SHORT ARTICLES | 小論

Supporting Learners Through Dialogue Within and Beyond the Classroom
教室内外における対話を通した学習者のサポート

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Abstract
The purpose of this short article is to give a brief overview of some of the themes that I will explore in my talk at The Independent Learning Association conference in Kobe in September. I will briefly explain what I mean by advising, touch on some of its merits, and give examples of how it can be enacted in practice both inside and outside the classroom.

Keywords: advising, reflective dialogue, learner autonomy, language learning

概要
本稿は、2018年９月に神戸で開催される学会The Independent Learning Association Conferenceにおいて発表するテーマの概要を述べるものである。学習アドバイジングで行われる対話の意義、およびその利点に触れると共に、こうした対話がいかにして教室の内外で活用できるかにつき、いくつかの例を挙げて紹介をする。

キーワード：アドバイジング、内省的な対話 、学習者の自律性、言語学習

One of the most significant ways that educators can support language learners is through dialogue. Although dialogue can take many forms, I am particularly interested in what has been termed *advising in language learning* (ALL) (Mynard & Carson, 2012). ALL is normally a one-to-one interaction with learners which has the purpose of promoting learner autonomy. Drawing on a sociocultural view of learning (Lantolf, 2000), learning advisors and researchers have argued that this kind of discourse can have a powerful effect on learners by helping them to activate deep reflection on learning (Kato, 2012; Kato & Mynard, 2015). Unlike regular conversation, Esch (1996) notes that advising is a "system of interventions which aims at supporting students' methodology of language learning by means of 'conversations', i.e., by using language in the framework of social interaction to help students reflect on their learning experience, identify inconsistencies and steer their own path" (Esch, 1996, p. 42). Colleagues at the University of Helsinki in Finland also explore how the dialogue is connected with identity construction; i.e., advising dialogue gives learners opportunities "to find and strengthen their learner voices and explore their learner

identities" (Karlsson, 2012, p. 188). Having the opportunity to reflect deeply and discuss learning with an advisor provides opportunities for these kinds of explorations.

Although this might be overly simplistic, an advising session might look something like Figure 1. The left-hand column shows pertinent areas of focus that a learning advisor helps a learner to navigate, and the right-hand column shows some of the discursive advising strategies that a learning advisor might draw upon in order to help a learner reflect deeply.
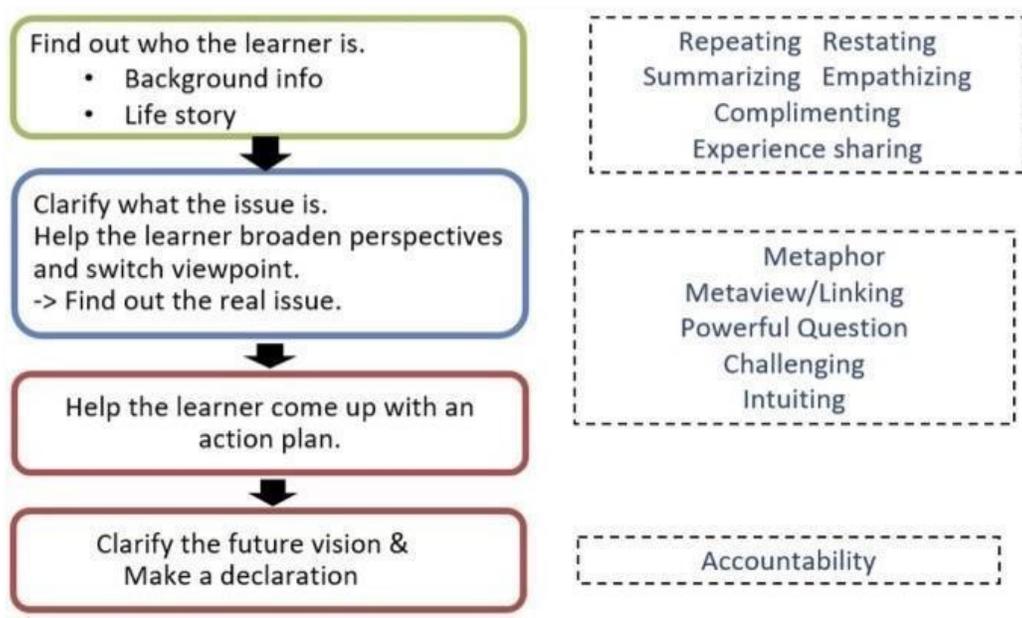

Figure 1. Example Structure of an Advising Session (Kato & Yamashita, 2015)

Engaging Learners in Reflective Dialogue

There are various ways in which we can engage learners in reflective dialogue while simultaneously ensuring that the responsibility for learning lies with them. Depending on their previous learning experiences, it is likely that learners need support with taking responsibility for language learning. For example, we can engage them in dialogue when they are making a learning plan, choosing resources and strategies, implementing a plan of study, evaluating their progress, finding opportunities to collaborate with others, or regulating their motivational and affective states. It is helpful to consider the degree of awareness that learners have about their own learning when deciding how best to support them. Everhard (2018) conceptualizes degrees of autonomy by drawing on work by researchers within and outside the SLA literature to visualize the autonomy-heteronomy relationship. Figure 2 shows a continuum whereby learners can (hopefully!) move from being dependent on others to being autonomous. Being dependent on oneself implies the acceptance of uncertainty (Jiménez Raya, Lamb, & Vieira, 2017) which makes an advisor's role particularly important as learners navigate this.
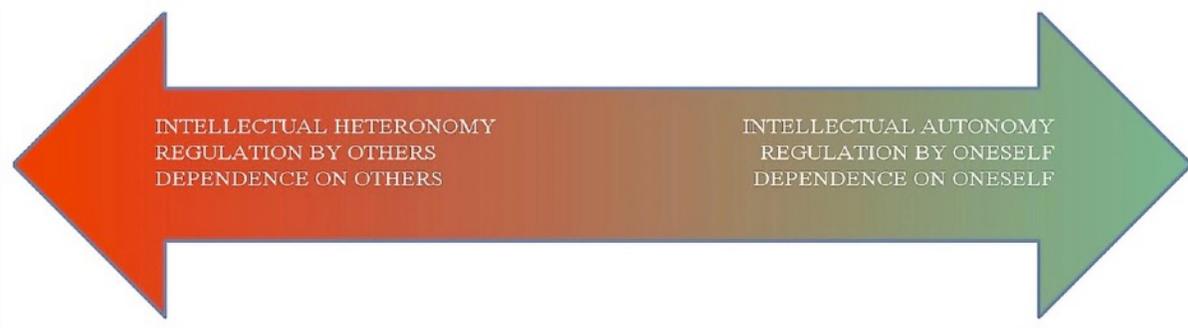
Figure 2. The Autonomy-Heteronomy Relationship (Everhard, 2018, p. 89)

In practical terms, the ways in which we work with learners who have been largely dependent on others to direct their learning will differ from ways in which we work with autonomous learners who are able to regulate their own learning. As Figure 3 shows, at the beginning of the autonomy journey, it might be effective to prompt action by giving suggestions to learners. However, as a learner becomes more aware, the advising dialogue seeks to broaden their perspectives, translate awareness into action and may promote fundamental changes in beliefs and approaches to learning (Kato & Mynard, 2015).

Figure 3 illustrates the four approaches described in Kato and Mynard's (2015) approach to advising. The term "transformational" here emphasises that ALL goes beyond simply giving learners hints and tips, but serves to promote deeper reflection on learning which can in turn lead to significant shifts in thinking and the nature of learning.
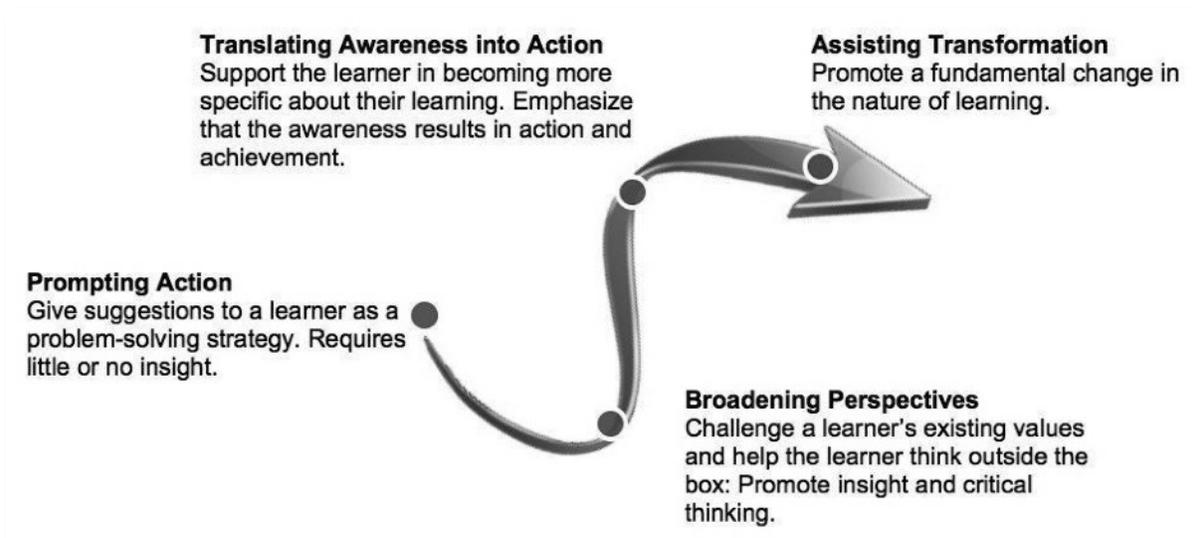

Figure 3. The Four Approaches in Transformational Advising (Kato & Mynard, 2015, p. 10)

Written Dialogue

In addition to face-to-face advising, written advising also offers opportunities for reflective dialogue with learners. Writing has been reported to promote reflection on language learning (Little, 2007, 2018) as it has the benefit of allowing more thinking time and offers an alternative

form of expression. Leni Dam and others have long advocated the use of learning logbooks (e.g., Dam, 2009, 2018); Tim Murphey has used action logs (Murphey, 1993); and written advising has also performed a powerful learning function (Mynard & Navarro, 2011; Thornton & Mynard, 2012). In all of these cases, learners activate their inner reflective dialogues as they write about their learning. Interaction (written or spoken) with a teacher or learning advisor can help learners to go deeper, often resulting in realizations about their learning or "aha moments" (Kato & Mynard, 2015, p. xxi). A further benefit of written advising is that it can be more practical and time efficient than meeting with individual learners, particularly when working with large classes.

Advising in the Target Language?

Whether the dialogue occurs in the target language or in the mother tongue has been debated and more research is needed. One view is that there are benefits for learners if the dialogue takes place as much as possible in the target language, as the whole process encourages the activation of agency for the target language through the target language itself (Little, 2013). Another view is that having access to the mother tongue allows the learners to go deeper without struggling to express themselves in another language; we should not deprive learners access to the mother tongue as it is a powerful cognitive tool (Yamashita, 2015). Another view might be to take a multilingual and multimodal approach to co-constructing dialogue (Koike & Blyth, 2015) which has yet to be researched in ALL. Whatever one's views on language choice, practitioners would generally be in agreement that the learners should ideally have the choice (Kato & Mynard, 2015; Thornton, 2012).

Promoting Autonomy Within and Beyond the Classroom

The promotion of learner autonomy through advising can be incorporated into language classes to a degree, but it is important to support learners outside the classroom too. In fact, *learning beyond the classroom* can be said to be the most powerful kind of learning and this may not necessarily involve teachers (Benson & Reinders, 2011; Reinders & Benson, 2017). One established platform for supporting learners and developing learner autonomy outside the classroom is self-access. Self-access centers have taken various forms, e.g., resource centers, conversation lounges, online hubs, language support desks, or a combination of these. However, the focus has certainly shifted in recent years towards a social language learning community (e.g., Murray & Fujishima, 2013, 2016) mainly due to technological advances and our growing awareness of how languages are learned (Mynard, 2016). Whereas traditionally self-access centers may have been the only source of materials and learning opportunities available to learners outside the classroom, nowadays, language learners have access to any number of resources and opportunities for language study and practice (Benson, 2017). However, the need for support may be greater than ever as language learners navigate the increasing opportunities available to them (Curry & Mynard, 2014). The kind of support needed depends on the learner, but it should always involve dialogue as this mediates learning. In addition, if learners have the opportunity to decide on, plan and implement a personalized course of study, advising can be a natural part of the process and can form a bridge

between the classroom and the self-access center. Activities related to awareness raising of learning and implementing a learning plan can be embedded into language classes or offered as stand-alone classes. As managing their learning is often something new for learners, having learning advisors available—particularly outside the classroom—to facilitate the process is essential.

I hope this article has provided a summary of why and how teachers might engage their learners in ALL within and beyond the classroom. My aim was to highlight the important role of dialogue about learning when aiming to promote learner autonomy. Taking this view expands the in-class opportunities and offers support for outside-class learning.

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