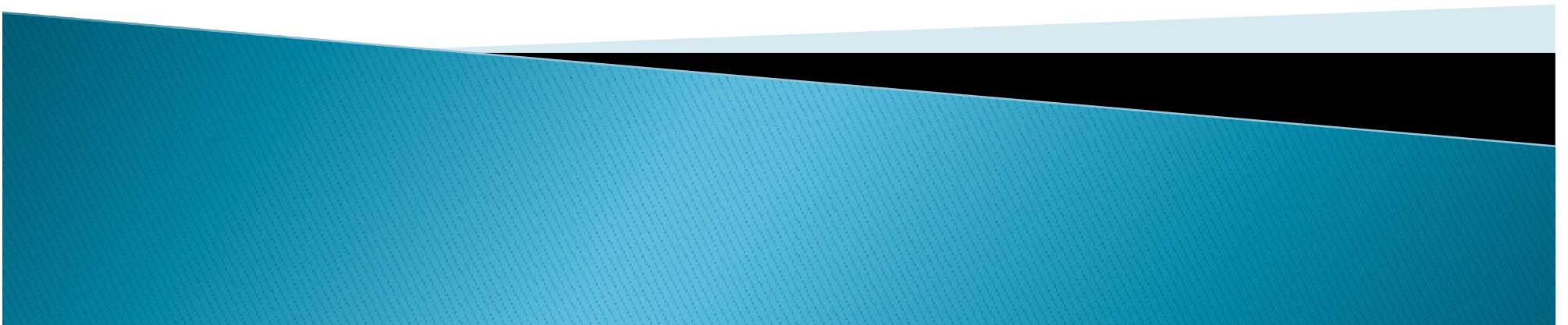
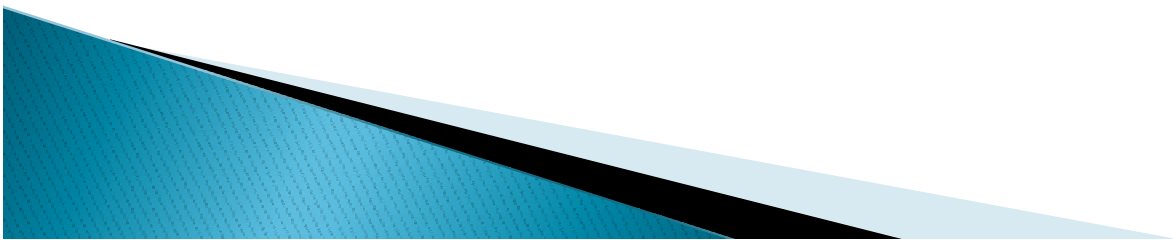


The Independent Learner

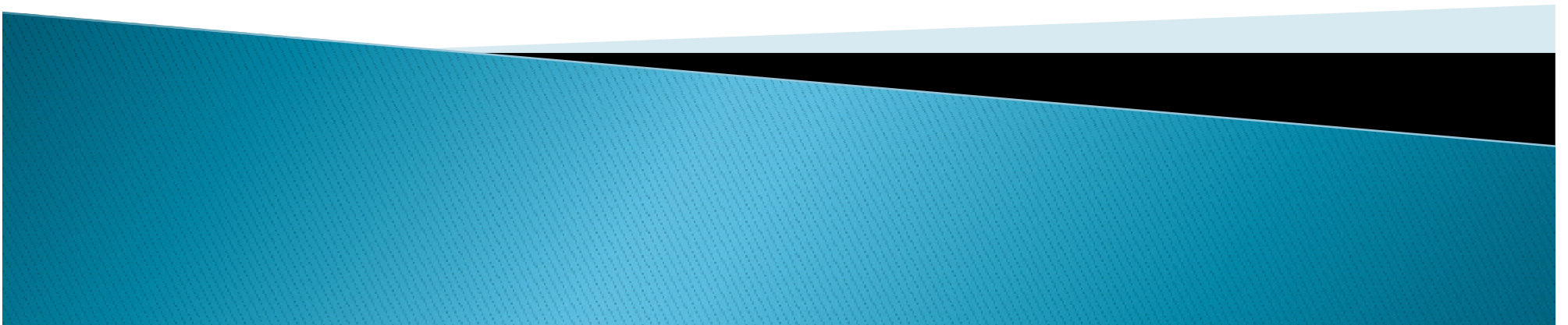
Dorothy Coombs
April 2010



“A degree course is very different from A-level, or other level 3 qualification, in that you will be expected to take responsibility for yourself and your learning”
(Jennifer and Richard Latto)



- What is an independent learner like?
- Why should learners be independent?
- How can we encourage independence?



What is he/she like?

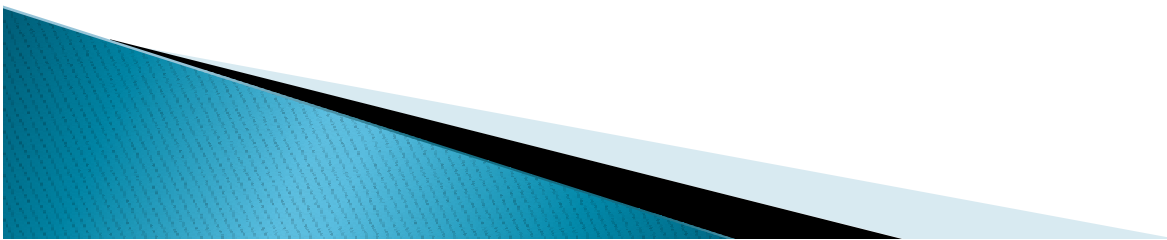
} Students say:

Finds things out

Does extra work

Is well organised

Doesn't have to be pushed



Teachers say:

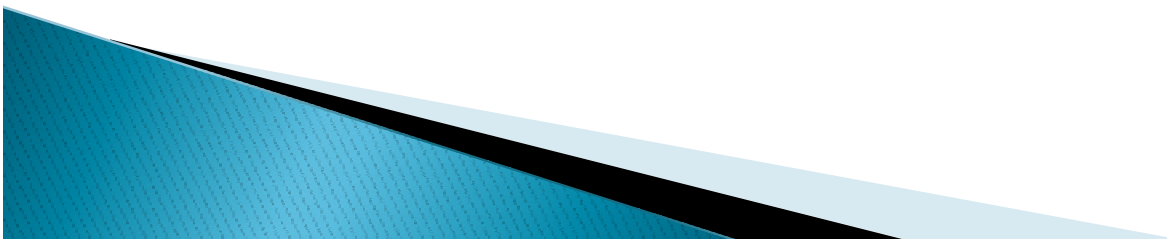
Confident

Flexible

Well motivated

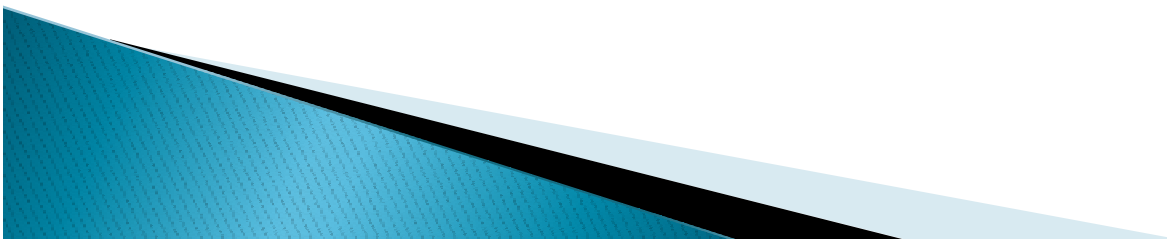
Self disciplined

Inquisitive



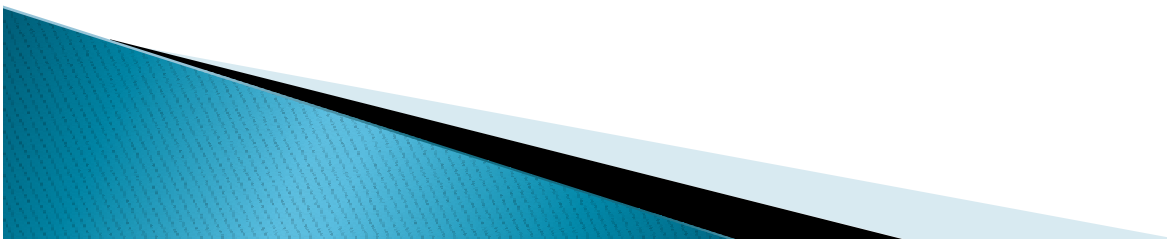
After an absence the dependent learner
says:

- } I was "bad" (ill)
- } I was going to come to a workshop
- } I looked for you
- } I couldn't find you
- } Didn't you get my e-mail?
- } Did I miss anything important?
- } (On being asked for the homework):
"I wasn't there was I?"



The Independent Learner says:

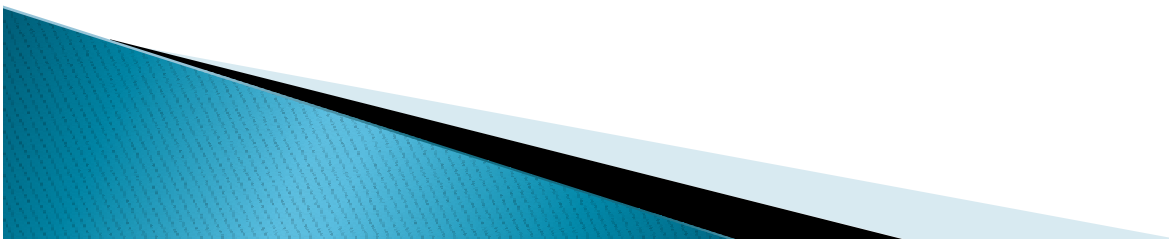
- } Please could you e-mail me the work I missed/will miss
- } I am sorry that I was absent, I will come to a workshop to catch up
- } I have contacted my friend and I have done the work I missed



Why does it matter?

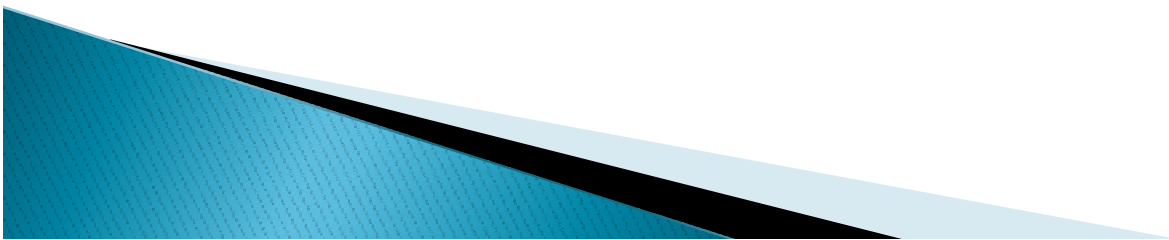
“The ultimate goal of the teacher is to shift to the individual the burden of learning”

John W Gardner



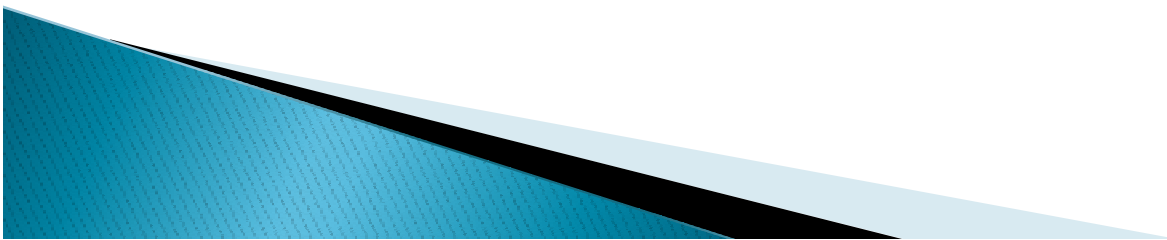
What are we aiming to achieve?

- } To equip students for life-long learning?
- } To improve exam results?



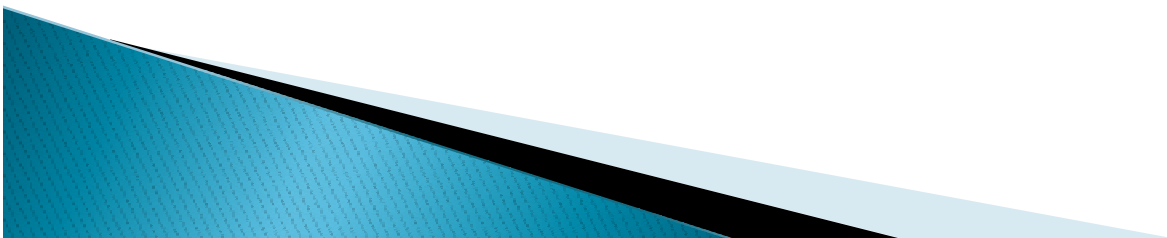
What is the role of the teacher in encouraging independence?

- } To raise self esteem (but not unconditionally)
- } To shift locus of control from external to internal
- } To promote meta-cognition



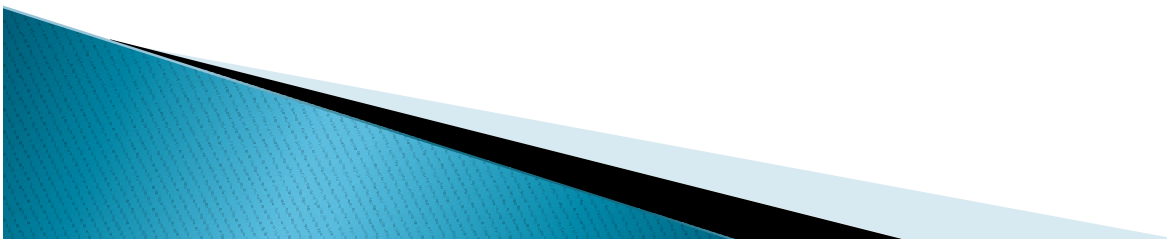
How do we do this?

- } Make learning enjoyable
- } Give clear instructions
- } Value students' opinions
- } Teach less and allow learning more
- } Be a learner yourself
- } Allow students to make mistakes
- } Work in partnership
- } Sometimes say "It might be" not "It is"
- } Be a role model
- } Try saying "Imagine you are...."



The Drawbacks

- } Time consuming?
- } Less control?
- } Scary?



References

- } Claxton G. "Building Learning Power" TLO
- } Jarvis M. "Teaching Post 16 Psychology"
Nelson Thornes.
- } Latto J. and Latto R. "Study Skills for
Psychology Students" O.U.P. 2009

