

Inside independent learning: old and new perspectives

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Concern for the individual learner and for learner choice, control and responsibility is central to the theory and practice of independent learning. Over the past three decades, enquiry into independent learning has focused on particular contexts or settings for learning, particular philosophies or approaches, and particular attributes of learners – whether these be dispositions, skills or goals. This paper provides a brief critical overview of landmark studies in independent learning, identifying both the sources and implications of developments in the field. New perspectives on independent learning, it is argued, have arisen from the emergence of a ‘new educational order’ (Field, 2006), lifelong and life-wide learning, and the growing importance of virtual learning opportunities. The paper then proposes a new paradigm of independent learning based on these emerging perspectives, together with questions and methodologies to guide further enquiry into the theory, research and practice of independent learning.

Reference

Field, J. (2006) *Lifelong learning and the new educational order*. Stoke on Trent: Trentham Books.