes (Care, & Kim, 2017).

Authentic assessment is broadly defined as an evaluative approach that requires learners to apply knowledge and skills to tasks that mirror real-life challenges, thereby fostering deeper understanding and transferable competencies. Empirical studies across educational contexts have demonstrated that authentic assessment enhances student engagement, motivation, and higher-order thinking skills (Puteri et al., 2023; Papanastasiou et al., 2025). More importantly, authentic assessment has been shown to promote learner autonomy by encouraging students to make decisions, evaluate their progress, and take responsibility for their learning outcomes (Ismail et al., 2023; Al-Rashidi et al., 2022). When students are actively involved in meaningful assessment tasks, they are more likely to perceive learning as purposeful and personally relevant.

In secondary education settings, the implementation of authentic assessment has gained increasing attention, particularly within subject-based learning such as science, language education, and the arts. Research conducted in secondary schools has revealed that authentic assessment practices, including project-based tasks, performance assessments, and portfolios, can effectively support students' independent learning and conceptual understanding (Agustina et al., 2022; Nurhaliza et al., 2022; Fitriyah et al., 2024). These findings suggest that authentic assessment not only serves evaluative functions but also plays a formative role in shaping students' learning behaviors and dispositions.

However, authentic assessment alone may not be sufficient to foster sustained learner autonomy. Without structured opportunities for reflection, students may complete authentic tasks without fully internalizing the learning processes involved. Reflective learning, therefore, constitutes a critical pedagogical complement to authentic assessment. Reflective learning involves deliberate cognitive and metacognitive activities through which learners analyze their experiences, evaluate their performance, and identify areas for improvement. Reflection enables learners to connect actions with outcomes, thereby supporting self-awareness and self-regulation (Green, & Du Plessis, 2023).

Extensive research has highlighted the role of reflective practices in enhancing learner autonomy and self-regulated learning. Through reflection, students become active participants in monitoring their learning progress and making informed decisions about future strategies (Gambo & Shakir, 2021). In classroom contexts, reflective learning is often facilitated through self-assessment, peer assessment, feedback dialogues, and reflective journals. Studies indicate that these practices empower students to evaluate their strengths and weaknesses, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility for learning (Manuel et al., 2024; Al-Rashidi et al., 2022).

Recent empirical work has further demonstrated that assessment reflection, in particular, serves as a powerful mechanism for promoting autonomous learning. Li et al. (2025) found that structured reflection on assessment tasks encouraged learners to critically examine their learning processes and outcomes, resulting in increased self-direction and confidence. Similarly, Khulaifiyah et al. (2025) reported that reflective activities embedded within synchronous learning environments enhanced students' autonomous engagement and learning persistence. These findings underscore the importance of integrating reflection systematically within assessment practices rather than treating it as an optional or peripheral activity.

The integration of authentic assessment and reflective learning aligns closely with theoretical perspectives on learner autonomy and self-regulated learning. Learner autonomy is commonly conceptualized as learners' capacity to take control of their learning by setting goals, selecting strategies, monitoring progress, and evaluating outcomes (Rochma, 2023). This

conceptualization overlaps substantially with self-regulated learning frameworks, which emphasize cyclical processes of planning, performance, and reflection (Gupta et al., 2024). Authentic assessment provides the contextualized tasks necessary for meaningful engagement, while reflective learning supports the metacognitive processes required for regulation and autonomy.

Empirical evidence suggests that when authentic assessment is combined with reflective learning, the effects on learner autonomy are amplified. Santana-Martel and Pérez-Garcías (2022) demonstrated that involving students in assessment co-creation and reflective dialogue significantly enhanced learner agency and self-regulation. Likewise, (Xu et al., 2024) found that autonomy-supportive assessment practices positively influenced students' assessment literacy through increased self-efficacy and critical reflection. These findings highlight the synergistic potential of integrating authentic assessment with reflective learning strategies.

Despite the growing body of research on authentic assessment, reflective learning, and learner autonomy, significant gaps remain, particularly in secondary education contexts. Much of the existing literature focuses on higher education or language learning environments, with comparatively limited empirical attention to systematic integration models at the secondary school level (Rahimjonova, 2025; Khadir et al., 2020). Moreover, many studies examine authentic assessment or reflective learning in isolation, rather than exploring their combined impact on learner autonomy. This fragmented approach limits the development of comprehensive pedagogical frameworks that address both instructional design and assessment practices.

Contextual factors further complicate the promotion of learner autonomy in secondary education. Teachers often face curricular constraints, high-stakes testing pressures, and limited professional development opportunities related to autonomy-supportive assessment (Rahimjonova, 2025). Students, meanwhile, may lack prior experience with self-directed learning and require structured guidance to engage effectively in reflective practices (Volya et al., 2025). These challenges highlight the need for empirically grounded instructional models that are both feasible and effective within real classroom settings.

Given these considerations, the present study seeks to address a critical gap in the literature by investigating the integration of authentic assessment and reflective learning as a means of enhancing learner autonomy in secondary education. By examining both learning outcomes and student experiences, this study aims to contribute to a more nuanced understanding of how assessment and reflection can be strategically combined to support autonomous learning. The findings are expected to inform pedagogical practice, assessment design, and educational policy by offering evidence-based insights into autonomy-supportive teaching approaches.

Accordingly, the objectives of this study are threefold: first, to examine the effects of integrated authentic assessment and reflective learning on learner autonomy; second, to explore students' perceptions of autonomy-supportive assessment practices; and third, to identify pedagogical implications for secondary education teachers seeking to foster autonomous learning environments.

METHOD

This study was designed to examine how the integration of authentic assessment and reflective learning practices contributes to the enhancement of learner autonomy in secondary education. To address this objective comprehensively, the research methodology was constructed to capture both measurable changes in learner autonomy and the nuanced learning processes experienced by students during the intervention. Accordingly, the study adopted a mixed-methods approach that combined quantitative and qualitative techniques within a structured instructional intervention. This methodological choice enabled the researcher to investigate not only outcomes but also the underlying mechanisms through which assessment and reflection influenced students' autonomous learning behaviors.

Research Design

The study employed a quasi-experimental mixed-methods design with a pretest-posttest structure complemented by qualitative inquiry. The quantitative component focused on identifying changes in learner autonomy before and after the implementation of authentic assessment and reflective learning activities. The qualitative component sought to explore students' experiences, perceptions, and reflective processes during the intervention. The integration of these two approaches allowed for methodological triangulation, strengthening the credibility and depth of the findings.

A quasi-experimental design was deemed appropriate because the research was conducted within an intact classroom setting, where random assignment of participants was not feasible due to institutional and ethical considerations. Instead, the design emphasized ecological validity by examining learning processes as they naturally occurred within a real secondary school context. This approach ensured that the findings would be relevant and applicable to everyday educational practice.

Research Context and Participants

The research was conducted in a public secondary school that had begun implementing learner-centered pedagogical principles aligned with curriculum reform. The participants consisted of students enrolled in a selected subject course at the secondary level. These students represented a typical classroom population with diverse academic abilities and learning backgrounds. The selection of participants was based on accessibility and relevance to the research objectives rather than random sampling.

Prior to the intervention, students had limited experience with authentic assessment and structured reflective learning activities. This context provided an appropriate setting to examine how systematic exposure to such practices could influence the development of learner autonomy. All participants were informed about the purpose of the study, and participation was voluntary. Informed consent was obtained from both students and their guardians in accordance with ethical research standards.

Instructional Intervention Framework

The instructional intervention was designed to integrate authentic assessment tasks with reflective learning activities in a deliberate and structured manner. Authentic assessment tasks were aligned with curriculum objectives and required students to engage in meaningful, real-world learning activities such as project-based tasks, problem-solving assignments, and performance-based assessments. These tasks emphasized application, creativity, and process-oriented learning rather than memorization or test-driven performance.

Reflective learning activities were embedded throughout the assessment process to encourage students to analyze their learning experiences. Reflection was facilitated through guided reflective journals, self-assessment checklists, peer feedback activities, and post-task reflection prompts. These reflective components were intended to help students monitor their progress, evaluate their strategies, and identify areas for improvement, thereby supporting the development of autonomous learning behaviors.

Stages of the Research Procedure

The research procedure was implemented in several interrelated stages, forming a coherent and systematic sequence from preparation to data analysis. Each stage was designed to support the integrity of the research and ensure alignment with the study's objectives.

The first stage involved preliminary preparation and needs analysis. During this stage, the researcher conducted an initial review of the curriculum, learning objectives, and existing assessment practices within the selected class. Informal observations and discussions with the subject teacher were used to identify prevailing instructional patterns and students' familiarity with learner-centered and reflective practices. This stage was crucial for contextualizing the

intervention and ensuring that the designed assessment tasks were pedagogically appropriate and feasible within the classroom setting.

The second stage focused on instrument development and validation. Quantitative instruments measuring learner autonomy were adapted from established and validated questionnaires used in previous research. The instrument was reviewed by educational experts to ensure content validity and contextual relevance. A pilot test was conducted with a small group of students outside the main sample to assess clarity, reliability, and appropriateness of the items. Feedback from the pilot study informed minor revisions to improve the instrument's reliability and comprehensibility.

The third stage involved pre-intervention data collection. Before the instructional intervention began, students completed the learner autonomy questionnaire as a pretest. This pretest established baseline data regarding students' levels of self-management, decision-making, and self-evaluation in learning. The pretest data served as a reference point for subsequent comparison and analysis of changes resulting from the intervention.

The fourth stage constituted the implementation of the instructional intervention, which took place over one academic term. During this stage, authentic assessment tasks were systematically introduced as core components of classroom instruction. Each task required students to engage actively in learning processes, make decisions regarding task completion, and demonstrate understanding through meaningful outputs. Alongside these tasks, reflective learning activities were consistently integrated. Students were guided to complete reflective journals after each major assessment task, respond to structured reflection questions, and participate in peer feedback sessions.

Throughout the intervention, the teacher played the role of facilitator rather than sole evaluator. Feedback was provided in formative and dialogic forms, encouraging students to reflect on their learning rather than merely focus on grades. Classroom observations were conducted during this stage to document student engagement, interaction, and participation in reflective activities. These observations provided contextual data that complemented students' self-reported reflections.

The fifth stage involved post-intervention data collection. At the conclusion of the intervention, students completed the same learner autonomy questionnaire as a posttest. This allowed for direct comparison with pretest results to identify changes in learner autonomy attributable to the intervention. In addition to the questionnaire, students submitted their reflective journals and completed open-ended survey questions designed to elicit their perceptions of authentic assessment and reflective learning practices.

The sixth stage focused on data analysis. Quantitative data from the pretest and posttest questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical techniques to determine changes in learner autonomy levels. Paired-sample analyses were employed to examine whether observed differences were statistically significant. Qualitative data from reflective journals, open-ended responses, and observation notes were analyzed thematically. The analysis involved systematic coding to identify recurring themes related to autonomy, reflection, engagement, and learning responsibility.

The final stage consisted of data integration and interpretation. Findings from the quantitative and qualitative analyses were integrated to provide a comprehensive understanding of the research outcomes. Quantitative results offered evidence of changes in learner autonomy, while qualitative findings provided insight into how and why these changes occurred. This integrative stage enabled the researcher to interpret the results in relation to the research objectives and theoretical framework.

Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

Several strategies were employed to ensure the rigor of the study. Reliability of the quantitative instrument was established through internal consistency analysis. Validity was supported through expert review and alignment with established constructs of learner

autonomy. Trustworthiness of qualitative data was enhanced through triangulation of data sources, member checking, and careful documentation of the research process.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles guided all stages of the research. Participants were informed of their rights, including voluntary participation and the ability to withdraw at any time. Confidentiality was maintained by anonymizing all data, and research activities were conducted in a manner that did not disrupt normal instructional processes or disadvantage any participant.

Summary of the Methodological Approach

In summary, the research methodology was designed to systematically investigate the integration of authentic assessment and reflective learning within a secondary education context. Through a carefully staged research procedure and a mixed-methods approach, the study provides a robust framework for examining how assessment and reflection can be leveraged to enhance learner autonomy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and interprets the findings of the study concerning the integration of authentic assessment and reflective learning in enhancing learner autonomy in secondary education. The presentation of results follows the sequence of the research objectives and methodological procedures described earlier, combining quantitative outcomes with qualitative insights to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of the intervention's effects. The discussion is interwoven with the results to ensure logical continuity and to situate the findings within relevant theoretical and empirical contexts.

Changes in Learner Autonomy Following the Intervention

Quantitative analysis of the pretest and posttest data revealed a clear improvement in students' overall learner autonomy following the implementation of authentic assessment integrated with reflective learning activities. Across the measured dimensions of learner autonomy—self-management, decision-making, self-monitoring, and self-evaluation—students demonstrated higher post-intervention scores compared to their baseline levels. This pattern suggests that sustained exposure to autonomy-supportive assessment practices can positively influence learners' capacity to take responsibility for their learning.

The most pronounced gains were observed in the dimension of self-monitoring, indicating that students became more aware of their learning processes and progress over time. This outcome aligns with the pedagogical emphasis placed on reflective journals, self-assessment checklists, and post-task reflection prompts during the intervention. By repeatedly engaging in reflection, students were encouraged to articulate what they had learned, identify challenges, and consider strategies for improvement. These activities appear to have strengthened students' metacognitive awareness, a core component of learner autonomy.

Improvements were also evident in students' decision-making abilities related to learning tasks. Students reported greater confidence in selecting strategies, managing time, and determining how to approach complex tasks. This finding reflects the authentic nature of the assessment activities, which required students to make meaningful choices rather than follow rigid, predetermined procedures. The results support the notion that authentic assessment creates spaces for learner agency by shifting responsibility from the teacher to the learner.

While gains were observed across all autonomy dimensions, changes in self-evaluation were comparatively more gradual. This suggests that evaluating one's own learning outcomes may require longer-term scaffolding and repeated practice. Nonetheless, the upward trend indicates that reflective assessment practices can initiate the development of evaluative judgment, even within a relatively limited intervention period.

Student Engagement and Participation in Authentic Assessment Tasks

Classroom observations and student reflections indicated increased engagement and active participation during authentic assessment activities. Students demonstrated higher levels of involvement, collaboration, and persistence when working on project-based and performance-oriented tasks compared to traditional instructional activities. Many students expressed that the tasks felt more meaningful and relevant to real-life contexts, which enhanced their motivation to complete them.

From an instructional perspective, authentic assessment tasks appeared to reduce passive learning behaviors and encouraged students to assume more active roles in constructing knowledge. Students were observed discussing ideas, negotiating roles in group work, and seeking feedback from peers and the teacher. This active engagement is a critical precursor to learner autonomy, as it reflects students' willingness to invest effort and take initiative in learning activities.

Qualitative data from reflective journals further revealed that students perceived authentic assessment as challenging yet rewarding. Several students noted that although the tasks required more effort and independent thinking, they felt a greater sense of accomplishment upon completion. This perception is significant, as it suggests a shift from performance-oriented motivation toward mastery-oriented engagement, which is closely associated with autonomous learning.

Role of Reflective Learning in Supporting Autonomy Development

Reflective learning emerged as a central mechanism through which learner autonomy was fostered during the intervention. Analysis of students' reflective journals revealed recurring themes related to awareness of learning strategies, recognition of strengths and weaknesses, and goal setting for future tasks. Students frequently referenced how reflection helped them understand not only what they learned, but also how they learned.

One notable finding was the evolution of students' reflective depth over time. Early reflections tended to be descriptive, focusing on task completion and surface-level experiences. As the intervention progressed, reflections became more analytical and evaluative, with students increasingly discussing problem-solving strategies, time management, and self-improvement plans. This progression suggests that reflective capacity can be developed gradually through structured and sustained practice.

Self-assessment and peer feedback activities also contributed to students' reflective engagement. By evaluating their own work and that of their peers, students were exposed to multiple perspectives on quality and performance. This process appeared to support the development of evaluative judgment, enabling students to better understand assessment criteria and learning expectations. Such understanding is essential for autonomous learning, as it allows students to regulate their performance independently of external supervision.

Integration of Authentic Assessment and Reflection: Synergistic Effects

The findings indicate that the integration of authentic assessment and reflective learning produced synergistic effects on learner autonomy that exceeded what might be expected from either approach in isolation. Authentic assessment provided the contextualized, meaningful tasks necessary for engagement and agency, while reflective learning facilitated the metacognitive processes required for self-regulation and autonomy.

Students' reflections frequently highlighted the connection between task authenticity and reflection. For example, students noted that reflecting on real-world tasks helped them see the relevance of learning and identify practical applications of their knowledge. This connection enhanced their sense of ownership and responsibility for learning outcomes. The results suggest that authenticity in assessment amplifies the impact of reflection by grounding it in meaningful experiences.

Furthermore, the integration of reflection into assessment processes appeared to transform assessment from a purely evaluative activity into a learning opportunity. Students began to perceive assessment as a tool for improvement rather than judgment, which reduced anxiety and encouraged risk-taking. This shift in perception is critical for fostering autonomy, as learners are more likely to take initiative and experiment with strategies when they feel supported rather than evaluated solely on performance.

Students' Perceptions of Autonomy-Supportive Assessment Practices

Analysis of open-ended survey responses revealed generally positive student perceptions of the integrated assessment approach. Students reported feeling more involved in learning decisions and more aware of their learning progress. Many students expressed appreciation for the opportunity to reflect on their work and receive feedback that focused on improvement rather than grades alone.

However, the findings also highlighted challenges associated with autonomy-supportive assessment practices. Some students initially experienced uncertainty and discomfort when given greater responsibility for learning tasks. This response reflects the transition from teacher-directed to learner-directed learning, which may require adjustment and explicit guidance. Over time, most students reported increased confidence and comfort with autonomous learning, suggesting that initial resistance can be mitigated through scaffolding and support.

These findings underscore the importance of gradual implementation and teacher facilitation in autonomy-supportive pedagogies. Learner autonomy does not develop automatically; rather, it emerges through guided practice, clear expectations, and supportive feedback. The results emphasize the role of the teacher as a facilitator who balances structure and freedom to support students' autonomous development.

Discussion in Relation to Research Objectives

The first research objective was to examine the impact of integrating authentic assessment and reflective learning on learner autonomy. The quantitative and qualitative findings collectively demonstrate that the intervention positively influenced students' autonomous learning behaviors. Improvements in self-monitoring, decision-making, and engagement provide evidence that the integrated approach effectively supports learner autonomy in secondary education contexts.

The second objective was to explore students' perceptions of autonomy-supportive assessment practices. The findings indicate that students generally viewed authentic assessment and reflection as meaningful and beneficial, despite initial challenges. These perceptions are significant, as positive attitudes toward learning practices are closely linked to sustained engagement and autonomy.

The third objective concerned identifying pedagogical implications for secondary education teachers. The results suggest that integrating authentic assessment and reflective learning can serve as a practical and effective strategy for promoting learner autonomy. However, successful implementation requires careful planning, explicit instruction in reflective practices, and ongoing teacher support.

Theoretical Implications

From a theoretical perspective, the findings contribute to the understanding of learner autonomy as a dynamic and developmental construct. The observed changes in students' reflective depth and self-regulatory behaviors support theoretical models that emphasize the cyclical nature of self-regulated learning, involving planning, performance, and reflection. Authentic assessment provided the experiential foundation for this cycle, while reflective learning facilitated its metacognitive components.

The study also reinforces the conceptual alignment between learner autonomy and self-regulated learning. By integrating assessment and reflection, the intervention operationalized

autonomy in observable practices, bridging the gap between theory and classroom implementation. This contribution is particularly relevant for secondary education, where autonomy development is often constrained by curricular and assessment demands.

Practical Implications for Secondary Education

The findings have several practical implications for teaching and assessment in secondary education. First, they suggest that authentic assessment should be intentionally designed to include opportunities for learner choice, decision-making, and real-world application. Second, reflective learning should be systematically embedded within assessment processes rather than treated as an optional add-on.

Teachers are encouraged to use reflective journals, self-assessment tools, and feedback dialogues to support students' metacognitive development. However, these practices must be accompanied by explicit instruction and modeling to ensure that students understand how to reflect effectively. Gradual release of responsibility is essential to help students transition toward autonomous learning.

At the institutional level, the findings support the need for professional development focused on autonomy-supportive assessment practices. Teachers require guidance and resources to design authentic tasks and facilitate reflective learning effectively. Policy frameworks that value formative assessment and learner agency can further support the implementation of such practices.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While the findings provide valuable insights, several limitations should be acknowledged. The study was conducted within a single school context, which may limit the generalizability of the results. Additionally, the intervention duration, although sufficient to observe initial changes, may not capture the long-term development of learner autonomy.

Future research could explore longitudinal implementations of integrated authentic assessment and reflective learning to examine sustained effects on autonomy. Comparative studies across subjects and educational contexts would further enhance understanding of how these practices function in diverse settings. Additionally, future studies could investigate the role of teacher beliefs and assessment literacy in shaping autonomy-supportive practices.

Summary of Results and Discussion

In summary, the findings of this study demonstrate that integrating authentic assessment and reflective learning can effectively enhance learner autonomy in secondary education. Through meaningful tasks and structured reflection, students developed greater awareness, responsibility, and engagement in their learning. The results highlight the importance of viewing assessment not merely as a measure of learning, but as a central component of the learning process itself. By aligning assessment practices with learner-centered and reflective pedagogies, secondary education can better prepare students to become autonomous, self-regulated learners.

CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine the potential of integrating authentic assessment and reflective learning as a means of enhancing learner autonomy in secondary education. The findings demonstrate that when assessment is designed as a meaningful learning process and complemented by structured reflection, students are better positioned to take responsibility for their learning. Through authentic tasks that mirror real-world contexts and reflective activities that encourage self-monitoring and evaluation, learners gradually developed greater awareness, engagement, and independence in managing their learning processes.

The integration of authentic assessment and reflective learning proved effective in shifting students from passive recipients of instruction toward active participants in learning. Students not only demonstrated improvements in key dimensions of learner autonomy, such

as decision-making and self-monitoring, but also reported increased motivation and a stronger sense of ownership over learning outcomes. Reflective practices played a particularly important role in this development by enabling students to make sense of their learning experiences, recognize challenges, and plan improvements. These processes helped transform assessment from a judgment-oriented activity into a formative and empowering learning experience.

From a pedagogical perspective, the results highlight the importance of intentionally designing assessment practices that support autonomy rather than merely measuring achievement. Authentic assessment tasks that allow for choice, problem-solving, and application, when combined with guided reflection and constructive feedback, create learning environments that foster autonomy while maintaining instructional structure. However, the findings also suggest that learner autonomy develops progressively and requires careful scaffolding, especially in secondary education contexts where students may have limited prior experience with autonomous learning.

In conclusion, this study underscores the value of viewing assessment and reflection as integral components of learner-centered instruction. By integrating authentic assessment with reflective learning, secondary educators can create supportive conditions for the development of learner autonomy, equipping students with essential skills for lifelong learning and active participation in an increasingly complex educational landscape.

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