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Individual support to pupils for enhancing learner autonomy and responsibility: Case of primary school teachers in Bukavu/Democratic Republic of Congo.

Abstract

This paper deals with enhancing learner autonomy and responsibility in the teaching and learning process. The gap in learner autonomy and responsibility results in low quality of education, amongst many factors. For data collection, qualitative approach applying semi-structured interviews was used. In total, sixprimary school teachers were interviewed. Contentanalysis was used to analyze data. Through this study, it has been revealed that quality of teaching and learning is a must, and therefore targets to contribute to sustainability. Teachers who implement both the participatory and active pedagogy and the cognitive activation by tasks seemed to enhance their students' autonomy and responsibility. The interviews with teachers revealed that learner autonomy and responsibility are still missing in the Congolese praxis. This paper has also explained why should teachers foster individual support to students to enhance learner autonomy and responsibility. Individual support helps in reducing students' lack of competencies, dropouts and grade repetitions. By applying learner autonomy and responsibility, students gain experiences not only from peers while working in pairs and groups and this is very helpful in the learning process for students' achievements while targeting outcomes. The experience students' gain from others helps them improve their perception on things and the result is that students gain competencies. Learner autonomy helps learners to be more responsible for their lives, they are enabled to work and live autonomously and responsibly.

Key words: Learner autonomy, responsibility, individual support, participatory and active pedagogy, quality teaching.

1   Introduction

This section describes the context in which the paper is set. The problem statement is elaborated and the research questions are conveyed.

1.1   Context

Research shows that teachers are a crucial factor in the educational system (UNESCO, 2005). The teacher plays a determining role in helping students to learn (Dembelé& Gauthier, 2004). Teachers have a great impact on students' learning, as they are the main positive change agents for students (Hattie, 2012). The present research finds its relevance in the sense that it

will investigate the way that teachers enhance learner autonomy and responsibility in their teachings.

The policy to education should be well organized and much emphasis should be put on all partners in education. The teacher is at the centre of quality of education because of the strategic role he or she occupies in education; so, they are the major player in the education process (Hattie, 2012). In this framework, this topic of teachers' individual support to learners in enhancing learner's autonomy and responsibility, with a case of primary schools in Bukavu in the DRC attracted our scientific inquisitiveness.

1.2   Problem statement

In the DRC context, a good teacher is viewed as a possessor of the knowledge (Baharanyi, Karki &Mutaleb, 2014). The teacher-centered pedagogy has dominated and the teacher are portrayed as the owners of information in the classroom and students should learn passively (Mokonzi, 2009). One of the main challenges in the Congolese education is that it does not foster autonomy and responsibility and this results in lack of poor quality of education which delivers diplomas without competencies. Education should be a unique potential to reach boost to wider development goals of the whole Congolese nation in general and the individuals but this is not the case, life does not improve (Bashir, 2009). The experience with primary school shows that learner autonomy and responsibility matter. As well, teachers lack necessary qualification, in-service teacher training.

1.3   Research questions

To reach the aim of this study, the following research question was asked: How do Congolese teachers foster learner autonomy and responsibility in learning by using the individual support? From the above main research question, the following sub-questions will be discussed:

1) What do Congolese teachers understand by individual in learning?

2) What are the strategies to enhance autonomy and responsibility in learning in the DRC context?

3) What challenges do teachers see in using individual support to enhance learners' autonomy and responsibility?

2

2 Review of literature

Literature plays important role in the elaboration of any scientific research. This paper elaborates on individual support to enhance learner autonomy and responsibility. It also looks into learner responsibility, and finally reviews learner autonomy and teaching quality.

2.1 Individual support to enhance learner autonomy and responsibility

In the perspective of enhancing learner autonomy and responsibility, the individual support may help. Individual support, being one of the criteria for teaching quality refers to the diagnosis of the learner, opportunity for learners to choose the tasks to do, different tasks to different learners should be admitted since that the learners do not have the same learning abilities. Individual support, being the centre of attention, providing numerous possibilities of individualized support due to internal differentiation between teaching methods as well as learning contents, materials, timeframes and levels of learning objectives, which can all be used to adapt learning programs and conditions to the specific (learning) requirements and (learning) abilities of individual students (Hannelore & Corinna, 2019). Research by Hannelore quoting Bosse et al., (2017) shows that in order to realize individualized support in the classroom, two characteristics of teachers are primarily discussed in inclusion research: the attitude of teachers towards inclusive learning and their self-efficacy beliefs regarding an individualized and differentiated teaching style (Hannelore & Corinna, 2019).

As far as the realization of individualized student support in class is concerned, it can therefore be assumed that teachers with a positive attitude and high self-efficacy regarding individualized support as well as intrinsically motivated teachers implement measures of targeted support of individual students in class to all degrees. In this context, research still lacks empirical studies that systematically investigate individualized learning in the classroom as well as factors influencing the implementation of individualized support and teaching measures in particular. There is need of research related individual support in education to foster autonomy and responsibility. The next question is to know what is individualized learning? And how it can boost autonomy and responsibility in learning? Individualized learning is where students set their own learning goals to work on. Students are given the autonomy to guide their personal learning journey and educational experiences. Learners progress through the curriculum at their own pace using resources and methods to suit their learning needs. This approach is often used in math lessons because students have varied abilities and the curriculum lends itself to engaging with content in multiple ways. But

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the same approach can be applied in almost all the learning disciplines. For example, in a pre-test review, a student may notice they have mastered one-step equations and are ready for two-step equations. They then set a goal of mastering two-step equations by the next formative assessment and create a plan to learn and practice the skills by then. In this approach, the teacher serves as a facilitator by offering a lesson on two-step equations, providing feedback and helping students determine where they are in reaching their goals. In the following paragraph it is worth mentioning the roles of teacher and student in individualized learning.

Leading an individualized learning classroom takes a specific mind-set and focus. Teachers are not leading traditional whole-class lessons and students are not working on the same tasks simultaneously. Teachers must shift their role to that of a facilitator. They understand each learner's profile, including concepts they have mastered and those they are working on, interests, preferences and learning strategies. They use various formative and summative assessment methods. They plan individualized instruction for students to master skills and provide opportunities for students to practice including individualized lessons, online experiences, or small group activities. They offer feedback to support students' learning and create Individualized Learning Plans (ILPs) for each student. Meanwhile, the students or learners have also great roles to play for the enhancement of their autonomy and responsibility based on individualised learning. Students or learners work with the teacher to set goals and contribute to their ILP. They apply their learning, skills, decision making and progress monitoring to work towards achieving their goals and reflect on their progress. Their individual learning plan (ILP) should mainly be based on their learning profile, the setting goals, the learning outcomes and the specific needs.

In order to consolidate the individual learning plan, the teacher should give more opportunities for practice skills through personalized tutoring with own dedicated tutor as well. In this each student receives differentiated instruction Based on his/her abilities designed to close the individual learning gaps, and scaffolded learning ensures every learner learns at the right place. Lessons are aligned with the state's standards and assessments but adapted to the individual learning capacities of the learners.

2.2 Learner responsibility

In this section which is mainly based on learner responsibility, it is worth understanding the learner responsibility in learning, the Relationship between Personal Responsibility and

4

126   Learning, how can you develop responsibility as well as mentioning some characteristics of
127   responsible learners.Research has shown that Learner responsibility can include a certain
128   number of elements among which: active participation, preparation, time management,
129   respect contribution, independence and responsibility to others (Agota& Anita, 2020).

130   By **the terms "active participation"** scholars understand the involvement of the students in
131   the learning process by listening, asking questions, and contributing to group work. As the
132   learning process belongs to students, they have to be active learners. By the term
133   "**Preparation**", the scholars understand all the activities the learner has to undertake to
134   prepare for the class and these may include completing pre-work, such as reading and
135   studying, reviewing the materials, etc. **While understanding the" time management"**, the
136   researchers understand the steps in organizing time by respecting the beginning time for
137   class, the time allocated to any learning step, the breaktime and the time for ending the class
138   as well as attending class regularly. In addition, "**Respect**" is understood as the having
139   regards to others' ideas and points of view, and encouraging them. In the learning process,
140   the learner has responsibility to respect others' opinions although not going in the same
141   direction but other learners' ideas have to be respected. Moreover, by the term
142   "**Contribution**" researchers understand the will for Sharing information and relevant life
143   experiences to contribute to the learning of the group. It crucial for learners to share
144   experiences through group discussions. Scholars understand by "**Independence**", the fact of
145   taking responsibility for learning and avoiding relying on the instructor. Independent learners
146   are autonomous and this is a big step in learning which is likely to prepare learners to
147   independent life. Researchers also understand by the terms "**Responsibility to others"** the
148   process of looking out for the well-being of others and acting responsibly with regard to the
149   learning environment and property. In the following sub section, the relationship between
150   personal responsibility and learning will be reflected because a learner can reach
151   responsibility in learning if he has personal responsibility.

152   The terms personal responsibility and learning are the target in this section. In order to
153   understand learner's responsibility, is good to understand the personal responsibility in
154   relation to learning (Bandura, 1993). It has been argued by scholars that there is a common
155   trait among successful learners which is determined in the sense that they take an active role
156   in ensuring that their needs are met and sustained over time (Alghamdi, 2016).

5

2.3   Learner autonomy and teaching quality

The term autonomy has been heard for many years. Autonomy is important and even it is the foundation of human dignity and the source of modality (Emmanuel Kant cited in Hill, 1991, p. 43). Besides, autonomy has been focused on as an essential aim of education and the concept of learner autonomy has become influential as a goal in many parts of the world.

Research shows that the term autonomy is described as 'the ability to take charge of one's learning'. On a general note, the term autonomy has come to be used in at least five ways in which autonomy in learning can be described in five different ways and situations which are: situations in which learners study entirely on their own; a set of skills which can be learned and applied in self-directed learning; an inborn capacity which is suppressed by institutional education; an exercise of learners' responsibility for their own learning; and the right of learners to determine the direction of their own learning (Omaggio, 1978 cited in Wenden, 1998, pp. 41-42) and Holec (1981) cited in Benson &Voller (1997) .

Contrary to teacher-centred, learner autonomy promotes the learner centered thus learner's critical thinking and participation in his/her learning process. Within such a conception, learning is not simply a matter of rote memorisation; it is a constructive process that involves actively seeking meaning from (or even imposing meaning on) events (Candy, 1991, p. 271). Research Omagglio (1978) cited by Wenden (1998) about learner autonomy mentions seven steps which describe an autonomous learner. Firstly, an autonomous learner has insights into his learning styles which are own learning strategies. Secondly, he takes an active approach to the learning task at hand. Thirdly, he is willing to take risks for his learning at all costs. In addition, an autonomous learner is a good guesser. Nothing prevents him from guessing for his/ her learning circumstances. Moreover, an autonomous learner attends to form as well as to content, that is, he/she places importance on both accuracy and appropriacy. Furthermore, he/she develops the target learning into a separate reference system and is willing to revise and reject hypotheses and rules that do not apply. Finally, an autonomous learner is tolerant in his/her learning.

3   Materials and methods

Considering the relevancy of the concepts of learner autonomy, responsibility and individual support, which may contribute to global learning and educational cultures change, it will be worth investigating on teachers' perceptions of fostering learners' autonomy that is likely to

188   contribute to change in all the dimensions of life within the society. The teacher himself is an
189   agent of positive change (Hattie, 2012).

190   Data for this research were collected by a qualitative approach using semi-structured
191   interviews. In the interviews, teachers explained and described their experiences as lived in
192   their daily profession. The main focus was to bring teachers explain the phenomena about
193   their daily practices. In this way, teachers focused on practices of teaching, learning,
194   competencies development, etc. (Mogliacci, 2015, p. 25). In this present study, semi
195   structured interviews were used to collect data. Participants for this research were teachers at
196   primary school, and a total of six teachers were interviewed. Content analysis was used to
197   analyse and interpret the data.

4   Results

199   The results are summarized in the following table:

Theme	Description in relation to autonomy & responsibility	Supporting evidence from interviews
Participatory and active pedagogy	Learner autonomy is fostered through participatory and active methods (PAP) where students work in groups, pairs, and whole-class discussions, taking an active role in constructing knowledge.	Multiple teachers state they "use participatory and active methods," allow students "free room" to communicate, and organize discussions and debates around given subjects.
Task design and classroom activities	Responsibility is encouraged through varied tasks that require students to contribute, produce outputs, and present to peers.	Teachers describe group work, individual work, presentations, debates, simulations, field-report presentations, quizzes, and additional assignments for weak students.
Classroom communication and language use	Autonomy is linked to students' ability to use the target language while supporting peers, with rules that frame responsible communication.	One teacher enforces French as the main language in group work, allows Swahili to help weaker peers, and mentions possible punishment for using other languages, aiming to strengthen mastery of lessons.
Individual support and differentiation	Teachers seek to maintain autonomy while scaffolding weaker or shy learners through targeted support, expecting them eventually to take charge of their learning.	Teachers report re-explaining lessons to weak pupils, giving extra homework, helping individually during or after class, and questioning shy students to stimulate participation.

7

Theme	Description in relation to autonomy & responsibility	Supporting evidence from interviews
Conceptions of autonomy and responsibility	Autonomy is framed as active participation and independent task completion; responsibility is associated with fulfilling assigned roles and duties.	Teachers link autonomy/responsibility to doing homework alone, speaking in class, taking group roles (president, secretary, moderator), and participating in school events and worship services.
Homework practices and family involvement	Homework is designed to develop independent learning but is often undermined by non-completion or delegation to family members, limiting genuine autonomy.	Several teachers observe that students neglect homework or ask relatives to do it, which they see as a major hindrance to autonomy and responsibility.
Structural constraints (class size, time, resources)	Large classes and time-consuming participatory methods restrict opportunities to consistently foster autonomy and responsibility.	Teachers mention classes of 65+ students, unsuitable seating, limited use of PAP because it is "time-consuming," and difficulties supervising all groups effectively.
Socio-economic constraints (fees, attendance)	Irregular attendance due to school fee problems interrupts learning and reduces chances to practice autonomous work habits.	One teacher notes that students are often sent home for unpaid fees, which limits their involvement in classroom tasks and follow-up assignments.
Teacher professional development	Teachers' capacity to promote autonomy is connected to their exposure to training on methods and classroom management.	Interviewees report attending varying numbers of workshops and in-service trainings, and some explicitly express a desire for more training to update their methods.

200

201 The above title of results shows the use of participatory and active method. It is seen that

202 teachers organise students' discussions and debates around selectedtopics. Other teachers

203 report that they use pair work and group work to help students interact easily.Regarding the

204 use of the language, only one teacher has mentioned that he uses French as a Must and that

205 learners who use other languages are severely punished. And regarding individual support,

206 some teachers have reported that they support their students by re-explaining the lessons to

207 students and they also said that that they use role-tasks for learners to exercise their

208 responsibility.Regarding teachers' experiences, interviewees reported that they had

209 participated in the training about participatory and active pedagogy but they reported that the

210 over-crowdedness of their classes seems to be one of the great challenges in the practice.

8

5 Discussion of the findings: Individual support as means to enhance autonomy and responsibility to foster educational quality in the DRC

This section about the discussion of findings is to deal with the summary of the status of research on teachers' individual support to enhance learner autonomy and responsibility.

5.1 Autonomy and responsibility for educational quality

Learner autonomy presupposes, but also entails that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning. The capacity for autonomy will be displayed both in the way the learner learns and in the way he or she transfers what has been learned to wider contexts (Benson, 1997; Little, 1991). Research has shown that learner autonomy refers to the ability of the learner of doing something. Autonomy, viewed as "a mode of learning, one in which the individual is responsible for all the decisions connected with his/ her learning, and undertakes the implementation of these decisions" (Dickinson,1987). Regarding this understanding, learner autonomy is the complete responsibility for one's learning carried out without the investment of a teacher or pedagogic materials. This understanding explains the highest degree of autonomy, the one where the learner chooses what, how and when of learning without the constraints of formal education.

Being an aspect of teaching quality, the learner involves more in his learning by working autonomously on tasks. In such understanding, the learner needs individual support. Following the perspective of individual support, being one of the teaching quality criteria, learners can be given different tasks that is for different learners there is need of different tasks regarding the personal abilities of each learner, and learners have ability to choose the tasks to perform (Dicknson, 1987). This understanding meets the teaching quality by leaving such responsibility to learners to choose what, how and when they can learn. Dickinson's perspective on autonomy is seen as freedom to take responsibility and this is opposed to what Freire (1996) has presented as the oppression in pedagogy.

In addition, as mentioned about learner responsibility, research has shown that the understanding of learner responsibility can be understood referring on a number of dimensions including: active participation, preparation, time management, respect contribution, independence and responsibility to others (Agota& Anita, 2020). Therefore, a responsible learner is the one who undoubtedly accept to participate actively on the tasks given by teacher. As it has been mentioned earlier, a responsible learner knows to prepare his/her lessons; all his activities are well prepared with respect to time. He/she is ready to

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243   contribute to his learning process, learning is not for the teacher, its rather for the learner,

244   thus it's the learner who must conjugate his/her efforts so that learning can take place. The

245   learner has to develop a high sense of independency by working on tasks, home assignments,

246   class assignments, reading his notes, making research on some of the areas, which look

247   difficult. By sense of responsibility, the learner develops the feeling of duty or obligation that

248   he/she an has towards his/her community or surroundings. It is the ability of the learner to

249   take ownership of actions and tasks, fulfil commitments, and demonstrate accountability.

250   Based on empirical research in this thesis, it has been revealed that teachers who target the

251   enhancement of autonomy and responsibility in learners are likely to utilize the participatory

252   and active pedagogy, the cognitive activation by complex tasks, the efficient classroom

253   management, the good learning climate and the individual support. The

254   word participatory comes from participation, which refers to the action of taking part in

255   activities and projects, the act of sharing in the activities of a group. The process

256   of participation fosters mutual learning. The participatory learning strategy has its theoretical

257   basis in the behaviorism as well as in cognitive and social psychology. Collaboration is

258   a useful tool used within participatory culture as a desired educational outcome. The

259   Partnership for twenty-first century Skills, for example, defines collaboration as working

260   effectively and respectfully with diverse teams, exercising flexibility and a willingness to

261   make compromises to accomplish a common goal, and assuming shared responsibility for

262   collaborative work while valuing individual contributions. The participatory and active

263   pedagogy (PAP) is seen as one of the tools to boost autonomy and responsibility in learners.

264   When it is handled appropriately, the PAP enhances learners' cooperation as well. It helps the

265   learner to use the learning potentials and opportunities to reframe his learning.

266   Instructional model which promotes the active engagement of participants in the learning

267   process, using various didactic strategies and techniques, such as group discussions, peer

268   learning, role-playing games, observation of the learning object, use of learning outcomes in

269   daily and professional life, evaluation of the learning action. Learner participation involves

270   information sharing, active collaboration, and other forms of communication and expression

271   through which young people and adults enter into dialogue so that each other's views are

272   taken into account and become consequential. Participatory Learning may have some key

273   principles which are: the right to participate, hearing unheard voices, seeking local

274   knowledge and diversity, reversing learning, using diverse methods, handing over the stick

275   (or pen, or chalk) and attitude and behaviour change (Karen & Jethro, 2005). Participatory

10

276 methods include: games, role plays, experimentation, discussion, inquiry based, problem-
277 solving, projects, rhymes, storytelling, debates and case studies. Participatory methods of
278 teaching and learning draw upon the experiences of the target population and build upon
279 them in the interest of developing and implemented the best possible educational program.
280 There are many different participatory techniques. In general, participatory training actively
281 involves and motivates learners by drawing upon their own experience and skills in solving
282 problems, using examples and situations of interest to them in their daily lives, and using a
283 variety of new, enjoyable, and often visual teaching methods. Participatory learning is
284 different from, but not always better than formal teaching. Both methods have their strengths
285 and are appropriate in different situations, with the best classroom teachers often using a
286 mixture of both approaches (Bradley, 1995).

287 Regarding the enhancement of Autonomy and responsibility by the cognitive activation by
288 complex tasks, in teaching, the cognitive activation strategy is one of the major strategies
289 which should be utilized by teachers to boost learners' competencies. Cognitive activation is
290 just the brain's stimulation. Research shows that cognitive activation may be understood in
291 six dimensions:

292 *"Firstly, encouraging learners to explain their thinking on complex problems. The second*
293 *aspect of cognitive activation is expecting learners to solve problems by using different*
294 *ways. The third dimension is requiring students to provide written explanations on how*
295 *they solve problems. The fourth contribution is encouraging students to work as a team*
296 *together in the issue of solving problems. The fifth understanding is encouraging learners*
297 *to be connected to mathematics concepts and being able to use those concepts out of the*
298 *classroom and school context. The last understanding refers to the process of going over*
299 *home assignments that learners could not solve by themselves"*. (OECD 2016):

300 Furthermore, it is worth understanding the term individual support. Individual support, being
301 the centre of attention, providing numerous possibilities of individualized support due to
302 internal differentiation between teaching methods as well as learning contents, materials,
303 timeframes and levels of learning objectives, which can all be used to adapt learning
304 programs and conditions to the specific (learning) requirements and (learning) abilities of
305 individual students (Hannelore & Corinna, 2019).

11

5.2 Opportunities of individual support in education

Research has shown that individual support can be practically seen in the classroom if the teacher does the diagnosis of his learners' abilities. To do so, the teacher must from the very first day make a diagnostical study of his pupils' abilities. Secondly, the teacher may plan different tasks to different learners. Since those learners do not possess the same abilities and even the same learning styles, the teacher must plan different tasks so to help all learners including bright learners, middle learners and those having difficulties to learn. Thirdly, the teacher must give opportunities to learners to choose the tasks to perform. This can be seen during quizzes, home and classroom assignments and even during the lessons. The teacher must plan a number of tasks and therefore pupils have freedom to choose the tasks to perform. In doing so, pupils will not consider the learning process as a kind of prison from which they should be liberated (Freire, 2001; World Bank, 2005).

Research by Hannelore quoting Bosse et al., (2017) and Gebhardt, et al. (2015) shows that in order to realize individualized support in the classroom, two characteristics of teachers are primarily discussed in inclusion research: the attitude of teachers towards inclusive learning and their self-efficacy beliefs regarding an individualized and differentiated teaching style (Hannelore & Corinna, 2019). As far as the realization of individualized student support in class is concerned, it can therefore be assumed that teachers with a positive attitude and high self-efficacy regarding individualized support as well as intrinsically motivated teachers implement measures of targeted support of individual students in class to all degrees. In this context, research still lacks empirical studies that systematically investigate individualized learning in the classroom as well as factors influencing the implementation of individualized support and teaching measures in particular. There is need of research related individual support in education to foster autonomy and responsibility. The next question is to know what is individualized learning? And how it can boost autonomy and responsibility in learning? Individualized learning is where students set their own learning goals to work on. Students are given the autonomy to guide their personal learning journey and educational experiences. Learners progress through the curriculum at their own pace using resources and methods to suit their learning needs.

5.3 Challenges of individual support in education

As mentioned above, the quality of education should be well thought of and should be well planned by any teacher who targets students' competencies. To reach such good results by

338 the teacher, the education policy makers should be consequent by availing suitable teaching
339 conditions. The basic teacher training should be well organized and in-service teacher
340 trainings should be organized regularly so to help teaching auctioneers i.e., teachers and
341 teachers' administrative agents among them schools' principles and inspectors being well
342 equipped in quality teaching. The criteria for quality teaching must be reflected in schools
343 and aspects of individual support to enhance learner autonomy and responsibility should be
344 taken into consideration. In this sub-section, some challenges related to the teaching quality,
345 others related to learner autonomy and responsibility and others related to individual support
346 will be developed. To do so, topics related to diagnosis of students' competencies and
347 cognitive abilities, different tasks to different pupils and freedom in the tasks choices by
348 students must be reflected because these topics are seen as major challenges.

349 As this research is mainly based on individual support to enhance learner autonomy and
350 responsibility, honouring children's starting points enable educators to build on students'
351 autonomy with an inquiry-based approach, developing purposeful and meaningful
352 experiences in the classroom. It is also important to realize that the ways in which young
353 children think, can be quite unique. Educators "must be particularly careful not to assume that
354 children see situations, problems, or solutions as adults do. Instead, good teachers interpret
355 what the child is doing and thinking and attempt to see the situation from the child's point of
356 view" (Clements &Sarama, 2009, p. 4). Also, it is very essential to help children regarding
357 their personal potentials and abilities. Individuals re not born equal, they have inner abilities
358 which differ and therefore they have to learn differently. Some individuals are quick learners,
359 others need repetitions and others need mostly individual supports and this is the biggest
360 challenges for overcrowded classes as it is the case for the DRC classes. The crucial idea here
361 is the child's point of view which meets what is discussed above about advanced learners
362 who should produce their claims about content and even generate new hypotheses related to
363 their content knowledge. Considerations should be done for slow learners who must also
364 generate hypotheses for their content knowledge to gain competencies. To do so, individual
365 support, work on tasks to activate learner autonomy and responsibility is a great need, hence
366 tasks being the mere activator of both autonomy and competency.

6   Conclusion, recommendations and perspectives

368 Learner autonomy and responsibility enhancement are one of the suitable tools for quality
369 teaching in primary education which helps students gain competencies. And the individual
370 support may help enhance learner autonomy and responsibility. If individual support to

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371 students is well handled in teaching it helps in reducing students' lack of competencies,
372 dropouts and grade repetitions. By applying learner autonomy and responsibility, students
373 gain experiences not only from peers while working in pairs and groups and this is very
374 helpful in the learning process for students' achievements while targeting outcomes. The
375 experience students' gain from others helps them improve their perception on things and the
376 result is that students gain competencies. Learner autonomy helps learners to be more
377 responsible for their lives, they are enabled to work and live autonomously and responsibly.
378 While working on complex tasks they experience autonomy and responsibility together with
379 life problems (Haidary, 2013).

380 Based on the usefulness of individual support to enhance learner autonomy and responsibility
381 to improve the quality of teaching and learning, it is worth mentioning the following
382 suggestions for practice:

383 1) To the Ministry of Primary Education of the DRC: Reform the primary education by
384 integrating the teaching innovations that can improve students' competencies, i.e., learner
385 autonomy and responsibility. In addition, to organize initial training of teachers on quality
386 teaching criteria by insisting on individual support so that future teachers can be equipped to
387 use innovative strategies to improve student outcomes. And to plan and provide as well as
388 textbooks and any other didactic tool and pedagogical strategies such as individual support to
389 enhance learner autonomy and responsibility.

390 2) To churches and donors: For churches to continue to work with donors to raise funds to
391 enable teachers to innovate in teaching by organizing in-service teacher training on quality
392 teaching criteria and pedagogic innovations. We encourage churches and their educational
393 partners to continue giving funds to churches in teacher training programs.

394 3) To the primary education institutions: Organizing continuous in-service teacher training on
395 teaching quality and innovations should be one of the top priorities. This is one of the means
396 to improve the quality of teaching in primary education and specially to enhance students'
397 competencies. In addition, primary education institutions should set up a system for following
398 up with teachers to check how they are dealing with the issue of implementing individual
399 support, learner autonomy and responsibility in their classes and to work systematically on
400 the change. In addition, to reduce the number of pupils allocated for a teacher in the
401 classroom and/or make advocacy of hiring more than one teacher in a single classroom.

402 4) To the teachers of primary education in the DRC: To accept the change of beliefs towards
403 new teaching practices in order to help their students acquire competencies. In addition, to
404 reflect very often on tasks in the daily teaching practice, which aim at the quality of education
405 and specifically at the autonomy and responsibility of the learners. In addition, individual
406 support should be prioritised by teachers during the lessons, during the assignments and in all
407 the teaching activities.

408 This paper leaves room for further quantitate research to explore more possibilities of learner
409 autonomy and responsibility.

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