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**Teacher Educator and Student
Teacher Perceptions of
Autonomous Support and
Practice in a Faculty of
Education in North Cyprus**

Thesis submitted to the University of Nottingham for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy

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AUGUST, 2019

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION

Abstract

Learner autonomy has been a popular topic of discussion and research with its potential to help learners manage their learning through taking charge of the process. It has also long been debated that teacher support for learner autonomy is a predictor of increased autonomous behaviours learners display in their learning. This study examines the perceptions of teacher educators about their conceptualisations of and support for autonomy, and the perceptions of student teachers about their conceptualisations of and practice of autonomy in their actual learning process. The study also looks at the factors that influence both teacher support and students' development and implementation of autonomy. This study was carried out in the Faculty of Education in a university in North Cyprus. The research design utilised case study within a qualitative paradigm with semi-structured interviews and student/teacher diaries as the data collection methods to explore autonomy support and practice in a natural setting with in-depth data. Content analysis was used for the analysis of the data.

Data from 15 teacher educators and 27 student teachers indicate that teacher educators support and student teachers practise learner autonomy in relation to five main categories: *Metacognition, an Atmosphere Conducive to Learner Autonomy, Learner Training, Interdependence* and *Affect*. According to both teacher educators and student teachers, there are serious barriers that hinder teacher educators' support and inhibit student teachers' practice. *Conceptualisations and background of teachers and learners regarding autonomy, education system* and *teacher autonomy* were reported to be the main barriers.

Key words: Learner autonomy, teacher autonomy, teacher support, Faculty of Education, qualitative research, teacher and student perspectives

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank everyone without whom this thesis could not have been completed.

Firstly, I would like to express my deep gratitude to my supervisors Dr Philip Hood and Dr Lucy Cooker for the expert guidance and invaluable support I received in this research. They have been incredibly supportive throughout the whole process. I am indebted to Dr Hood who was always there to provide encouragement and feedback on each stage of my PhD journey.

I would also like to thank Dr Barbara Sinclair for her supervision and valuable feedback in the early stage of this study. The questioning episodes I had with Lucy and Dr Barbara Sinclair led me to question myself and played an important part in guiding me to find my route in this study.

I would like to thank the participating students and teachers in the Faculty of Education for all their support. The valuable data 15 teacher educators and 27 student teachers provided constitutes the findings of this thesis.

I am truly grateful to my friends Sefika Mertkan and Gulen Aliusta for their availability and suggestions when I needed help.

And my family. Special thanks go to my husband Salih, and daughters Nahide and Ulfet for their patience, support and encouragement. I spent so much time on my studies that we could have spent together as a family. There were times I was not there when you needed me. Thank you for the sacrifices you made to help me complete my thesis. And to my mum and dad who always believed in me and boosted me throughout my life and my study years.

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Abbreviations

LA: Learner Autonomy

TA: Teacher Autonomy

TE: Teacher Educator

ST: Student Teacher

TEI: Teacher Educator Interview

STI: Student Teacher Interview

TED: Teacher Educator Diary

STD: Student Teacher Diary

FGI: Focus Group Interview

GM: Group Meeting

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Overview

This chapter provides the background to the research I conducted in the Faculty of Education at a university in Northern Cyprus between February and June 2016 which investigated perceptions on how teacher educators (TEs) provide support to their learners in terms of learner autonomy (LA), how student teachers (STs) experience LA as learners in practice and the factors affecting both.

In this chapter, I will begin with giving an account of my motivation for studying LA. This will be followed by a brief introduction to LA and teacher support for LA. Then I will give a description of the context where this research was conducted to set the background. This will be followed by explaining the purpose for carrying out this study and highlighting the significance of this research. Finally, I will present the outline of the thesis.

1.2 Background and Motivation for the Present Study

When I started the PhD programme, I was a teacher with twenty years of experience. In my twenty years of teaching, I had always been uncomfortable about my learners' tendency to be dependent on their teachers and their apparent reluctance to take responsibility for their learning. I observed that they often found comfort in their teacher's leading the learning/teaching process, seeming to prefer to stay passive in their learning. Thinking about my own student years, I realised it was not very different. I remember being presented almost entirely with syllabus-based content. We were not usually allowed to make our feelings and opinions explicit, and I even remember being criticised by teachers when we offered alternative suggestions. Therefore, in this traditional teacher-directed context, which was the prevailing teaching approach of our student years (1980s and 1990s), we were inclined to learn what was presented in the way it was presented. Pondering about these old experiences and being disturbed by the feeling that there was something wrong with it made me realise that we were deprived of opportunities to learn for ourselves by ourselves. That is, we lacked autonomy. It was even more discomfoting to realise our students have similar experiences and dispositions.

In my MA study as a part-time student, I noticed how significant it is to take ownership of your learning if you desire to make a difference for yourself and your surroundings. This directed my attention to concepts such as lifelong learning, learning to learn competency, learner-centred learning and constructivism. My queries around these issues led me to acknowledge the relevance of autonomy to learning.

At the beginning of my PhD journey, I was aware that it was LA I wanted to explore but the route towards finalised research questions was not a straight one; I had to make some changes to the direction while trying to define the key issue. In my research proposal what I had in mind was to measure the autonomy level of students at the English Preparatory School of the institution I was teaching at. Later, after reading extensively around the area, I realised that there is ample research carried out on LA in language learning. This realisation coincided with the period I moved from the English Preparatory School to teach English in a department as a service teacher. Though I was still teaching English, I had the chance to observe students in this faculty from a different perspective and to frequently engage in informal conversations with them.

In the English Preparatory School, an intensive English course is offered. There is a haste to help students reach a level of English where they are competent enough to follow their courses in their chosen departments where the medium of instruction is English. This puts both learners and teachers under a great pressure. In the department I moved to at the moment, it was different, particularly in terms of language learning. The medium of instruction in the department was Turkish. English courses were offered as compulsory courses but they did not have any direct effect on learners' departmental courses, with less pressure on both parties.

In this new context, I found it interesting to talk to students about their learning. I would ask questions and guide them to think about themselves as students. We spoke about workload and the difficulty of being successful without intensive rote learning. Through these conversations, my initial worries that these students did not know how to learn and that they yearned for guidance to be able to be more competent in the learning process were underscored repeatedly. It was also

obvious that it was not only language learning that these students had problems with. These students lacked the skills and the mind-set that would guide them to become successful learners of any subject. I had been reading and deliberating about LA for a long time but the realisation that learners need the support of their teachers in attaining LA directed my attention to teacher roles for LA. Therefore, I started to read about teacher roles and teacher support for LA.

Having contemplated about what I, as a teacher, can do to help my learners adopt a more autonomous approach in their learning and having read about teacher roles in pro-autonomy pedagogy, I concluded that my main interest is developing greater autonomy in my students and helping teachers foster LA. This signified the beginning of my PhD journey.

1.3 Key Concepts in the Present Study

1.3.1 Learner Autonomy

In recent decades, autonomy, or the ability to control one's own learning, has been a prominent theme for educational research since it is perceived as an organising principle within contemporary teaching/learning frameworks and since learners who exercise autonomy tend to be more effective and efficient in their learning process (Benson, 2001; Dafei, 2007). Therefore, in North Cyprus, as well as in other parts of the world, it has attracted the attention of educators and has appeared in the mission and vision statements of educational settings. The university I work in is not an exception. The ultimate goal of education, both in theoretical and practical terms, is to help learners reach higher levels of autonomy, with the competence for lifelong learning that would guide them on their route to achieve a better life, not only by getting good jobs, but also by being better citizens and better people through taking control of their own learning and their own lives (Cooker, 2012).

1.3.2 Teacher Support for Learner Autonomy

There are several lines of research that highlight the significance of teacher support for LA. As will be discussed later in Chapter 2, it is possible to acquire autonomy through appropriate assistance (Nunan, 2003; Tan & Chan, 1998). In educational contexts, assistance can be provided through different means such as other learners in the setting, yet, the main guidance for the development of

autonomy is provided by teachers through pro-autonomy pedagogy (Black & Deci, 2000; Little, 1995; Reeve & Jang, 2006; Reeve, Jang, Carrell, Jeon, & Barch, 2004; Williams & Deci, 1996), hence, in the promotion of autonomous behaviours, teachers have a determinant role.

Having contemplated about LA and the role of teacher support in LA, I decided to explore the current situation in a higher education context with regards to how learners practically exercise LA in their learning process and how teachers support its actualisation.

1.4 Context

1.4.1 The Position of Learner Autonomy in North Cypriot Education Policy in Primary, Secondary and Initial Teacher Education

LA and concepts related to LA are emphasized in the mission and vision of the educational policy in North Cyprus. In North Cyprus, compulsory education is offered to children until they are 15 years old (including pre-school, elementary and secondary education) where the teaching programmes are developed to address the necessities of contemporary education. It is suggested that a constructivist approach is adopted as noted on the ministry's website (<http://www.mebnet.net/>). The Ministry of Education identifies the chief aim of education in North Cyprus as aiming to develop self-aware, self-monitoring, self-regulated learners who are able to identify their interests/needs and strengths/weaknesses where teachers act as guides in nurturing learners' inner motivational resources. Helping learners to develop the skills to transfer knowledge across subjects and situations, and identify the link between and among subjects offered with a holistic view to learning through project-based, task-based, problem-solving, experiential learning models are emphasized with the potential to lead to deep and meaningful learning (<http://talimterbiye.mebnet.net/Ogretim%20Programlari/lise/ana.html>). To this end, teachers help learners develop as individuals who view learning as a lifelong activity, who are responsible, flexible, adaptable, creative, critical, capable of accessing information they need and having the capacity to evaluate the information they access, having the ability for problem-solving, good at working together, possessing social interaction skills, willing to negotiate, being able to make decisions and accept the consequences of decisions made

<http://talimterbiye.mebnet.net/Genel%20yaklasimler/Programlarda%20Temel%20C4%B0lkeler.pdf>). It is significant to note that the education systems in Cyprus and Turkey are similar since ‘both countries took similar steps and significant transformations in the process and structure of the education systems’ and hence, they encounter similar problems regarding education (Baskan & Ayda, 2018, p. 2).

In North Cyprus, a centrally planned curricula is followed in schools and the education system is highly centralised (Mertkan, 2011). The Ministry of Education modified the curriculum in 2005 and requires that a learner-centred approach is followed in the education system. Despite what is offered and required by the Ministry of Education, the results of a study conducted in high schools in North Cyprus by Aliusta, Özer, and Kan (2015) suggest that in spite of the modifications in the curriculum and the in-service training programmes offered to teachers, a learner-centred approach is not effectively implemented in schools and traditional teaching still dominates high school settings. For example, the authors suggest student profile, curriculum, teachers, educational resources, parents and structure of classrooms as the main barriers (Aliusta & Ozer, 2014). Pilli and Aksu (2013) argue lecturing and questioning are the main methods used to present content in primary schools in North Cyprus referring to maths lessons. Moreover, ‘because of content deficiencies of these trainings, the inadequacy of qualifications of trainers, and the fact that these trainings aim for promotions’, the in-service training programmes are argued to be ineffective (Baskan & Ayda, 2018, p. 23).

There are two routes to follow regarding initial teacher education in North Cyprus: education faculties in higher education contexts and Ataturk Teacher Training Academy (ATTA). Graduates of faculty of education programmes can continue their careers in either pre-school, primary or secondary school contexts. In ATTA, student teachers receive education to prepare them as pre-school or primary school teachers well-equipped in terms of information and capacities required for the teaching profession. The Academy offers pedagogical formation courses to their own students as well as students from other institutions who wish to be granted a teaching certificate. In the pedagogical formation courses, student teachers are offered education in educational theories, principles, methods,

models and learning/teaching styles/strategies with reference to new trends in education such as effective learning, constructivism, creative thinking, lifelong learning, teacher effectiveness and with a focus on recognising individual learner differences to be able guide learners in their learning (<http://www.aoa.edu.tr>). However, pedagogical formation courses are argued to be ineffective since they are not effectively combined with application (Baskan & Ayda, 2018; Onurkan Aliusta & Özer, 2017). A study conducted in ATTA with student teachers on their expectations from the ATTA further suggests lecturing is a method utilised by teacher trainers in the context and learners mainly remain passive (Tacman, 2010).

1.4.2 The Position of Learner Autonomy in the Context of the Study

This study was conducted in a faculty of education of a university in North Cyprus which offers education in a multicultural environment with opportunities to specialise in a wide array of disciplines as noted on their website. In its mission and vision statements, training students to become professionally responsible individuals who have the ability to adopt themselves to changing society and technology, who are innovative and who have the ability to contribute to the society are identified as the university's chief objectives. Creativity, free thought, participation, academic autonomy are expressed as significant values in the university's aims.

Educational policy in the Faculty of Education is to administer quality teacher education programmes where the educational expectations of society are reconciled with the necessities of contemporary education. In this regard, developing new models of education to meet the needs of the society, and developing, applying and improving contemporary teaching/learning philosophies with a focus on teaching how to learn are highlighted. To this end, evaluation and improvement of educational programs are given significant consideration. Primarily, the faculty aims to train their students to be effective and autonomous teachers.

Considering the mission and vision statements of the university and the Faculty of Education, the emphasis on LA and related concepts is signified. However, the results of previous studies have conflicting results. Two recent studies conducted in the ELT department in the Faculty of Education report positive

outcomes with regards to the promotion of LA based on the perceptions of both teachers and students (Baghbankarimi, 2014; Farahi, 2015). However, the results of another study conducted in the English Preparatory School in the same context suggest both teachers and learners are positive towards autonomy, yet although teachers have an established view of what autonomy is and how it can be promoted, they have difficulties in promoting it in practice (Haşimoğulları, 2017).

1.4.3 An Overview of the Curriculum in the Faculty of Education

Teacher education programs in Turkey and in North Cyprus are under the management of Council of Higher Education (HEC) and the courses offered in education faculties are developed in accordance with the requirements of HEC. All the departments in the Faculty of Education provide STs four year education including theoretical courses in the first three years and practice-based courses such as internship in their final year. The courses offered to STs can be categorised under three main categories as subject matter (content knowledge), pedagogy (including both pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge) and general knowledge courses (English, Turkish, Computer, History courses for all programmes) (https://www.yok.gov.tr/Documents/Kurumsal/egitim_ogretim_dairesi/Yeni-Ogretmen-Yetistirme-Lisans-Programlari/AA_Sunus_%20Onsoz_Uygulama_Yonergesi.pdf). In the graduation year, student teachers are offered practical courses and are required/given the opportunity to do teaching practice in public/private schools (<https://www.emu.edu.tr/en/academics/faculties/faculty-of-education/706>).

1.4.4 Information about Participating Teacher Educators and Student Teachers

In the Faculty of Education, there are eight departments: Computer Education and Instructional Technologies, Elementary Education, Foreign Language Education, Mathematics and Science Education, Educational Sciences, Special Education, Fine Arts Education and Turkish and Social Sciences Education. During the time the research was conducted, there were 1928 STs and 68 TEs across all eight departments. In the study, 11 female and four male teachers with teaching experience ranging between four and 31 years, 14 of them Turkish Cypriots and one from Turkey volunteered to participate. 11 of them are from

Educational Sciences, two from English Language Teaching and two from Computer Education and Instructional Technologies Department. 14 TEs completed their primary and secondary education in Cyprus and one in Turkey. Seven TEs completed their undergraduate/graduate studies in Cyprus and Turkey, two in Turkey and UK, two in Cyprus and UK, two in Cyprus and two in Turkey.

The courses and the year groups they taught at the time the study was conducted are given in the table below:

Courses Taught	No of TEs	Year groups TEs were teaching that they focused on for this study
History of Education	1	2
English for specific purposes	1	3&4
Student-centred Education	1	3
Teaching Practice	1	4
Principles and Methods of Instruction	1	2
Psychology of Education	1	2/3/4 (students from different departments)
Guidance and Psychological Counselling in Schools	1	1
Instructional Technologies and Material Development	1	2
Inclusion and Special Education Services	1	2/4

Turkish Education System	1	2/3/4 (students from different departments)
Literature reviewing and Reporting	3	1
Educational and Behavioral Measurement and Evaluation	1	2
Research methods	1	4

21 female and 6 male student teachers, five of them from North Cyprus and 22 from Turkey (reflecting a similar nationality profile of students across the faculty) volunteered to participate in the study. Three of them were in their first year, eight in their second year, nine in their third year and seven in their final year at university. Five of them were from Elementary Education, seven from Foreign Language Education, nine from Educational Sciences and six from Special Education.

1.4.5 Researcher's Role within the Institution

As the researcher, I am a teacher at the Foreign Languages and English Preparatory School of the university where the study was conducted. I do not share the same division with the participating TEs or STs. I had no prior connection with the STs before this study began. I knew all of the TEs on a professional basis as colleagues as we meet in general university or union meetings.

I held two sets of interviews with the TEs and so met each twice for the purposes of the study. I held three group meetings with STs where I asked STs reflective questions around LA and related concepts aimed at helping them create their own meanings. I then met them for individual/focus group interviews at the end of the study. I contacted all participants at the beginning of the diary keeping process to help with clarification issues (p.87). I shared my contact details with all participants and encouraged them to contact me if/when a need arose.

Although there was no intention to provide intervention for either party, I acknowledge that the Teacher Support Model (Appendix 1) and the group meetings (p.86) may have served this purpose as these raised awareness of LA and concepts related to LA, and may have influenced their practice.

1.5 Purpose of the Study

LA is an instructional goal in education. I appreciate its significance in the learning process from first-hand experience and also acknowledge the significant role of teacher support in its attainment. Hence, I propose teachers' perceptions of the modes of support they provide to their learners in the development and implementation of LA, and learners' perceptions of their actual practice of autonomous behaviours are areas that need to be explored. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine TEs' perceptions of their support for LA, i.e., namely STs (future teachers who are currently studying in the Faculty of Education) and STs' perceptions of their autonomous experiences as learners in the Faculty of Education, with the factors influencing both the support and the practice of LA.

1.6 Significance of the Study

LA has received considerable attention from researchers in the previous decades and ample research has been carried out in the area. In the literature, there are numerous studies and articles on autonomy in language learning, the nature of autonomy, the components of LA, the possibility and advantages of fostering autonomy, and how it can be supported by teachers, the majority taking into account either teachers' or students' perceptions. However, a review of related literature yielded limited empirical research with regard to both teachers' and students' perceptions of how teachers support their learners in the development and implementation of autonomous learning behaviours, and how students put LA into practice, particularly those including experiences and narratives that have the potential to provide deeper insights into the concepts. Perceptions of participants' actual practices that provide rich details about practical implications rather than theory based findings are significant as what is considered to be perfectly appropriate and accurate in theory may not be

applicable in practice. Therefore, there is a recognised need for studies that provide rich details to expand our understanding of how LA can be supported, how it is put into practice and the factors influencing its development and implementation from the viewpoint of both TEs and STs in the same context. I consider that empirical research on this interaction can shed light on current teaching/learning processes and lead to a fitting change in the practices of both teachers and students interested in LA.

This study is the first to my knowledge to be conducted in a Faculty of Education taking into account subjective views of both STs and TEs on the concept of autonomy through real life experiences and narratives in a natural setting. The main aim of conducting this research in a Faculty of Education is the belief that teacher education programmes are the optimal contexts where autonomy support can be provided, since the teaching staff in the Faculty of Education (TEs) and the learning community (STs) constitute the population that are familiar with the concepts being studied and are expected to exercise these concepts in practice, either giving or receiving instruction on the issues in theoretical terms as well as exercising them in the teaching/learning process.

In conclusion, the data gathered as a result of this study will comprise teacher perceptions on the LA support they provide in practice and their rationale (rather than merely in theoretical knowledge) as well as learner perceptions on how they put LA into practice and their rationale for doing so. Perceptions on the support offered will provide valuable implications regarding how teachers can support LA and how students can exercise it, and thus provide suggestions to those who wish to improve themselves as teachers and/or students while at the same time offering implications to the institutions for the betterment of their contexts to be able to actualise LA. I consider it significant to keep in mind that only when the stakeholders are aware of their own and each other's perceptions and actual practice can they be assisted in making amendments and improvements regarding the teaching and learning process, if and when necessary.

Therefore the study addresses the following research questions:

- 1 How do teacher educators perceive their support for the development of learner autonomy?

- 2 How do student teachers perceive their own learner autonomy in practice?
- 3 What are the factors that influence the development and implementation of learner autonomy according to the perceptions of teacher educators and student teachers?

1.7 Thesis Outline

Chapter 2 locates the study in relation to a review of literature on LA and teacher support for LA. Chapter 3 presents the theoretical perspectives and methodology underpinning the thesis, drawing on social constructivism and interpretivism. Chapters 4-11 present and discuss participating TEs' and STs' perceptions focusing on: conceptualisations and background of participants regarding LA (Chapter 4), the contextual factors influencing LA practice and teacher support for LA (Chapter 5), how participants support/practise metacognition (Chapter 6), what TEs do to create an atmosphere conducive to LA and how STs utilise such an atmosphere to enact autonomous behaviours (Chapter 7), learner training provided by TEs and how such training is reflected in learner behaviours (Chapter 8), participants' views on interdependence (Chapter 9) and the affective element of learning, with reference to how TEs provide affective support and how STs control their emotions (Chapter 10). Chapter 11 concludes the thesis by outlining specific results of the study. It is also a culmination of the previous chapters and provides a discussion of the findings synthesizing all data collected with the implications it suggests considering perceptions of how TEs support and how STs practise LA with reference to the factors. It later identifies limitations and implications for future research, and also provides some suggestions to teachers, students and institutions interested in LA.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This study seeks to investigate the perceptions of TEs and STs on the support TEs provide to STs concerning the development and implementation of LA and the autonomous behaviours learners display in their learning, and the present chapter aims to locate the study within a theoretical framework. To this end, a literature review on LA, teacher support for LA, teacher education for LA and TA is provided.

2.1 Some Common Themes around Learner Autonomy

2.1.1 Lifelong Learning and Learning to Learn

Learning is a lifelong process, whether in formal or informal contexts, individually or collectively, it is a process carried out throughout our lives. The increasingly rapid changes of the technological world requires that learners, and citizens carry on learning for their education, work and life in order to maintain full participation in the society they live in. It is widely recognised that we train our children for the future without knowing what the future will demand and what skills and competencies they will need later on in their lives (Claxton, 2002; Hoskins & Fredriksson, 2008; Taras, 2002). Therefore, students need to have the mind-set that learning is a lifelong process and that they will need to continue to update their knowledge base and skills/competencies to be able to function in line with the contemporary demands.

The significance of promoting lifelong learning by inspiring in learners the desire to learn and by assisting them in developing the ability to learn is, therefore, appreciated. Learning to learn is considered to be a key competence that can help learners sustain in ‘the learning profession’ throughout their life span with its main focus on the learning process rather than learning specific content (Hoskins & Fredriksson, 2008). Education is not merely concerned with passing information from generation to generation which results in regurgitation of existing knowledge. On the contrary, contemporary approaches to learning emphasize the significance of the learning to learn competence since it enables the construction of knowledge which is in line with the philosophies of ‘constructivism’ (3.1.2 Constructivism) and ‘learner centred approaches’ (below).

2.1.2 Learner-centred versus Teacher-centred Education

The fact that learners should assume agency and persist in active participation in the learning process has directed attention to learner-centred learning (LCL) as opposed to teacher-directed education. In teacher-directed education, teachers dominate instruction and the emphasis is on didactic modes of learning which some researchers maintain only leads to surface learning with learners as passive recipients of knowledge and the teacher as the main authority in class (Little, 2005; McMullan, 2006). In traditional teaching perspective, teachers are viewed as the main source of knowledge where they mainly use lecturing and presentation delivery styles and expect their learners to copy and memorise the information they are provided with (Ingleby, Joyce, & Powell, 2011; Wirth & Perkins, 2012). This teacher-directed education is also referred to as the ‘banking’ concept in Freire’s terms in which teachers transmit their knowledge to learners by organising a process to deposit to students the so-called ‘true knowledge’. The scope of learners’ actions, therefore, is limited to ‘learning’ by receiving, memorising and repeating what they are being taught (Freire, 1970).

LCL rejects the premise that ‘one teaching style fits all’ and aims to involve learners in all phases of learning by putting learners at the centre of the learning process where student needs, abilities, interests, experiences and perspectives are given primary consideration (Brown, 2003). In this approach, teachers are responsible for creating environments that promote effective learning for all learners, where learners are active in their learning, making use of their previous experiences and building on prior learning (Woelfel, 2003). With such characteristics, LCL is considered as promoting LA (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2019).

2.2 Understanding Learner Autonomy

All the aforementioned concepts, lifelong learning, learning to learn and LCL, share a common focus on the learner and the learning process. They all require learners to take responsibility and act as active agents in their learning; that is, they all require LA. Hence, the development of learners to be more autonomous in their learning comes to the foreground.

2.2.1 What is Autonomy?

In the literature covering autonomy, authorities in the field have their own ways of defining ‘learner ‘autonomy’ or ‘autonomous learning’ (two terms which I will use interchangeably in the present study). The fact that there is a sheer quantity of work on autonomy calls for a selective approach for its definition. The most commonly quoted authorities in the related literature are Holec, Little, Benson, Dickinson, Littlewood and Dam. Although in essence all these authorities seem to be in a consensus that autonomy is taking ‘control’, ‘responsibility’, ‘charge’ of learning to manage the learning process, I contend that the details they attach to the term are of considerable value to differentiate.

In the history regarding autonomy, it is the seminal work of Holec which triggered the interest on autonomous learning, particularly in the field of language learning. According to Holec (1981, p. 3), autonomy is one’s ‘ability to take charge of one’s own learning’ and autonomous learning is a process where learners are able to take responsibility for all aspects of their learning through exercising decision-making at successive stages in the process. There are five main categories of responsibilities in Holec’s definition and these are: determining learning objectives, defining the content and progression, selecting learning methods and techniques, monitoring the procedure of acquisition and evaluating what has been acquired. Holec’s definition of autonomy has formed the essence of what LA is and has established a basis for the development of the concept, however, it has been criticised for being technical, focusing mainly on metacognitive strategies and excluding some significant principles of LA (Benson, 2011).

Little (1991, p. 4) adds a psychological dimension to the definition by suggesting: ‘....autonomy is a capacity – for detachment, critical reflection, decision-making, and independent action. It presupposes, but also entails, that the learner will develop a particular kind of psychological relation to the process and content of his learning’. In this definition, the importance of the psychological factors related to the learning process in general and to the content is emphasized. Holec stresses the technical side of autonomy while Little (1991) complements it with the affective factors. In order to be able to detach oneself from the process and the content by stepping back, and critically analyse what is

going on, one needs to apply affective strategies, managing emotions regarding both what and how learning is happening. Little goes on to emphasize the role of social interactions through acts of negotiation in the development of autonomous behaviours, which directs attention to social factors as prerequisites of LA.

Dam (1995, p.1) defines autonomy as ‘a readiness to take charge of one’s own learning in the service of one’s needs and purposes’ and adds that autonomous learners possess the learning to learn competence to guide their learning process. She argues autonomous learners assume responsibility for everything in the class. Learners are active in the decision-making process, and there is great emphasis on self-evaluation, particularly with regards to learning plans, which are evaluated and revised as required. She contends that social interactions with others are substantial in the development and implementation of autonomy.

Dickinson argues autonomy is both an attitude and capacity. He sees autonomy as a capacity for active and independent learning, and states that autonomy expresses the conception of learning situations in which learners are responsible for taking and implementing decisions regarding their learning. To him, attitude towards learning and capacity for learning independently constitute autonomous learning, also directing attention to the role of motivation in the learning process (1995, p. 165).

Littlewood (1999, p. 428) posits ‘capacity’/‘ability’ and ‘willingness’ are required for autonomy. He defines autonomy as ‘an independent capacity to make and carry out the choices’ which govern behaviour and favours the use of the term ‘relatedness’ which expresses the notions of ‘contact, support and community with others’ to refer to the concept of social relations.

In a relatively more recent definition which covers most issues discussed by the mentioned scholars, Benson (2011) refers to autonomy as control over the learning process at three levels which will be discussed under 2.2.3 Levels of Autonomy. The role of social relations in the achievement of autonomy is underlined when Benson identifies the distinction between independence versus interdependence, favouring the latter in the attainment of autonomy.

My definition of LA is based on the critical analysis of existing definitions, from Holec (1981) to Dickinson (1987), Little (1991), Littlewood (1996 and 1999) and Benson (2001), as well as an analysis of related areas such as self-regulation (Zimmerman, 2002) and self-direction (Knowles, 1975), with the intention of ascertaining crucial components of autonomous learning. Therefore, the analysis of literature leads me to propose: LA, or autonomous learning, is the learners' capacity to manage and direct their learning by being conscious of their own and others' role in the learning process and by taking responsibility for this process as a whole where they are able to make decisions on the purpose, content, method of learning, where they monitor and evaluate the learning process, their dispositions towards the learning process with regards to their relations to the self and others, and take action accordingly in a cyclical fashion, repeating all or necessary steps as required. As Sinclair (1989, p. 242) puts it autonomy requires 'introspection, reflection and experimentation'. It is worthy to note that autonomy is not something that is done to learners, it should not be viewed as a teaching method, rather it is something that learners themselves do in the learning process to direct their learning (Little, 1991; Vermunt, 1996).

2.2.2 Characteristics of Autonomous Learners

In the broad literature on autonomy, there is a tendency to attach certain skills and attitudes to the concept. There is a far-reaching consensus that the ability and willingness to assume responsibility for the learning process constitutes the core of autonomous learning. Autonomous learners explicitly take responsibility for the learning process by taking the initiative in setting goals, planning and accomplishing objectives. After goals are set, learners select and implement appropriate learning strategies that have the possibility to guide them towards their goals. They reflect on their progress which enables them to monitor and evaluate their learning (Benson, 2001; Dafei, 2007). Reflecting upon learning facilitates self-assessment, a significant aspect in autonomous learning (Boud, 2013). Through reflection, they discern their strengths and weaknesses. Being aware of the gaps in their learning gives learners the opportunity to adapt/monitor their goals and their way of learning, hence enabling them to take necessary action (Kolb, 1984). In this cyclical process, motivation plays a key role. Motivated learners, particularly those who are intrinsically motivated, are

considered autonomous. They embark on a task with a desire that stems from within and mainly value learning for the sake of pleasure and satisfaction they obtain as opposed to learning for external rewards (Deci & Ryan, 2011; Reid, 2007). Therefore, to them what actually counts is the fact that they are progressing in the learning process.

Other characteristics associated with autonomous learners are that they:

- are determined
- are able to select and utilise resources
- design or make use of existing criteria in the evaluation process
- are happy to work on their own as well as seeking and utilising support from peers/teachers
- manage time
- take an active approach to learning
- are risk taking
- are persistent
- have high self-esteem/are confident
- relate new learning to what has previously been learnt
- are well-organised
- are flexible

(Camilleri, 1999; Chan, 2001b; Dafei, 2007; Holec, 1981; Koçak, 2003; Little, 1991; Macaskill & Taylor, 2010; Thanasoulas, 2000)

Taking into consideration all the characteristics attached to autonomous learners, it is possible to suggest that these learners are the ones who understand that learning goes on throughout lifetime, and attribute and implement certain behaviours and approaches in their learning process. Hence, they themselves can be referred to as lifelong learners, which in fact, is the ultimate goal of all education.

2.2.3 Levels of Autonomy

Autonomy is not an absolute concept: it is possible for learners to be operating at different levels on the continuum from dependence to complete autonomy, and in the literature regarding autonomy, there are various descriptors used to identify the autonomy level of learners. According to Nunan (1997) learners

perform at different levels in different contexts and at different times. The levels or degrees he proposes are: *awareness, involvement, intervention, creation and transcendence*. The first level, as the name suggests, is the level where learners are aware of the pedagogical goals and content while at the second level, learners actually select their own goals among a pool of alternatives. At the intervention level, learners are able to modify and adapt learning goals and content in the light of previous experiences. At the highest levels, learners create their own goals and function fully autonomously making links of what they are learning to the world they are living in respectively (Nunan, 1997).

Benson (2011, pp. 92-117) argues learners exert control over their learning at three levels which are *control over learning management, control over cognitive processes* and *control over learning content*. Control over learning management includes behaviours that learners demonstrate in the planning, organisation and evaluation of their learning. The conscious employment of learning strategies has a significant place at this level.

Control over cognitive processes is basically related to the psychology of learning with its three sub-categories as attention, reflection and metacognitive knowledge. Directing attention, that means being mentally engaged with the input, helps to sort out the input that learners are generally bombarded with. Reflection, which is of paramount importance in effective learning, entails the questioning and exploring of experiences and is referred to as a distinctive characteristic of autonomy. The third sub-category in Benson's control over cognitive processes, metacognitive knowledge, was introduced to the literature in language learning by Wenden. Simply put, metacognitive knowledge is the knowledge about learning including personal, task and strategic knowledge (Wenden, 1998) (2.3.1.1 Metacognitive Knowledge).

Benson adds his third level of control as control over learning content since control over the self-management of learning and control over the psychology of learning would not be enough to control the learning process as a whole. For the exercise of autonomy, it is crucial that learners have the opportunity for the self-determination of learning content, goals and methods rather than being imposed by others, be it teachers, textbook or the curriculum. To this level of

control, Benson adds the social dimension of learning, acknowledging the will and the role of learners in the determination of relations with ‘others’ in the learning process.

These levels are in fact interrelated and attainment in one in a way influences attainment in the others. For example, effective control of cognitive processes has the capacity to lead to better control over the management of learning, together with having a significant impact on the control of content.

Littlewood (1999) proposes there are two types of autonomy as ‘proactive’ and ‘reactive’, which can also be considered as levels in the implementation of autonomy. Learners who exercise proactive autonomy are able to set their own directions, select methods/techniques suitable for themselves and evaluate their learning. Reactive autonomy, however, does not entail creating directions but enables learners to organise their resources and reach their goals when a direction is initiated. Although some may not count reactive autonomy as genuine autonomy, I consider that reactive autonomy has the capacity to actually form the basic step to the more profound level, enabling learners to exercise some autonomy before being able to function fully autonomously.

2.3 Significant Concepts in Autonomy

LA is a broad umbrella. After a thorough analysis of the existing literature, in the present study I propose LA can be explored under three main headings as metacognition, interdependence and affect in learning.

2.3.1 Metacognition

Metacognition carries a crucial role in effective learning. It can be described as ‘thinking about thinking’ (Anderson, 2002, p. 1) or ‘knowledge about learning’ (Wenden, 1998, p. 515). Both definitions help display the importance of metacognition in the learning process, as it has the capacity to equip learners with the “learning to learn” competence, (Hoskins & Fredriksson, 2008), and thus, leading to autonomy. Metacognition particularly arises in occurrences where learners confront failures and when they struggle to overcome the challenges (Livingston, 1997; Öz, 2005). Learners who deploy metacognition in their learning are considered to be conscious of their deficits in the learning process, having an idea of what to do in cases of ambiguity and regulate their

learning accordingly (Anderson, 2002; Claxton, 2007). The metacognitive enterprise therefore is the realisation of the fact that there are limitations in learning but also there are strategies to rectify the limitations (Nāznean, 2016).

Metacognition is often associated with Flavell who popularised the term in the late 1970s by arguing that successful learning requires the ability to think about thinking. Metacognition in language learning is attributed to Wenden (1998).

It is possible to discuss metacognition under two main headings as metacognitive knowledge and metacognitive processes/strategies.

2.3.1.1 Metacognitive Knowledge

Metacognitive knowledge (Flavell, 1979; Wenden, 1998) is the knowledge that learners have about cognitive processes. This knowledge can be directly related to their own or others' experiences. It is possible to acquire this knowledge both formally and informally, with deliberate effort or incidentally. It is argued that metacognitive knowledge should be storable, that is, learners should be able to talk about this knowledge base, with its potential to unearth the intentions behind (Flavell, 1979; Fox & Riconscente, 2008; Ismael, 2015; Trebbi, 2008; Wenden, 1998).

Metacognitive knowledge is divided into three subcategories depending on whether it focuses on the learner (person knowledge), on the learning task (task knowledge) or the learning process (strategic knowledge).

Person knowledge (Wenden, 1998; Zhang, 2016), or self-knowledge in Pintrich's (2002) terms, is mainly related with the beliefs learners hold about themselves. *Self-efficacy*, that is learners' perceived beliefs about their capabilities and competencies, is an important part of person knowledge since it has a great influence in determining how learners feel, think, motivate themselves and behave, and the targets they set for themselves (Bandura, 1993). With learners possessing high self-esteem, achievement of hard goals becomes more probable since these learners have the belief that they can attain better results (Shannon, 2008; Spratt, Humphreys, & Chan, 2002).

Awareness of what one knows and what one lacks, 'the breadth and depth of one's knowledge base' (Pintrich, 2002, p. 221), is another aspect of self-

knowledge as is being aware of one's *strengths and weaknesses*. These two dimensions of self-knowledge are of paramount significance in the learning process, and are in fact closely related with the notion of reflection. Learners reflecting on their learning process and progress know where they are good at and where they need to improve and take action accordingly, which takes its deserved place under the umbrella of self-knowledge.

With these in mind, it is possible to suggest that person knowledge has the capacity to either foster or inhibit learning. However, caution should be taken with regards to the accuracy of this knowledge base since outside factors such as teachers, peers or even previous experiences with incidental successes or failures can mislead knowledge a person has about himself/herself and their learning (Pintrich, 2002). The flattering of the people around as well as circumstantial successes can lead to deceiving perceptions about oneself or what one can achieve while lack of motivators or unfortunate incidents may result in underestimation of the capabilities one possesses (Anderson, 2002).

Task Knowledge (Flavell, 1979; Wenden, 1998) comprises knowledge in three main aspects: *knowledge about the purpose of a task*, *knowledge about the demands of the task* and *knowledge about the nature of the task*. Learners have specific needs in the learning process, determined through reflection on learning in the form of ideas that need consideration or came up in the course of learning, and it is important to identify how the task will serve these learning needs. The necessary steps to be taken for the completion of the task and what information and skills are required for successfully accomplishing the task need to be considered which comprises task knowledge. The nature of the task also deserves attention as the kind of the task may have an influence in undertaking the task.

The third variable in metacognitive knowledge is *strategic knowledge* which is related to the strategies learners utilise in learning. It is assumed learners possess strategies to guide their learning, and are able to manage when and how to implement the appropriate ones in their learning process. Thus, strategic knowledge can be presumed as a subcategory of task knowledge as appropriate strategy selection for specific tasks can be perceived as task demand (Wenden,

1998). These include all the strategies at the service of learners. While some argue that these are mainly metacognitive strategies (i.e. Öz (2005), others such as Livingston (1997) propose that the strategies are both cognitive and metacognitive. However, I consider that in the effective management of the learning process, successful learners are the ones that utilise all kinds of strategies, be they cognitive, metacognitive, social or affective (Oxford, 1990).

2.3.1.2 Metacognitive Processes/Strategies

Metacognitive knowledge guides learners in their implementation of metacognitive strategies. It is the metacognitive knowledge about oneself as an individual and as a learner, knowledge about the task at hand to be completed and knowledge about strategies to be used that guide the metacognitive processes (Wenden, 1991).

Metacognitive strategies help learners control their own cognition in order to supervise and manage their learning (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2019; Oxford, 1990; Reinders & White, 2016; Wenden, 1991). Anderson (2002, p. 1) contends that ‘The use of metacognitive strategies ignites one’s thinking and can lead to more profound performance’.

Centring and planning learning, self-assessment and utilisation of learner strategies are significant metacognitive strategies.

2.3.1.2.1 Centring Learning

Centring learning (Oxford, 1990) is significant as it entails the link between present learning and previous learning which is of paramount importance in the learning process. According to constructivist thinking, learners base their conceptualisations on their prior knowledge and people learn new information by synthesising new knowledge and what they already know. This accords well with what Schneider and Stern (2010) propose: ‘what students already know substantially influences their subsequent learning processes’. Therefore, learners questioning what they already know and what they are learning, and trying to make a connection between their existing knowledge and new information help learners construct meaningful knowledge; knowledge that belongs to them instead of knowledge reiterated.

Another aspect in centring learning is paying attention (Benson, 2011; Wenden, 1991; Wenden & Rubin, 1987). Attention can be perceived in two distinct forms: directed attention and selected attention. Directed attention is deciding beforehand on general aspects of a task that one desires to focus on. It helps learners converge and focus their attention on their learning, and ignore the distractors, be they contextual or personal issues. Selected attention is being selective about what to concentrate on and so narrowing focus. Therefore, the ability to control what to attend to is significant in gaining control over learning.

2.3.1.2.2 Planning Learning

Strategies used for planning are deployed at the outset of learning and require pondering about what is expected to be achieved at the end in order to be able to guide the learning process (Wenden, 1991). Learners first need to be able to find out their learning needs or interests (Anderson, 2002). Taking into consideration their needs/interests, they need to set goals. It is indeed important that these are realistic goals since goals that underestimate or overestimate competences may lead to demotivation (Schunk, 1990). It is then necessary to devise a learning plan with reference to goals taking into account the available or optimum time required to achieve the goals set, the place where learning can take place; at home, at a library, on the internet (Bown, 2009). Reflecting upon the resources required and the resources available is also crucial (Donker, De Boer, Kostons, Dignath van Ewijk, & Van der Werf, 2014; Phakiti, 2006). What strategies learners are already confident in using, what alternatives can be used and how to improve using the alternatives are issues to be contemplated in the planning stage.

These strategies involve:

- a.* identifying needs for learning
- b.* deciding on priorities
- c.* setting goals and objectives
- d.* making a learning plan/organising learning
- e.* deliberating about the time to be spent and where to carry out learning
- f.* identifying the purpose of learning
- g.* determining how to achieve objectives

h. identifying resources essential to fulfil learning

(Donker et al., 2014; Ertürk, 2016; Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1991; Zimmerman, 2002)

2.3.1.2.3 Self-assessment

The ability to assess oneself requires taking responsibility through reflecting, monitoring and evaluating process and progress, therefore, enhances learning. Hence, it can be advocated that self-assessment has a significant place not only in terms of LA but also in preparing learners for lifelong learning. Boud (2013, p. 12) argues ‘Self-assessment means more than students grading their own work; it means involving them in the processes of determining what is good work in any given situation’. Similarly, it is argued that self-assessment is vital for the development of autonomy by attracting attention to the fact that autonomous learning is not only controlling learning through target setting and selecting activities but at the same time, by its very nature, it requires the evaluation of learning outcomes and the identification of strengths and weaknesses to be able to guide the learning process (Chitashvili, 2007; Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Little, 2004a; Taras, 2010).

There are two distinctive types of self-assessment. One is internal self-directed activity and the other is external other-directed activity. Although both have merits, the internal one in essence being similar to proactive autonomy and the external one like reactive autonomy, the self-driven self-assessment is the ideal one that can help learners accomplish the advantages of autonomous learning (Benson, 2011; Littlewood, 1999).

Although self-assessment has not traditionally been a formal part of learning, it has been a tool learners frequently experience and utilise. For example, going over work and reflecting on its adequacy, checking understanding while studying are common examples of self-assessment carried out in regular learning situations. Although the instances given provide examples of how it is conducted by learners in an unconscious manner, it is crucial to note that it should be practised more consciously and systematically for more fruitful results because self-assessment can only serve its aims if it is thorough, accurate and relevant to the learning aims (Boud, 2013; Gremmo & Riley, 1995; Taras, 2002).

Caution should be taken against the fact that self-assessment is usually challenging for learners, with learners overestimating or underestimating themselves. Learners who are weak may lack the knowledge and skills to accurately self-assess themselves, therefore, overestimating their performance, an issue that can also be related to person knowledge discussed under metacognitive knowledge (2.3.1.1 Metacognitive Knowledge). On the contrary, high-ability learners may underestimate, not fully recognising the extent of their knowledge and skills (Anderson, 2002; Aoki, 1999; Pintrich, 2003; Tassinari, 2011). To help overcome these problems, solid criteria which is comprehensible and student friendly should be available to learners to give them reference point to check their work and to enable them to arrive at a notion of whether their performance can be considered adequate and meet the standards. The availability of such criteria is significant since the aim of self-assessment is to provide learners with the information that enables them to control their learning (Benson, 2011). Hence, self-assessment tools utilised in a learning context should focus on self-monitoring and should be exploited in a cyclical approach, to ensure re-evaluation of learning rather than merely focusing on the end-product (Benson, 2011).

Although assessing oneself against other-created criteria is possible and can help learners engage in their learning, there is another alternative which is more favourable in autonomous learning with its potential to lead to taking ownership. This is the development of one's own criteria in accordance with one's own needs and targets (Cooker, 2012). Teacher-driven self-assessment leads learners to focus on teacher's expectations and thus is limited in the autonomy it offers. In contrast, self-driven self-assessment with own-created criteria places the whole emphasis on the individual, providing an ideal basis for the development of LA.

Both teacher-driven and self-driven self-assessments have their own merits and should be encouraged by teachers in learning contexts according to learner profiles. If learners are capable of creating their own criteria to check their learning against, they should be encouraged to do so without intervening with teacher-driven criteria. However, if they are not competent with creating their criteria, then they should be provided with teacher-driven ones to provide

learners with models and support them in the gradual process of being able to come up with realistic and efficient criteria. This can be likened to the internalisation of extrinsic motivation into intrinsic motivation that will be discussed under 2.3.2.1.2 Motivation. Teachers can guide learners who at first are not capable of generating their own criteria in the process of becoming competent to do so. Such teacher support can help learners to be able to come up with their criteria at later stages of their learning, which is a step taken towards more autonomous acting.

Reflection, monitoring and evaluating are significant skills for self-assessment.

Reflection

John Dewey, who is the pioneer of reflection and who directed attention to the role of reflection in the learning process, describes reflection as ‘active, persistent, and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends’ in his ground-breaking book ‘How We Think’ (Dewey, 1933, p. 6). He suggests that self-reflection leads to autonomy in learning, which is one of the main goals of education. Benson, on the other hand, asserts that effective reflection has the capacity to liberate learners from their learning habits and ways of learning, which in fact are inimical to autonomy (Benson, 2011).

Reflection is an internal process. Through reflection, learners examine and explore an issue which is usually triggered by an experience, with the intention of clarifying meaning. This response to the challenge helps learners to create new understandings (Freire, 1970). Therefore, the results of reflection have the capacity to bring about a change in conceptual perspectives, empowering broader perceptions, by leading to the realisation that there is no static reality but a reality that is continually being transformed in the light of new perspectives (Freire, 1970).

Loo and Thorpe (2002) refer to reflection as a three stage process which begins with awareness of situation, followed by analysis of the situation and finally the development of a new perspective. Reflection enables learners to make their learning visible and concrete, giving them the opportunity to make necessary improvements and amendments by taking necessary precautions. This gives

learners the opportunity to regulate their learning. When reflecting, learners are challenged to confront their experiences and expectations in a new light (Monteiro, Gomes, & Herculano, 2010). They engage in deliberate thought about what and how they are learning, and thus, are able to identify their learning needs (Brown, 2001; Sharifi & Hassaskhah, 2011). Identifying needs facilitates the act of checking later what action has been taken regarding these needs, therefore, monitoring progress, with the goal of improving it (Thomas, 1998).

However, it should be kept in mind that merely reflecting without taking action is not likely to be effective and may not produce the desired effects, so it should be practised as a cyclical process: experience, reflect, modify, experience (Kolb, 1984) if it is to reach its aims. In Kolb's learning cycle, concrete experience is taken as the starting point and is followed by reflecting on the experience. This leads to derivation of rules and generalizations. Later, experience is modified for future occurrence which leads to the next concrete experience. This cyclical nature, in which experiencing and reflecting are the two major components, makes the learning process more effective by adding to its depth, shifting learning from surface to deeper levels. It is possible to refer to Argyris and Schon's double loop learning here. They claim that single loop learning where errors are detected and corrected within governing variables is not adequate, and advocate that for effective learning, governing variables themselves should also be scrutinised (Argyris, 2002; Schon, 1983; Smith, 2003, 2009).

Although the development of reflection seems to be an educational goal on its own, it should be remembered that it is not an inborn capacity that leads to automatic implementation but needs to be supported in learning contexts (Biggs, 2011). On the issue of training for reflection, Kohonen (2000) asserts that it is possible to help learners build reflective skills with concrete tasks, supportive environment and effective tutoring.

The development of reflection may seem to be unproblematic at first sight; however, it brings with it a number of limitations that need to be addressed through proper training and preparation. McGrath, Lamb, and Deckard (2000) caution that practising reflection in essence involves risk-taking and maintains it requires preparedness in both attitudinal and technical terms. Learners from

traditional backgrounds may be reluctant to implement reflection in their learning, preferring to remain passive learners as they have been used to (Little, 2005; McMullan, 2006).

It is also significant to note that reflection is practised at different levels by learners. The highest level of reflection is critical reflection. Reflecting at this level necessitates undertaking a substantial change in perspective, that is, the transformation of meaning frameworks (Kember et al., 2000). Learners practising critical reflection are aware of why they perceive, think, feel and behave the way they do. They have the capacity to question their deep-seated beliefs and values which are either consciously or unconsciously assimilated into their belief systems through prior experiences and learning. It is essential to put aside assumptions in order to be able to define and direct action, and form new conceptual frameworks (Thorpe, 2004). Reflecting at this level is assumed to be challenging and is rarely observed to be achieved by learners (Kember, McKay, Sinclair, & Wong, 2008). Although it should be acknowledged that learners reflecting at lower levels on the reflection continuum (such as habitual action, understanding and reflection) benefit from that action, critical reflection is the level of reflection that is able to bring about major changes, ending with improvements in meaning frameworks (Kember et al., 2000; Kember et al., 2008).

Monitoring Learning

Monitoring requires the questioning of how well learning is going on. Monitoring through the act of reflecting enables learners to gain consciousness on their learning. For monitoring their attempts to learn, learners ask themselves questions like 'How I am doing?', 'Am I processing?', 'Are there any obstacles?', 'What are the obstacles?', 'How can I deal with the obstacles?' and in the light of the answers learners give to such questions, they gain the opportunity to take precautions, make amendments and regulate their learning (Wenden, 1991). When learners reflect upon their learning with a view to monitor it, it is likely that they can identify what went well and what did not. Learners are able to confront and articulate their weaknesses and strengths as learners or the strategies they employ in their learning. They then contemplate possible causes for either achievement or disappointment and position themselves in a better

place where they can struggle to overcome the problems (Donker et al., 2014; Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1991). It is possible to go back and ponder about the planning stage, and make changes and improvements to the decisions taken at the planning stage, turning learning into a cyclical process (Bown, 2009).

Strategies for monitoring learning attempts can be exemplified as follows:

- a. reflecting on learning process, checking the appropriateness of goals and the learning plan
- b. identifying what is achieved and what is not through a recognition of weaknesses and strengths
- c. contemplating possible causes for not achieving as desired
- d. pondering about strategies used taking into consideration their appropriateness to the goals and learning tasks
- e. considering alternative strategies that can be used
- f. recognising obstacles
- g. reflecting on resources with regards to their appropriateness to the goals and learning tasks

(Tassinari, 2011; Wenden, 1991; Zimmerman, 2002)

Evaluating Learning

Evaluation of learning is usually the hardest part since it entails a critical stance towards both what is learnt and the learning process as a whole (Donker et al., 2014; Tassinari, 2011). Evaluating learning is in essence analysing performance and the efficiency of learning approach (Donker et al., 2014). It usually necessitates thorough reflection on achievements and failures, as well as the whole learning cycle (Anderson, 2002; Livingston, 1997). The evaluation stage usually interprets successes and drawbacks in learning in terms of achieved goals since the strategies for evaluating learning are employed after learning (Donker et al., 2014). For evaluating their learning, the strategies used by learners involve evaluating learning with regards to their starting point and progress, learner strategies and learning resources in terms of their suitability to the learning goals and tasks, and evaluating their learning plan and its efficiency.

(Donker et al., 2014; Tassinari, 2011; Wenden, 1991; Zimmerman, 2002)

2.3.1.2.4 Learner Strategies

The conscious use of learner strategies is a metacognitive strategy highlighted in the literature. Hoskins and Fredriksson (2008, p. 24) define learner strategies as ‘...behaviors and thoughts in which a learner engages and which are intended to support the learner’s learning process’. (Cohen, 1996) draws attention to the conscious selection of learner strategies, differentiating strategies from processes that are not carried out strategically. Oxford (2003, p. 84) recognises learner strategies as ‘psychological gateways’ to LA arguing that the use of learner strategies in the regulation of learning process entails critical reflection and adaptation.

There are several lines of research that support the importance of strategy use in learning suggesting that when they are used appropriately, they facilitate performance and that being equipped with appropriate learning strategies promotes success in academic contexts (Donker et al., 2014; Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Hoskins & Fredriksson, 2008; O’Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1991; Zimmerman, 2002). However, although a considerable number of scholars are in favour of the practice of learning strategies, there are some counter arguments against their efficiency. It is argued that successful learners practise the use of learner strategies but not necessarily the ones that are commonly recommended or that there is no causal relationship between learners’ knowledge of learner strategies and their success, implying that learners who are knowledgeable about learning strategies do not necessarily make use of them (Little, 1995; Rees-Miller, 1993). Yet, it is valuable to note that it is not a prescriptive set of strategies that make a learner a good one but rather the ability to compile and employ a personal set of effective strategies that a learner is confident in using at the right time in the right place. It is also emphasized that the conception of learners about learning is of crucial significance. No strategy can help learners who perceive learning as a task to be completed. Rather than being viewed as a task, a mind-set of construction of knowledge should be adopted in order to benefit from the awareness and the implementation of strategies (Benson, 2011) which come together to suggest that training and support may be effective in their successful implementation.

2.3.2 Affect in learning and Affective Strategies

2.3.2.1 Affect

Oxford (1990, p. 140) proposes that *affective* is a term related to ‘emotions, attitudes, motivations and values’ and suggests that the domain of affect incorporates concepts such as self-esteem, anxiety, risk-taking and tolerance for ambiguity, and as such embracing significant aspects of autonomy.

2.3.2.1.1 Self-concept/self-efficacy

Learners’ beliefs about themselves are a significant aspect of affect, thus notions such as self-concept and self-efficacy are emphasized (McCarthy & Schmeck, 1988; Schunk, 2004). Self-concept embraces both self-esteem and self-confidence, and comprises of what people think they are, what they believe they can do and how best they can perform on the way to achievement. Self-esteem is the perceptions a person holds which represents their evaluation of their own worthiness. It is the emotional judgement of oneself as a person or as a student in educational settings, and how much they value themselves with regards to what they are doing. Self-confidence is the feeling of trust on one’s abilities and competences, giving clues about the scope of what one can accomplish and perform (Öz, 2005; Schunk, 2004).

The value learners give to themselves, the perceptions they have about the extent they believe they can achieve profile not only the goals learners set with regards to their learning but also influence the success of the whole learning experience (Bandura, 1993). Learners with high self-esteem and with the assurance that they will achieve set higher goals, have firmer commitment and accomplish higher outcomes, therefore self-concept/self-efficacy influence achievement (Bandura, 1993; Öz, 2005; Pintrich, 2003), previously mentioned as person knowledge under 2.3.1.1 Metacognitive Knowledge. In fact, this operates in a cyclical fashion: strong self-efficacy leading to better achievement, better achievement preceding high self-esteem. These terms are also closely related to LA: learners with high self-esteem and self-confidence tend to put extended effort and be more persistent in learning, and hence are better at regulating the learning process (Schunk, 1990).

Sometimes it is the case that learners expect encouragement and praise from others such as teachers, parents and peers, and do not realise that it is more valuable and effective if these come from within the learner; i.e. a learner possessing and activating intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b). Similarly, some learners tend to value the perceptions of others about themselves. It should be made clear to learners that their self-concept is what counts more, but should also be emphasized that the misconceptions they possess have the risk of influencing learning negatively (Anderson, 2002; Pintrich, 2002).

2.3.2.1.2 Motivation

Motivation is a significant aspect in autonomous learning that is affective in nature. Controlling motivation contributes to effective learning through enabling regulation of the process. Encouraging oneself, appreciating learning for its own sake, creating conditions to make one feel that learning is valuable and enjoyable, holding positive beliefs about learning, being persistent in learning, trying to resolve challenges rather than easily quitting, rewarding oneself are strategies that can be used by learners. In attaining these, learners' beliefs about themselves as learners and as individuals play a significant role directing attention to self-concept discussed above.

Motivation is a construct that helps learners initiate and sustain goal-directed cognitive processes and behaviours with the intention of attaining their goals and satisfying their needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000b; Schunk, 2004). To be motivated means to have the drive to do something, in the case of education, to have the impetus to learn, through being persistent, engaging in activities and relating learning to previous understandings (Ryan & Deci, 2000a). Motivated learners deal with problems in challenging situations, without letting challenges inhibit their learning. They also maintain positive beliefs about the learning process and create opportunities for more learning by extending their effort, doing more than they are required to do (Dembo & Seli, 2007; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; Ryan & Deci, 2000a; Schunk, 2004).

Yet, as reminded by Ryan & Deci, 2000a, motivation should not be granted as a unitary phenomenon. The level and nature of motivation learners possess and

exert in the learning process may vary from learner to learner and even for the same learner from context to context. There may be differences in the motivational level of students, some learners being more motivated than others, or in the orientation of their motivation, the driving force of what motivates them.

Two theories of motivation seem to be pervasive in the field of education. These theories, namely self-determination theory (SDT) (Deci & Ryan, 2011; Deci, Vallerand, Pelletier, & Ryan, 1991) and the attribution theory of motivation (Dickinson, 1995; Weiner, 1972), generally lead the discussions around the topic.

Self-determination theory (SDT) put forward by Deci and Ryan, is an empirically derived theory that emphasizes the role of inner resources for the development of personality and self-regulation of behaviour (Deci & Ryan, 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2000b). SDT distinguishes motivation as intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation is the genuine interest for learning and forms the basis of learning throughout lifetime (Ryan & Deci, 2000b). There are four sources of intrinsic motivation and these are challenge, curiosity, control and fantasy (Schunk, 2004). Intrinsic motivation involves a desire for carrying out an activity or engaging in the learning process for the enjoyment and the satisfaction obtained rather than separable consequences. Learners who are intrinsically motivated are interested in learning for its own sake and do not relate or expect outcomes to bring external rewards or pressures. Intrinsic motivation is claimed to foster the effectiveness of learning since it is closely related with learners' making use of opportunities to assume responsibility in their learning and making decisions regarding the learning process, in short, exercising autonomy. By contrast, extrinsic motivation is carrying out learning for external reasons. Rewards/outside pressures play a great role in the motivation of extrinsically motivated learners. These learners perform for the sake of outside factors rather than an interest in learning. Extrinsically motivated learners expect to attain separable outcomes with instrumental value. The external rewards can be in various forms such as appraisals, approvals, grades etc. or in the form of pressures such as fear of failure, low grades or disapproval (Benson, 2011; Deci et al., 1991; Dickinson, 1995; Roth, Assor, Kanat-Maymon, & Kaplan, 2007;

Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b). Although rewards are mainly associated with extrinsic motivation, there is a place for rewards in intrinsic motivation too, but the rewards in the two types of motivation differ in nature. Rewards in intrinsic motivation are internal, in the form of feelings such as competence and control, self-satisfaction and pride (Schunk, 2004).

Intrinsic motivation is viewed as the optimal form of motivation that is genuine in nature and leads to efficiency in learning, however, as Ryan and Deci (2000a) attract attention, there are circumstances where extrinsic motivation is the primary possibility when learners have no interest in the activity being undertaken or learning in general. Although human beings are endowed with intrinsic motivation from the early years of their lifetimes, there are circumstances when they feel the need for supportive conditions to maintain their intrinsic motivation. In such cases, providing external motivation enables learners to carry out tasks, taste the satisfaction of learning which eventually may lead to create intrinsic motivation. It is therefore possible to accept that external regulations can be transformed into internal regulations, with external motivation as a starting point for internal motivation. This process of transforming extrinsic incentives into internal motivation is referred to as *internalisation* (Black & Deci, 2000; Pelletier, Fortier, Vallerand, & Briere, 2001; Ryan & Deci, 2000a, 2000b; Williams & Deci, 1996).

On the other hand, there is a counter argument that extrinsic motivation may influence learners with intrinsic motivation in a negative way, killing their curiosity for genuine learning and making learners expect external rewards such as grades or rewards in return for their efforts rather than enjoying learning in itself (Dickinson, 1995).

Attribution theory (Dickinson, 1995; Weiner, 1972)

According to attribution theory, learners' perceptions of the causes of their success or failure are the determinants of their future performance. These causes are categorised under four headings as *ability*, *task difficulty*, *effort* and *luck* with regards to locus of control, stability and whether they are internal or external. Ability is assumed to be internal and stable while task difficulty is external and stable. Luck, too, is external but changeable, while all three (ability, task

difficulty and luck) are not within the control of the learner. Effort, however, is internal, changeable and its control is dependent on the learner as it is the learner who decides on how much effort they will put into learning. According to attribution theory (Dickinson, 1995), these perceptions learners hold regarding the learning process and themselves as learners greatly influence whether they are successful or not. Learners who attribute their success or failure to reasons which are external or stable do not tend to be persistent in their learning and are inclined to give up with the conception that their success or failure is determined by factors other than they can regulate. Accordingly learners who conceive themselves to be equipped with the ability to fulfil a task or carry out learning perform better than those who hold opposite views. Similarly, learners with insights that their success is directly related to luck and will succeed if their luck permits are likely to be less motivated to strive for success. Those, on the other hand, believing that the more effort they put, the more successful they become, are motivated to study more and attain better results (Dickinson, 1995; Spratt et al., 2002).

The cause and effect relationship with relation to success and failure, and the beliefs learners hold about these are therefore crucial and require critical reflection on the assumptions learners possess regarding their deep-seated beliefs and values on learning and themselves (Kember et al., 2000; Thorpe, 2004). Unless one is conscious about their belief systems and values, it is not possible for them to modify the ones that have the potential to inhibit their learning. Therefore, reflecting on beliefs, attitudes and values towards learning tasks and learning in general with the intention to make amendments in order to adapt them in accordance with learning needs enhances the learning process and learners' autonomy in this process and helps combat inhibition (Dickinson, 1995). This is closely related with person knowledge discussed under metacognitive knowledge, suggesting that self-efficacy is significant in determining how learners think and behave. Maintaining high but realistic self-esteem increases the chances of motivating oneself. With learners who are confident in their abilities and competences, the likelihood that they set higher goals and attain better results increases (Dickinson, 1995; Shannon, 2008).

With these in mind, an obvious link between attribution theory and metacognitive knowledge is conceived drawing attention to the significance of learner beliefs in the progress of learning. Learner beliefs carry such a determining role in the success of learners since it is the beliefs learners hold about themselves and the learning process that shape their actual learning experiences. This is linked to the mind-set theory put forward by Yeager and Dweck (2012) which suggests learners who view their capacities as assets that can be developed tend to be more resilient in their learning.

Affective strategies in learning, which represent the control of actions related to self, allow learners to regulate their emotions, motivations and attitudes (Benson, 2011; Oxford, 1990). It is essential for learners to have control over their feelings to be able to regulate their learning. While negative feelings towards learning limit the amount of input learners can process, positive feelings have an opposite effect enhancing the amount and the quality of learning by making learning enjoyable and effective (Craig, Graesser, Sullins, & Gholson, 2004; Oxbrow, 1999; Oxford, 1990; Oxford, 2015).

The affective strategies that learners utilise to manage their feelings, attitudes and thoughts regarding learning can be summarised as follows:

- a. Lowering anxiety
- b. Risk-taking
- c. Increasing motivation/self-encouragement

Learning can be frustrating at times. Learners can take precautions against their anxiety or other factors hindering their learning provided that they are conscious of such feelings and that there are ways of dealing with them. Learners usually have their own ways of dealing with their anxiety. In order to realise what works for them; they need to listen to themselves, experience different methods and at the same time give chance to the strategies suggested by others. For example, while some learners relax by listening to music, some others talk to friends about their problems while others prefer doing exercise (Craig et al., 2004; Oxbrow, 1999; Oxford, 1990).

Developing tolerance towards ambiguity is also significant for managing anxiety. Learning generally contains chaos and uncertainty. Being able to

tolerate these and using strategies to deal with them is crucial considering the fact that learning continues throughout lifetime (Oxford, 1990).

Adopting a mind-set which enables and encourages taking risks is also an important factor in successful learning (Camillieri, 1999; Oxford, 1990; Thanasoulas, 2000). Such learners are better able to adapt themselves to the requirements of their needs and preferences, and are able to perform a step further than what is already available or offered. Tinkering with new approaches/ways/strategies to find out what works for them is in fact a move towards autonomy and is an affective strategy learners can make use of in learning.

Self-motivation through being positive about oneself and rewarding especially after achieving something aimed are considered as learner strategies that are affective in nature. Learners who deploy these strategies are in a better position to manage their learning (Oxford, 1990).

2.3.3 Interdependence

The term autonomy seems to denote the concept of independence. A misconception that autonomy implies only working in isolation from teachers, other learners and courses can, therefore, be created. Here a paradox is manifested since learning by its nature is a social act, particularly in a social-constructivist spirit. Learners are social beings and they rely on each other for many aspects of everyday life, and learning as a part of everyday life is not an exception. Therefore, it is discussed in the literature that learners need each other in the learning process and the role of cooperation and collaboration on the way to autonomy is emphasized (Benson, 2011; Koçak, 2003; Lee, 1998; Littlewood, 1999; Vieira, 1999; Zoghi & Dehghan, 2012). To emphasize this point, Little (1995, p. 178) asserts that ‘total independence is not autonomy but autism’ and suggests that even in situations where learning seems to lack social interaction such as when reading a book, there is in fact a covert form of interaction going on, highlighting the fact that interaction is a core element in learning.

The fact that learners need the presence and assistance of teachers and other learners in the learning process draws attention to interdependence rather than independence (Benson, 2011). On the one hand, learners need to make their own

way into learning on the basis of their own needs and interests. On the other, they are constrained by the fact that they need to work towards mutual goals in social settings such as classrooms or group work activities where responsibilities are shared and decisions are taken in negotiation with others. What seems to be two binary opposites, then, need to be braided together, by finding and maintaining a balance (Koçak, 2003; Zoghi & Dehghan, 2012).

A substantial point on this issue is made by Littlewood (1999) when he refers to the need for *relatedness* in learning. Littlewood (1999) contends that the attainment of autonomy is a fundamental need for human beings, as is the need to be related. With the term ‘relatedness’, ‘contact, support and community with others’ are the ideas conveyed, referring to the notion of ‘autonomous interdependence’, which is in fact the balance between irrational freedom and dependence (Littlewood, 1999, p. 74). The author concludes that the relations with others and concrete support are important factors for the facilitation of autonomy, enabling to practise liberty in making decisions while at the same time staying mutually connected with others for the exercise of autonomy. The same issue is echoed when Aoki (1999) claims that autonomy finds its existence in the context of supportive social relations, drawing attention to the role of teachers and other learners in the learning process. One of the three main needs of human beings is identified as relatedness, and teachers and other learners in the learning context can be referred to as significant others (Núñez, Fernández, León, & Grijalvo, 2015; Núñez & León, 2019; Sierens, Vansteenkiste, Goossens, Soenens, & Dochy, 2009).

The significance of collaboration and negotiation in learning are, therefore, underscored and it is argued that these two tenets are essential for the development of autonomy (Benson, 2011; Kohonen, 2007; Ting, 2015). In his experiential learning framework, Kohonen (2007) posits that interactions taking place between individuals help shape knowledge construction. These direct attention to the notions of social learning, apprenticeship and Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) in the learning process.

The role of social interactions and the context in learning can be linked to the notion of apprenticeship which conveys the idea that learners acquire learning

behaviours and dispositions by being apprenticed to a community where these behaviours and dispositions are displayed, modelled and valued (Claxton, 2002; Schunk, 2004). In education, this is referred to as cognitive apprenticeship (Oxford, 2003, 2015).

Vygotsky (1980) introduced the notion of Zone of Proximal development (ZPD), the idea of scaffolding with which less capable learners are able to perform better through the help of more capable ones in the context. Vygotsky (1980, p. 86) defines ZPD as:

... the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers.

The ZPD maintains through proper instructional conditions, learners are able to achieve higher goals than they would normally achieve had there been no support provided, with the suggestion that learners can possibly accomplish higher goals in the future as a result of the cooperative work carried out earlier in their studies (Reid, 2007).

Accepting the arguments that learning is a social act involving other people and that others in learning circumstances influence the learning process and the nature of what is learnt highlight the role played by social learning strategies. The social context and the participants in the social context are determinants of what is actually learnt (Claxton, 2002; Putnam & Borko, 2000). These draw attention to the crucial role these strategies play in the learning activity. Although Wenden and Rubin (1987) argue social activities do not directly contribute to learning but only provide opportunities for practice, in reality, social relations in learning have the potential to facilitate the learning process as social strategies assist learners in learning with and from each other (Tassinari, 2011) and enhance knowledge construction (Benson, 2011; Koçak, 2003; Zoghi & Dehghan, 2012).

2.4 Limitations to the Implementation of Autonomy

Although the implementation of autonomy in learning has numerous benefits for the facilitation of the learning process, it is not without its limitations. There are a number of factors that inhibit the practice of autonomy in educational settings

as well as in independent learning situations, some of which are external while some are internal limitations (Trebbi, 2008). One of the biggest limitations to the practice of autonomy is learner beliefs (Abdolahzadeh & Nia, 2014) about the nature of learning and teaching. Learners from traditional learning backgrounds, where all decision-making resides with the teacher, may not feel comfortable with the idea of autonomy, particularly with the issues of responsibility taking and sharing a part in making decisions. Such students may have the belief that it is the teacher's responsibility to cover these duties and may find it challenging to take responsibility. Some may even criticise the teacher for not doing their job and lose motivation for learning (Chan, 2001a, 2001b; Reinders, 2010; Spratt et al., 2002; Tan & Chan, 1998). Furthermore, if learners possess a misconception that successful learning takes place only when it is mainly guided by the teacher, depending on their backgrounds or previous experiences, it becomes particularly difficult to operationalise autonomy (Thanasoulas, 2000). This issue is even more problematic if learners are adults with rooted beliefs and fossilised behaviours which make it even harder to undergo transformation, which is the usual case in higher education contexts (Nicolaidis, 2008). Learners' previous learning experiences influence learner beliefs. Learners who have not been exposed to learning situations where they could exert autonomy find it confusing to deal with alternatives, reach decisions or think about their learning, and so display hesitance since they have no similar experiences they can build on. This results in learner resistance towards LA or misuse of the opportunities provided (Trebbi, 2008). Such learners either reject the idea altogether or make superfluous responses to alternatives, by making arbitrary choices, which have little or no contribution to the aim.

It is possible for some learners to find LA demotivating. If learners are left to make decisions and take responsibility which is beyond their competency level, they may be discouraged by what autonomy offers and be reluctant to practise it. They may blame their teachers as not being adequate, or themselves as lacking the skills and knowledge to attain or maintain success. These result in learners' quitting. It is therefore necessary to identify what learners can manage, the extent to which they can tolerate autonomy and scaffold learners accordingly to accept

to regulate their learning gradually (Camillieri, 1999; Kirschner, Sweller, & Clark, 2006).

Agency is a significant issue in the exercise of autonomy. However, it should be remembered that the development of agency may not be achieved by simply changing situational conditions. As Oxford (2003) points out, it requires more than asking or letting learners assume responsibility and draws attention to the need for opportunities for actual practice. The author also cautions against the fact that although it is possible to exert autonomy technically in contexts where physical conditions seem to support autonomy, the exclusion of psychological factors may inhibit its actual implementation and directs attention to the need for psychological preparation of learners for the application of autonomy so that they accept its significance for effective learning and use it actively.

It may also be the case that some learners are not inclined to exercise autonomy in their learning because they are too busy with learning domain confined knowledge that they may not prefer to spend time on things whose capacity to lead to success is not personally supported by evidence. This is also true for learners who are under exam pressure and focus on exam related material, ignoring other tools that can be useful in helping them learn to learn (Chan, 2001a).

Autonomy is usually referred to as a Western concept and that learners, particularly from eastern backgrounds, find it difficult to exercise autonomy in their learning due to the fact that learning in their contexts is mainly guided by authoritarian approaches. However, Littlewood (1999) argues this is an unfounded view and cautions against creating and imposing stereotypes. He holds that although students from Asian backgrounds do not take the incentive to initiate learning, that is, they do not commence proactive autonomy, they can take responsibility of learning reactively once a direction is appropriated by the teacher. The author also contends that 'there is actually less difference in attitudes to learning between Asian and European countries than between individuals within each country', pointing out the fact that the difference primarily lies in the approaches learners take towards learning (Littlewood, 2000, p. 31). Similarly Ivanovska (2015, p. 354) reflects that 'It seems to be true

that none of us can escape entirely from the cultural assumptions and practices that have shaped us, although at the same time we might believe in the existence of human universals'. Autonomy can be achieved regardless of age and culture (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2019) and is more related with local insights than 'orientalist national or regional stereotypes' (Smith, 2003b, p. 138).

Whether learners receive the right messages in their learning regarding autonomy or not is a determining factor in its practice. This is highlighted when Taras (2002) reminds that in reality learners receive contradictory messages, claiming that what is aimed at and what actually takes place in classroom practice often contradict each other. Despite the broader educational view focusing on independent judgement and agency in the learning process, the way courses are designed and presented to learners differ greatly, conveying the message that what really counts is not the process but the product, not learning itself but the grades learners obtain (Chuk, 2003).

It is also significant to note that if the two theories of action as theory-in-use and espoused theory (Argyris, 2002; Schon, 1983) are different, the realisation of target behaviours is problematic, which Borg and Alshumaimeri (2019) refer to as stated and enacted beliefs. Sometimes it is possible that learners express their views on one hand but behave in ways that do not match their theoretical views. In such cases, although they appear to accept and value LA, it is difficult for them to practise it.

Whether autonomy is implemented or not, or the extent to which it is implemented is open to discussion even in contexts where it is claimed to be the leading pedagogy (Reinders, 2010). These all attract attention to the fact that if teachers and learners are not well informed about the value of autonomy and have not internalised what can be achieved via its use, it is very likely that its implementation will fail in what it intends to achieve, stressing the importance of supportive contexts and training for the success of autonomous learning, as well as teachers' being prepared to be able to support it (Chan, 2001a; Reinders, 2010). Although learners hold various beliefs about the nature of the learning process, and their own and their teachers' roles in this process, it should be borne in mind that the mentioned problems can be overcome by adequate and proper

support from teachers and such support is the cornerstone in the application of any pedagogy. If not provided with the necessary guidance, learners may start to feel demotivated and quit easily, losing belief in its usefulness (Chan, 2001b; Reinders, 2010).

Providing learners with the training they need depending on their level is, therefore, of utmost importance, which is something discussed by Vygotsky with his notion of ZPD. When efforts are carefully mediated and scaffolded from where learners stand to the point they can mature in cooperation with more capable ones, success is reinforced, where scaffolding refers to the act of providing support to learners as needed and fading the support when they are more competent in what they are doing (Poehner, 2012; Rowlands, 2003; Zoghi & Dehghan, 2012).

In creating the context, teachers have a crucial role and teacher beliefs/dispositions around LA greatly influence its actualisation as teacher beliefs on a pedagogical approach impact how they structure their practice and what kind of opportunities they provide to their learners (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2019).

2.5 Teachers and Learner Autonomy

2.5.1 Teacher Roles for Learner Autonomy

In autonomous learning, teachers and learners have transformed roles. LA entails the learners taking responsibility for their learning through giving them the opportunity to manage their own learning by participating in decision-making. In traditional classrooms, teachers are the major decision-making figures: It is the role of teachers to decide on what to be covered in class and how it is to be covered (Ingleby et al., 2011). Sharing this responsibility with learners may give the implication of less authority on teachers' side, yet, in an autonomous classroom, teachers have a broadened role. Besides teaching, they act as facilitators, counsellors, consultants and managers of learning resources (Demirtaş & Sert, 2010; Han, 2014; Little, 1995; McDevitt, 1997). Teachers in such environments are responsible for providing options to learners and guiding learners in the decision-making process so that learners are more able to arrive at solutions to their problems by themselves (Oğuz, 2013a). Being able to

scaffold learner behaviour and thinking as and when necessary is also a part of the capacity teachers need to be equipped with (Hui, 2010).

Teachers and learners together are co-producers of lessons and teachers help their learners accept responsibility and take initiative (Little, 1995). In an autonomous classroom, a teacher should be able to let go of the control, allowing learners to learn by themselves, which is in contradiction to the perception of 'good teacher' in some contexts where learners are accustomed to the traditional way of teaching due to their educational backgrounds (Phan, 2012). It is equally significant to convey the message that the teacher has confidence in their learners' managing their learning (Vansteenkiste et al., 2012).

Teachers do not convey information they think is necessary for learners to learn, rather, they create an atmosphere where learners are inspired to learn and in which the learning environment crafts the hunger for knowledge in learners and keeps the yearning for learning alive (Poerksen, 2005).

Cognitive conflict has a significant role in autonomous learning. When learners are confronted with cognitive conflict, they try to resolve the conflict by reflecting on their experience which as a result enhances their learning. Teachers in autonomous classrooms act as problem designers and foster learning by presenting problems which ignite in learners the aspiration to find answers (Little, 2006; Poerksen, 2005; Schunk, 2004).

It is also crucial for teachers to guide their learners to question the validity of the information they receive with the intention of creating their own meanings rather than regurgitating those of others, which is an underscored principle in the constructivist view (Poerksen, 2005). To this end, learners are encouraged to practise negotiation. Through initiating, supporting and directing the processes of negotiation, learners are encouraged to generate their own meanings (Little, 2006; Poerksen, 2005). Teachers are no longer authorities to be obeyed blindly but resources that can help find answers and enlighten the learning process, helping learners make informed choices when needed.

The most important role of teachers is to help learners become autonomous and effective in learning through providing the supportive conditions and equipping

learners with the necessary skills through training. They provide learners with the necessary tools and help them become aware of different learning strategies, and give them the opportunities to implement these in their learning, assisting them in their journey to act autonomously (Ahmad, Yaakub, Rahim, & Rohani, 2004).

2.5.2 Teacher Education

LA is a gradual process that can be nurtured through proper and appropriate guidance (Dickinson, 1995; Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Little, 1995; Louis, 2006; Reinders, 2010; Thanasoulas, 2000; Yasmin & Sohail, 2018). Acknowledging this brings us to realise that teachers are the ones who can ignite autonomous learning in their learners. At this point the realisation of teacher education for LA is signified since if teachers are not educated or well-informed about LA, it would not be realistic to expect them to help their learners to be autonomous, drawing attention to the need of a knowledge base together with direct experience in LA (Baz, Balcikanli, & Cephe, 2018; Camilleri, 1999; Chuk, 2003; Edelhoff, 1984; Ertürk, 2016; Kahraman, 2015; McGrath et al., 2000; Smith, 2003a; Smith & Erdoğan, 2008; Trebbi, 2008; Vieira, 1999; Vieira, Barbosa, Paiva, & Fernandes, 2008; Yasmin & Sohail, 2018). Little (1995) proposes that in teacher education, prospective teachers should be given opportunities to argue and internalise the importance of LA but also cautions that mere argument is not adequate. Little (1995, p. 179) takes the view that ‘We must provide trainee teachers with the skills to develop autonomy in the learners who will be given into their charge, but we must also give them a first-hand experience of LA in their training’. To facilitate autonomy in learners, teachers should have an explicit awareness of themselves as learners which is usually uncovered in educational contexts, particularly in teacher education programmes (Breen & Mann, 1997). This resonates with what Edelhoff (1984, p. 189) argues: ‘teachers will hardly be prepared or able to administer autonomous learning processes in their students if their own learning is not geared to the same principles’. In a study conducted in Japan with practising language teachers, Stroupe, Rundle, and Tomita (2016) suggest that teachers need support on the way to help learners develop LA, directing attention to teacher education/training. Training teachers

on teacher support helps them accept that autonomy support is easy and possible to be implemented (Reeve & Cheon, 2016).

2.5.3 Teacher Autonomy

The ongoing debate on the significance of promoting LA and how it can be promoted (Benson, 2011; Little, 1995; McGrath et al., 2000; Reinders, 2010; Voller & Benson, 1997), and the transformed roles teachers take on in structuring and scaffolding the learning environment in pro-autonomy pedagogy have given rise to discussions on TA. According to Hui (2010) there is an interactive relationship between the two constructs, with TA being acknowledged as a crucial factor influencing the development of LA. The same issue is highlighted by Camilleri (1999) who proposes that empowering teachers with autonomy will be reflected in their subsequent promotion of autonomy in learners.

2.5.3.1 Versions of Teacher Autonomy

TA, like LA, has been approached from different perspectives and therefore, has been conceptualised differently with two main versions identified in the related literature (Cárdenas, 2006; McGrath et al., 2000; Smith, 2003a) which are: *TA in self-directed professional action* and *TA in self-directed professional development*.

a. TA in Self-directed Professional Action

In the first camp, an analogy between TA and LA is readily recognised, where the principles of LA are embodied in TA. In this view, TA is viewed as taking responsibility for the teaching process in the same sense LA is taking responsibility for the learning process (Kahraman, 2015; Manzano Vázquez, 2018; Sinclair, 2008). Autonomous learners manage their learning with all its aspects; similarly, TA addresses all aspects regarding the teaching practice, including not just the nature and role of content but also social and affective factors relating to the teaching and learning process, and especially the role of teacher reflection. Concerning this issue, Little (1995, p. 179) maintains that TA is the capacity of a teacher to engage in self-directed teaching and goes on to define it as teachers' 'having a strong sense of personal responsibility for their teaching, exercising via continuous reflection and analysis the highest possible

degree of affective and cognitive control of the teaching process', so highlighting the significance of both *capacity* and *responsibility*. In this version of TA, it is important for teachers to take ownership of their teaching, being able to and having the chance of making informed pedagogical choices in their profession as well as taking the initiative to propose and implement pedagogical change (Cárdenas, 2006). Aoki (2002) suggests TA requires *freedom* besides responsibility and capacity in making choices regarding the craft of teaching since mere capacity in contexts where freedom, and/or responsibility are not present may not always lead to the realisation of TA.

Thus, in its simplest form, TA is the act of making autonomous decisions about what to teach and how to teach. When talking about TA in the sense of self-directed professional action, it should be borne in mind that teaching is not replicating what other teachers do but finding and following your own way of practice. Therefore, teacher judgments on self-directed action are prominent. In this view of TA, teachers follow their pedagogical and practical knowledge together with their experience to decide on the content and the approach to the teaching process. They ponder about the progress and the need of their students and adapt their teaching content and pace accordingly. To be able to this, they need to be equipped with the necessary knowledge base: aptly informed and furnished with content knowledge, pedagogical knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge (Nilsson, 2008).

Hui (2010) argues teacher dispositions/attitudes towards TA need to be taken into consideration too, since dispositions influence both motivation and actual action. It can be argued that teacher attitude and beliefs may constitute internal constraints and so present themselves as great obstacles, with negative attitudes towards TA restricting its actualisation. With all these in mind, we come to realise that TA is a construct as challenging as LA since both are multifaceted concepts where the co-presence of certain factors is necessary. Therefore, both need to be properly supported in psychological as well as behavioural terms.

Although this view of TA has been criticised for its mere focus on teachers without having an explanation of how TA is related to the development of LA (Aoki, 2002), I consider it significant for LA in that it has the potential to lead

to LA since teachers displaying such behaviours help their learners internalise the concept that it is not covering topics but learning that matters. Such teachers, with the behaviours they exhibit, act as models and stimulate in their learners the target behaviours. They convey to their learners that learning needs to be adapted according to their needs and pace. By doing so, they encourage their learners to embrace similar autonomous behaviours. Regarding this Phan (2012) treats that TA and LA are two concepts that reinforce each other since in the promotion of LA, teachers need to work autonomously with regards the learners' learning process. 'Because autonomously motivated teachers have a developed understanding of the merits of the subjects they teach and of the methods they use, they can provide their students with convincing explanations and examples for the value and relevance of those subjects and for their methods of teaching' leading to greater autonomy support which consequently may result in greater autonomy in learners (Roth et al., 2007, p. 764).

b. TA in Self-Directed Professional Development

In the second version, TA is conceptualised as the capacity for 'self-directed professional development' (McGrath et al., 2000; Smith, 2003a). In this conceptualisation, teachers are autonomous in the sense of professional development. Teachers have a professional identity and they keep abreast of current developments in their fields as well as the changes in the world in order to adapt and meet the changing needs of the teaching/learning process, thus their learners. Teachers reflect on their practice critically and identify their weaknesses, and decide on their priorities for action. They are in charge of their own decisions on areas they feel the need to improve in, the time and the context they find fit to this end (Cárdenas, 2006; Lamb, 2008; Smith, 2003a). It is noteworthy to realise that reflecting on practice is significant both in terms of identifying gaps to be addressed and utilising experiences as a resource to learn from which is equally important for professional development.

2.5.3.2 Teacher Autonomy Serving Learner Autonomy

TA has the capacity to serve LA (Cárdenas, 2006; Smith, 2003a). It is the ability and the willingness of a teacher to empower their learners to take ownership of their learning (Cárdenas, 2006; Thavenius, 1999). It can be considered as a

'commitment to promoting LA' through nurturing a class culture where learners are ready and prepared to take responsibility for their learning (Cárdenas, 2006, p. 190). Teachers reflect on their craft of teaching, deliberate about they can do to promote autonomy in their learners and come up with ways to support their learners to be able to behave autonomously. Through reflective conversations and acts of negotiation, they endeavour to inspire their learners to internalise the value of autonomous behaviours. Further, they not only try to make their learners aware of how significant it is to be able to have command over their learning but they also provide training on what learners can do to regulate their own learning and give their learners opportunities to put into practice through tinkering with ways of learning that they find convenient for themselves. However, I consider TA serving LA to be quite challenging: It requires not only the knowledge and the motivation to help learners build autonomous skills, but it also requires the courage. It, in fact, necessitates risk taking (Wang, 2011). In the two versions of TA, teachers are engaged in adapting/improving themselves and their practice. They control their own environment with the aspects related to their own lives and their professional world. However, when TA is taken as serving LA, the focus shifts to teachers' not controlling their learners. This requires the courage to ease off the control; they endeavour to find ways to support their learners without intervening. The focus therefore ceases to be within the control of their own environment only, but takes into account other social beings with their own realities, own motivations and own constraints. Teachers try to assist learners to build autonomous behaviours while at the same time trying not to influence them, and trying to help them find their own ways instead of replicating that of teacher or their classmates.

2.5.3.3 Limitations to Teachers' Implementation of Teacher Autonomy

TA brings with it a number of drawbacks that need to be addressed. To begin with, it deserves particular attention to note that attaining TA is a not a straight forward activity. Apart from the requirement for teacher education for LA, it is accompanied with some other tensions.

The extent to which teachers are autonomous in their decisions regarding their profession varies from context to context since in different contexts, there are different limitations to TA, which sometimes reduces the profession to a

technicist enterprise (Lamb, 2008; Oxford, 2003). These limitations arise from both external and internal reasons, mainly from accountability standards and as resistance by the teachers themselves to the application of autonomy (Benson, 2011; Cárdenas, 2006; McGrath et al., 2000; Roth et al., 2007; Smith, 2003a).

Educational systems which do not practically favour the development of autonomy may inhibit its realisation (Nicolaidis, 2008). Standardised tests may present themselves as a limitation for TA. In contexts where standardized tests are the main determinants of success of both learners and teachers with the assumption that performance of learners is an indication of how 'good' a teacher is, the implementation of TA in the sense of self-directed professional action can be restricted. Teachers in such contexts usually feel the pressure to focus on what is usually tested instead of spending time on supporting learners on how to learn or assisting them in the process of taking ownership of their learning or in gauging learners' genuine interests. Similarly, evaluation of teacher performance is another limitation. In contexts where teacher performance is evaluated against pre-set criteria, TA may be left only as a utopia. On this issue Vieira (1999, p. 227) advocates that 'Teachers tend to become disempowered executors of the laws and principles of effective teaching, their competence being measured by pre-specified performance criteria.' In such circumstances, teachers feel the need to adopt a uniform teaching to 'meet the standards of teacher evaluation' (Yan, 2010, p. 176).

The intention of maintaining a standard among all educational settings within a level/form poses another limitation to the implementation of TA. There are set learning outcomes outlining what learners should be able to do on completion of a specific level and institutions align their teaching programmes as described in the standards. The prescribed syllabi impose teachers to follow the same goals in more or less similar timeframes (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2019). Teachers in these contexts are busy with covering the learning outcomes without having the chance to pay attention to other aspects of teaching, eventually resulting in less TA. Unfortunately, it is possible to suggest that teachers lacking autonomy in their teaching practice may find it difficult to help their learners build autonomous behaviours since they tend to lose interest and energy in what they bring to their practice, with less TA resulting in less LA (Camillieri, 1999;

Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Ranosa-Madrurnio, Tarrayo, Tupas, & Valdez, 2016; Roth et al., 2007).

Moreover, a teacher who has the capacity to behave in an autonomous manner but who does not take on the responsibility cannot be expected to be self-directed in their teaching practice. It may be the case that teachers do not regard managing their teaching practices themselves through taking initiative as their own business, undermining its significance. They tend to stick to what is roughly expected from them, doing no more or no less. Teachers like these cannot be categorised as autonomous since they lack the responsibility to regulate their practice to their own enterprises and their learners' needs.

With regards to self-directed professional development, it may also be the case that the context in which teachers work in does not value/support professional development (Cárdenas, 2006). If teachers find themselves in an environment where their attempts to improve do not mean much to the institution they work in and are not appreciated with what they do, even if they have a genuine interest towards development, they may lose motivation to continue their attempts.

However, although it is essential to admit that contexts have the power to act as boundaries to the scope TA is accepted and implemented, whatever the pressure be, whether they are standard tests, standardization or institutional policies, it is up to the teacher to draw their own route according to what they believe deserves consideration. They can determine their approach to their teaching and with flexible approaches teach the prescribed content in their own favoured way. Teachers may have to follow a fixed programme, yet as Little (1995, p. 178) points out 'the teacher cannot help but teach 'herself' since it is their own interpretation that they are seeking to convey to their learners (Camillieri, 1999). The syllabus they follow can be fixed but what is focused on in class are the teacher's own priorities with their own way of thinking. Thus, within the present constraints, it is also possible to try to find ways of dealing with constraints and transform them into opportunities towards what is targeted through independent judgement (McGrath et al., 2000). It is significant to bear in mind that learning materials can be exploited so as to serve LA besides presenting learning content,

signifying that it is possible to aim for and attain TA even in situations where teachers feel their hands tied with restrictions (Little, 1995).

Besides constraints that arise from external bodies and that are beyond the immediate control of the teacher, there exist constraints from within, which can be identified as teacher dispositions. Teachers may have a tendency to follow their safe methods whose success have been personally proven (Cárdenas, 2006) rather than trying out new ways to approach teaching, with the fear that it can lead their learners to focus on aspects other than the content and thus misguide them into wasting time, a constraint specific to TA in professional action. Moreover, changes in teacher roles giving more freedom and voice to learners may result in teacher resistance, disturbing teacher identities (Reinders & White, 2016).

On the other hand, we should also realise that there have always been constraints and resistance to autonomy, that of teacher and learner, and there will always be. Yet similar to what I have argued for LA, limitations to TA can be overcome. Even the internalised constraints, whatever their origin be, can be dealt with through support, particularly in the form of awareness raising and promotion of critical reflection exercised by teachers themselves, which is accepted to be a challenging process but which can be developed all the way through a teacher's professional practice (Lamb, 2008). Awareness of both external and internal constraints with the intention of adapting after practising critical reflection is the first step to overcome the limitations (Trebbi, 2008).

The mentioned limitations are particularly valid for contexts in which the curriculum is not aligned with the concepts of TA/LA and when these concepts are not expressed explicitly as curriculum/institutional objectives. Regarding this Trebbi (2008) suggests autonomy cannot possibly develop in institutionalised systems if it is not expressed as an objective, referring to LA which I consider to be also valid for TA. In contexts where these concepts are valued, their development is supported by the context itself, with room for teachers to experience autonomy themselves and emphasis to assist learners to build related skills through embedding required support in the curriculum. However, an issue that needs to be pointed out at this point is the fact that when

there is a pressure for the development of either concept, a backlash is possible to take place. Autonomy and coercion are the two opposite sides of a continuum and it is not possible that they meet at any point, and thus should be approached cautiously. Hence, for both TA and LA, coercion should be avoided; persuasion and negotiation should be sought.

2.5.4 Teacher Support for Learner Autonomy

Autonomy cannot be taught or learnt; it can only be mediated with proper educational initiatives (Benson, 2011), which is an issue being discussed in the present study. The context influences the extent to which individuals are autonomous (Black & Deci, 2000; Lamb & Reinders, 2008; Nicolaides, 2008; Pelletier et al., 2001) and in educational settings where autonomy support is offered, learners are likely to demonstrate more autonomous behaviours (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2019; Williams & Deci, 1996). This is congruent with what Tan and Chan (1998) advocate: the learning environment should be conducive to the aims; that is, if the aim is to foster LA, the learning environment should be designed in such a way that it promotes the realisation of LA. Acknowledging the teacher as the main actor creating the context, the role teachers play in the development and implementation of autonomy is emphasized (Smith, 2008a): teachers refocus their teaching and adapt it in such a way to support LA. The atmosphere a teacher creates in class together with the messages they convey is helpful both in guiding and making sense of learner behaviour and motivation (Núñez et al., 2015). This may present itself as a paradox: on one side autonomy implying the notion that learners are free to find their own way into their learning and make all decisions by themselves, on the other side teachers guiding learners to be autonomous and making informed choices. However, as argued previously (p.46), autonomy cannot be considered as complete independence since learning by its very nature is a social act where the significance of others, such as teachers, in this process is undeniable (Thanasoulas, 2000).

This brings us to realise that the inter-relational climate in a context between teachers and learners has an influence in the development and maintenance of LA. Social relations that are supportive (Aoki, 1999) and the pedagogical dialogue between the teacher and the learner help develop autonomy (Little, 1995). La Ganza (2008) maintains that learners tend to be more autonomous

when their relationships with the teacher is strong and emphasizes that the capacities of the teacher are as significant as the capacities of the learner in the realisation of LA.

Aoki (1999, p. 146) suggests ‘Learners exercise the partial autonomy that they can handle with social support from the environment and thus develop their feeling of autonomy’, which is parallel to the concept of ZPD. The level of support provided to learners according to their need matters a great deal since in fact learners, usually the ones accustomed to teacher dominated classrooms, view the move towards autonomy as risk-taking and need assurance from their teachers in the form of support to make these moves more comfortably (La Ganza, 2008).

Teacher support provided should be structured in the sense that it provides learners sufficient guidance in meeting their problems and aims on the way to control their learning, and not in the form of unlimited freedom with the intention of helping learners to act in complete independence (Assor & Kaplan, 2001; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012). While structured teacher support helps learners to deal with the learning activities effectively, when teacher support is not structured, learners are often led to chaos and usually do not benefit from the support provided. Therefore, autonomy support and structure go hand in hand rather than existing as bipolar concepts, and their co-occurrence supports learners in developing autonomous motives since structure enhances the support teachers provide and makes what it offers more meaningful and accessible (Hospel & Galand, 2016; Jang, Reeve, & Deci, 2010; Sierens et al., 2009; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012).

Williams and Deci (1996, p. 767) describe autonomy support in medical care as ‘a person in an authority role (e.g., a health care provider) taking the other’s (e.g., the patient’s) perspective, acknowledging the other’s feelings and perceptions, providing the other with information and choice, and minimizing the use of pressure and control’. The authors further suggest ‘Autonomy support involves encouraging others to be self-initiating’ (p.769). Drawing on this definition, I suggest that autonomy support in education can be defined as the form of guidance provided by teachers to learners in their learning journey where the

teacher acknowledges learners' social, psychological and learning needs and feelings, and guides learners in the management of their learning through providing opportunities to learners to identify their personal needs/intentions and make informed choices regarding these, as well as creating a comforting/nonthreatening learning atmosphere where learners feel free and are encouraged to tinker with new learning ideas and find their own way of learning effectively where these are all integrated into lessons rather than remaining as something else to be learnt (Reeve & Jang, 2006; Williams & Deci, 1996). In autonomy-supportive environments, learners are endorsed to be themselves rather than complying with teacher expectations (Núñez et al., 2015). Provision of choice is significant in this whole process and where the opportunities for choice is limited, teachers provide a meaningful rationale for why the choice is limited in order not to make learners feel that they are under pressure (Vansteenkiste et al., 2012).

The internalisation process is a part of the teacher support provided to learners. As discussed earlier (p.43), internalisation is the transformation of external regulations into intrinsic incentives. In this process, teachers are important actors in helping learners internalise autonomous behaviours. In the present study, I propose that the learning context created by the teacher has the potential to assist the internalisation process and facilitate the development of autonomous learning behaviours.

Recent empirical research provides evidence for learners' perceived autonomy support facilitating LA. Núñez et al. (2015) conducted a research study in which they investigated the relationship between teacher's autonomy support and students' autonomy and vitality. The study was carried out with participants from seven different departments studying at university. According to the results of their study, the authors suggest that 'if students perceive that their teachers understand and accept their decisions and negative feelings, provide meaningful rationales, suggest alternative solutions, and offer choices between different tasks in the classroom, this will produce changes in students' autonomy over time' (p.198).

A longitudinal study at two different law schools on understanding the negative effects of legal education on law students based on self-determination theory conducted by Sheldon and Krieger (2007) proposes that perceived autonomy support predicted greater autonomy, competence, and relatedness over the three years the study took place. The study further suggests that controlling or autonomy suppressing, rather than autonomy-supportive contexts have the adverse effect with less self-determined motivation, which is contrary to what autonomy offers.

Learner training occupies its due place under the umbrella of teacher support. Being able to manage the learning process is an ability learners need to be equipped with in order to be effective in their learning. However, this ability to direct learning is not innate (Holec, 1981; Little, 1995; Nunan, 1996; Tan & Chan, 1998) and learners are not naturally inclined for independent learning (Hood, 2000). Thus, at this point, the necessity of helping learners to develop the required knowledge base and skills is foregrounded (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Ertürk, 2016; Little, 1995; Tan & Chan, 1998). As Reinders (2010) puts it unless learners are trained and encouraged for autonomy, no matter what resources or opportunities surround them, it is unlikely that they develop the capacity for autonomous learning and prefer to continue their learning journey in the way they are used to.

Learners need to be provided with explicit instruction about the process of learning in order to be capable of managing their learning. First of all, they need to be skilled in talking about the learning process, and so need to be taught the language to articulate the learning process (Gremmo & Riley, 1995) as it was previously suggested when arguing that metacognitive knowledge should be storable (p.29) (Wenden, 1998). They need guidance on identifying their learning needs, preferences and decisions they take regarding their needs and preferences. It is also significant for learners to be trained in reflection which is a crucial skill for the development of autonomy. Reflection, a skill that can be learnt (p.35), guides learners in the identification of their strengths and weaknesses, giving them the chance to monitor and take action by setting feasible targets regarding their learning needs (Kohonen, 2000). It is possible to guide learners to be able to reflect on their learning through posing questions on

which they need to contemplate about their learning process in order to provide answers. However, the nature of these questions matter a great deal since questions which require stereotyped answers hinder, instead of enhancing reflection. Helping learners think about their learning achievements with regards to the objectives set can facilitate reflecting on learning while asking questions where learners need only answer with what they have done and how they have done it allows reflection to a limited level (Thavenius, 1999).

Recognition of the fact that there are learning strategies to be utilised for the promotion of learning is also significant. Learners should be given explicit training in learning skills and strategies on how to learn that is built in as part of the curriculum as a set of learning process goals (Nunan, 1996). It is important that learners learn domain specific knowledge, but equally important, if not more, is that learners are given chances to learn ‘how to learn’ and transfer the skills they learn across different disciplines (McDevitt, 1997; Nunan, 1996; Tan & Chan, 1998). Alongside explicit instruction and awareness raising activities, giving learners opportunities to put into practice what they have been learning is crucial considering the fact that instruction without practice may not necessarily lead to desired effects (Nunan, 1996; Vermunt, 1996). Therefore, constructing opportunities so that learners exercise the learning to learn skills is important. To this end, allocating time in classroom for actual practice, modelling and providing support need to be considered.

The preparation to develop autonomous learning skills needs to be not only in terms of learning skills but from a psychological point of view as well. Learners should also be encouraged to develop a mind-set of learning that perceives learning as an active process, which is more likely to be achieved when learners are overtly instructed for doing so (Chitashvili, 2007; Dickinson, 1995; Reinders, 2010; Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011). Being persuaded that autonomy in learning has its own merits and accepting responsibility over learning accordingly, therefore, carries great importance in the application of autonomous learning skills into practice (Assor & Kaplan, 2001; Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Koçak, 2003).

On the issue of learner training, caution has to be taken, however, since it should not be considered as a single act but rather as a slow and continuous process, requiring occasional moving back and forth on what is actually being covered to episodes of reflection and analysis (Chan, 2001b; Gremmo & Riley, 1995; Little, 2004a).

All these issues come together to indicate the significance of teacher support for the actualisation of LA. According to Reeve (2009), autonomy-supportive environments encourage learners to build an understanding of relating their success to variables that they themselves have control on, frame their learning around volition and perceive a sense of choice. These come together to lead to an enhanced internal motivation where learners are psychologically and behaviourally prepared for better comprehension, more creativity and more positive feelings towards learning in general. It is important to keep in mind that teachers cannot directly give learners autonomy experiences; they can encourage learners to develop autonomous behaviours through creating appropriate classroom contexts (Oğuz, 2013a, 2013b; Reeve, 2009; Reeve & Jang, 2006; Reeve et al., 2004; Stefanou, Perencevich, DiCintio, & Turner, 2004). That is, they allocate time to train and support autonomous learning behaviours and conceptions.

There are several lines of research that support the importance of LA support in the learning process. Provision of choice in promoting autonomy was given primary consideration in the studies of some researchers (Oğuz, 2013a, 2013b; Reeve et al., 2004), yet, as Stefanou et al. (2004) suggest the nature of choice should be considered since meaningless choices do not have much impact on learners' perceptions of autonomous learning. The same concern is echoed by Cárdenas (2006) when he posits that the presence of choice does not always bring with it autonomy in the same way the absence of coercion does not necessarily result in autonomy. Assor, Kaplan, and Roth (2002) add to this by suggesting it is not the provision of choice only that fosters autonomy, but that there are other more significant components for the promotion of autonomy, such as fostering relevance of what is taught to real life and real needs. However, the authors also put emphasis on providing choice, given that the alternatives are consistent with learners' personal aims and whose outcomes have the potential

to serve these aims. This is congruent with what Benson (2016, p. xxxiv) suggests as ‘the personal relevance of learning’.

Having discussed the crucial role of teacher support for learner autonomy, it is significant to note that, on the way to scaffold learners to build and utilise autonomy in their learning, teachers need to be aware of their share in this process. It is necessary for teachers to help learners build target behaviours/skills and create an atmosphere to implement such behaviours/skills, since autonomy support is what fuels autonomous motives of learners. Yet it should be remembered that teachers themselves need to learn some behaviours/skills. They need to be ready to let learners learn themselves, holding back from unnecessarily influencing the learners and helping learners to hold back from requesting help in circumstances where they themselves can manage. Thus, it is possible to suggest that being aware of where to step in and where to withdraw is a skill necessary for teachers (Kirschner et al., 2006; Samah, Jusoff, & Silong, 2009).

2.5.5 Autonomy Controlling and Autonomy Enhancing Teacher Styles

Although acknowledging the numerous benefits offered in autonomy-supportive contexts, it is debated that controlling teaching styles continue to be the default style in many settings due to school policies, administrators, parents, societal expectations, cultural norms, student reactions in classroom and teacher dispositions and beliefs about the teaching profession. Thus, a distinction between autonomy-supportive/enhancing and autonomy controlling/autonomy suppressing styles is made (Assor & Kaplan, 2001; Núñez et al., 2015; Reeve, 2009; Reeve, Bolt, & Cai, 1999). It is suggested that while teachers with a controlling style induce in their learners a conception of being under external pressure, autonomy-supportive teachers encourage an internal locus of causality and a sense of being able to make informed choices through acting on own decision and preference (Assor et al., 2002; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Reeve, 2009; Reeve et al., 1999). Manipulating learner behaviour through the use of extrinsic incentives provides examples for controlling styles, where teachers try to boost behaviours they themselves find appropriate as opposed to guiding learners to find and exhibit the behaviours learners themselves consider proper to their purposes (Reeve et al., 1999). In such cases learners find themselves and

their learning confined with the external pressures and expectations, and may forget their aims and needs for learning in the struggle to conform to the situations. This signifies that in paving the way for autonomous behaviours, the styles teachers adopt in their teaching practice and the ways they utilise to stimulate the development of autonomy carry great significance, since it is commonly accepted that teacher styles have the power to influence learner motivation, emotion and performance (Earl, Taylor, Meijen, & Passfield, 2017; Reeve et al., 1999). Acknowledging this reality takes us a step further to deliberate and focus on what autonomy-supportive teachers are claimed to do to support autonomy in their learners' learning process as will be discussed below.

2.5.6 Suggested Ways for Teachers to Be Autonomy-supportive

Although in his earlier empirical research, Reeve, who has been a prominent figure on the issue of teacher support for LA, approached LA from mainly the perspective of decision-making and LA support from that of providing opportunities for learners to make choices, in subsequent articles, he argues that the cluster of autonomy-supportive behaviours include five main aspects (Reeve, 2009). The first of these is *nurturing inner motivational resources*. It is assumed that learners possess inner motivational resources and autonomy-supportive teachers help learners to identify and nurture these inner resources instead of relying on outer motivational resources such as rewards, punishments, threats, deadlines etc., directing attention to the significance of what was previously defined as intrinsic motivation (p.42). It is crucial in autonomy-supportive approach that teachers guide their learners to recognise what inner motivational resources they have and help learners build on these resources, apply them more efficiently in their learning and make greater and proper use of these resources. That is, it is accepted that all learners have psychological needs, intrinsic motivation, internalised extrinsic motivation, personal interests and personal goals to pursue, and teachers should be assisting their learners to identify these and build their learning around such frameworks. However, it should also be kept in mind that not all activities/tasks that learners are asked to cover at school can directly be related to learner interests, for which the second aspect of autonomy support comes into question.

The second aspect of autonomy support, as suggested by Reeve, is providing *explanatory rationales* for the activities that are inherently not interesting to learners. Supportive teachers offer learners explanations of why such activities are worth their effort, which in a way can be considered as an extrinsic motivator with the potential to be internalised. This aspect is closely related with what Assor et al. (2002) refer to as *fostering relevance*. That is, instead of forcing activities that are not meaningful for learners, helping them understand the relevance of what they are learning with their personal needs/interests and how school learning contributes to the successful achievement of their goals are particularly significant in motivating learners for genuine learning that is autonomous in nature. Fostering relevance is significant in that it comprises of teacher actions that help learners perceive their learning experiences as relevant to their personal goals and aims, enhancing motivation for learning in an autonomous manner. It may be the case that learners do not have personal aims, in such cases, autonomy-supportive teachers help learners uncover their interests and develop goals in the light of their interests (Assor et al., 2002).

The third of Reeve's autonomy support aspects is *displaying patience and allowing time for self-paced learning* so that learners find the opportunity to formulate their answers/solutions to given activities, opposite of which is interfering with the natural rhythm of learners' learning. Autonomy enhancing teachers listen to what their learners have to say and allow them time to organise their approach to the activity without intruding, as giving learners the opportunity to organise their learning according to their own pace is considered to be substantially beneficial. On the other hand, when teachers intervene with learners' natural rhythm of learning, it leads them to lose focus and miss what they were initially aiming at (Assor et al., 2002).

The fourth aspect is *using informational language* rather than controlling language so that learners do not feel under pressure. Teachers have the tendency to articulate requirements and push learners towards 'predetermined products and solutions, right answers and desired behaviours' (Reeve, 2009, p. 170). However, the adaptation of the language used by teacher in a way that it informs instead of controlling has the capacity to enhance autonomous behaviours. Such

informational language is free from *should* statements and imperative forms, and seeks to provoke/emerge learners own interests.

The fifth aspect is *accepting learners' expression of negative affect*. This is also referred to as *allowing criticism* (Assor et al., 2002). In the learning process, it is natural that learners experience various emotions, negative feelings being one of these. From time to time, learners feel the need to complain about learning activities or learning in general and express their dissatisfaction. In such cases teachers' being sensitive to such emotions, trying to understand rather than oppress and displaying that they take learners' perspectives, is significant. Accepting criticism enables teachers to adapt their teaching to meet learners' interest or make it more interesting. If adapting is not possible, it gives teachers the chance to provide the rationale for learning tasks in order to convince learners that it is worth covering (Assor & Kaplan, 2001; Reeve, 2009; Sierens et al., 2009; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012). Suppressing criticism, on the other hand, deprives learners of the chance of self-expression, which is detrimental to the development of autonomy (Assor et al., 2002).

In addition to these, Vansteenkiste et al. (2012) propose that supportive teachers convey the feeling of trust to their learners, express confidence in their ability, and besides communicating expectations, they follow whether learners comply with the consented expectations consistently.

Voller (1997) characterises teacher support under two headings as technical support and psycho-social support. Technical support is the support provided to learners to guide them in the planning, organisation, monitoring, evaluation and self-assessment of learning. This, in essence, is learner training and is about helping learners to develop and implement metacognitive strategies. On the other hand, in psycho-social support, qualities of the supporter as 'caring, supportive, patient, tolerant, emphatic, open, non-judgemental' are underscored (102). The supporter is the one who is able to motivate learners for commitment, for being persistent when faced with adversities and looking for ways to overcome these. Avoiding manipulating, objectifying and controlling are required qualities for providing support. Helping learners practise critical

reflection with the aim of abandoning preconceptions and adopting new mind-sets are also significant components of psycho-social support.

Thanasoulas (2000) maintains persuasive conversations between the teacher and the learners have the potential to attitude change in learners. Through presenting and discussing a certain aspect with the aim of convincing learners on the benefits of target behaviours, teachers attempt to help learners develop behaviours that will enable them to manage their learning. Persuasive conversations can be efficient, yet they need to be backed up with other techniques such as giving learners chances to have first-hand practice with the consideration that merely talking to learners about the benefits is not enough to persuade them to exercise different learning approaches (Reinders, 2010).

For the purposes of the present study, Reeve's autonomy support provided by teachers to their learners has been taken as the starting point, however, it is conceptualised in a broader perspective. I have also made use of Voller's autonomy support concept to arrive at a model of autonomy support that is relatable to the present study. Autonomy-supportive teachers, first of all, understand their learners' perspective and identify their display of learning behaviours to be able to help them build on these. It is crucial to construct an atmosphere where LA is supported in all terms and where learners are both behaviourally and psychologically prepared for the application of autonomous behaviours. A context where learners are allowed time to build healthy relationships among themselves and with the teacher in order to be ready to display autonomous behaviours is particularly significant. Following this, teachers make available to learners different learning strategies/methods: they make their learners aware that there are various learning approaches at their disposal that they can utilise in their learning. It is also important to explain the rationale behind exercising these and help learners grasp the value of utilising them, instead of solely bringing it to the consciousness of learners that different learning approaches exist. Apart from being aware of the existence and the practical value of these approaches/strategies, learners are also made cognizant that it is possible to orchestrate their use as well as identifying what works best in which situation. What is crucial is to give learners ample opportunities to practise them in their actual learning since being equipped with information

about an issue does not guarantee its implementation, and learners need to have first-hand experience to be convinced to use them. Learners also need to be guided to attend to the effectiveness of these methods/strategies through reflecting and evaluating their strategy use. It is significant at this point to avoid directive language, giving learners the implication that one strategy works better than the others, but to allow learners to tinker with different strategies and to identify which ones to use, how and when. Accepting and acknowledging negative emotions is part of the natural rhythm of the learning process and need to be encouraged rather than suppressed. At this point, teachers' adoption of a motivating style and not that of a controlling one is a determining factor. Learners need to be encouraged to identify and nurture/develop their inner motivational resources, deal with negative affect, find ways of increasing their self-esteem, benefit from working with others for the promotion of their learning, and question and ponder about their learning, a process in which teacher support and encouragement are crucial elements.

According to Assor and Kaplan (2001), supporting autonomy is a complex and demanding process, and teachers are not expected to be perfect in this process. Being 'good-enough' would be satisfactory, which in itself is a challenging task, let alone being perfect (p. 102). Although it may not be possible to apply all of the suggested ways for promoting autonomy all at once, I consider autonomy-supportive teachers provide support in a combination of ways if not all at the same time.

2.5.6 Limitations to the Support Teachers Provide to Their Learners

Teacher support has numerous benefits to learners for building and executing autonomous behaviours. However, teachers, even the ones who are real proponents of such support, more often than recognised find themselves limited in the support they provide for several reasons.

Teacher/learner dispositions, accountability standards, the pressure to follow uniform teaching, standardised tests are among these limitations (Reeve et al., 1999; Roth et al., 2007). The factors affecting the practice of TA negatively and restricting teachers in acting autonomously (2.5.3.3 Limitations to Teachers'

Implementation of Teacher Autonomy) are also valid reasons for limiting teachers' autonomy support.

Considering the centrality of teachers in creating the environment in the classroom, it would be proper to suggest that teacher dispositions influence the support teachers provide to their learners in terms of autonomy. Teachers with personal tendencies to be motivating or controlling due to their own educational background or beliefs tend to differ in the support they provide (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2019; Reeve, 2009). Being persistent and not giving up easily due to reasons that arise from the context and that are unfortunately not uncommon are qualities required to be able to be supportive. Learned helplessness, a conception of being incapable or giving up the belief that one can produce a desired outcome (Chen & Mykletun, 2015), is the main restriction to the application of any philosophy and teachers accepting that something may not produce what it is expected to produce close all the doors to what is aimed. Therefore, teacher motivation towards autonomy support and the factors affecting teacher motivation need to be scrutinised since the context can be influential in promoting autonomy support (Pelletier, Séguin-Lévesque, & Legault, 2002).

Teachers pressured from directors/administrators also tend to adopt a controlling style as their instructional behaviour, with less room for autonomy support. Pressured teachers are usually inclined to conform to the expectations/regulations posed on them (Pelletier et al., 2002). Even the commonly shared practices and understanding within a context is a restriction to personal endeavours. If an approach to instruction is not commonly valued and followed by colleagues, teachers in favour of such a style may approach it with hesitancy. Pressures to comply with curriculum constraints, accountability standards and the established norms merge as reversely proportional to the practice of autonomy support (Pelletier et al., 2002; Reeve, 2009). Pressures have the power to limit autonomy support, while the absence of such pressure increases the amount of support provided by teachers. When teachers feel the responsibility to cover the syllabus so as their learners are not deprived of the opportunity to be exposed to the components of the curriculum, when they feel responsible for their learners' performance and when they feel secure about the

fact that there is a standard among all those taking the same course/level, they focus on the expectations and ignore the other significant elements of effective teaching.

According to Reeve et al. (1999), teachers who feel under pressure have a tendency to behave in a controlling manner, with frequent use of directives, *should* statements, rewards and praises, and little room for learners to be endorsed to be themselves. They behave in this way because, just like expectations of controlling teachers from their learners, teachers are expected to comply with the expectations of the institution they work in alongside the expectations of the education system they belong to. These teachers are under the pressure of helping their learners to produce good performance and accordingly tend to perform in a more controlling manner in order to reach this aim, unfortunately neglecting the support that has the potential to lead to more effective learning (Pelletier et al., 2002).

It is sometimes the case that learners are resistant to autonomy, and consequently, they do not accept anything to do with autonomy. They are not willing to behave in an autonomous manner and tend to reject any offer from teachers to this end. The disengaged and the repulsive manner of their learners may lead teachers to give up on what they are aiming at. If teachers do not see any progress in what they are trying to achieve, they are likely to quit (Reeve et al., 1999). On the other hand, positive motivation by learners is found to be a mediating factor for positive teacher behaviour with regards to autonomy support, suggesting that teachers of intrinsically motivated learners are more supportive in their teaching (Pelletier et al., 2002).

Class size and the heterogeneous level of learners both in terms of skills, competence and emotional needs may also present themselves as limitations. In overcrowded classrooms, teachers may find it difficult to support and reach all learners (Reeve et al., 1999; Roth et al., 2007). Learners come to teaching/learning contexts with their individual differences, needs, preferences and level at which they can tolerate autonomy. In a crowded classroom, it may be challenging to identify each and every one's weaknesses and strengths, and try to support them, particularly considering the fact that teachers spend limited

time with their learners. With a heterogeneous level of learners, teachers have a tendency to be more ‘supportive, kind, and considerate’ when learners are perceived to be more capable (Pelletier et al., 2002, p. 186). When learners are perceived as not being able, teachers take on a more controlling approach, giving more directives and hints, relying more on external incentives, particularly punishments. That is, positive expectations and confidence in learners positively affect the support teachers provide, being more open in their provision of learning content, choice and support.

2.6 Conclusion

The present chapter reviewed the literatures on LA, focusing on components of autonomy as metacognition, affect in learning and interdependence. Later, it focused on teacher support for LA, with consideration to the significance of teacher education and TA as influencing teacher support. It also drew on factors influencing the actual practice of both LA and teacher support for LA. The following chapter presents the epistemological and ontological beliefs underpinning the study and gives details on the research design adopted as well as detailing the analysis methodology.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The previous chapter reviewed the literatures on LA and teacher support for LA. It argued that LA is an educational goal as it has the potential to bring about successful learning and that teacher support enhances the development and implementation of LA. The present chapter begins by presenting the rationale for my epistemological and ontological stance. I describe the overall design of the study and then move on to describe the instruments and the procedures for data collection. I later give details concerning the participants and ethical considerations. Finally, I provide details on the analysis methodology.

3.1 Theoretical Framework

I adopted an interpretivist and socio-constructivist stance in the present study. Epistemologically, I believe in the interpretivist/subjectivist view of inquiry where ‘Investigators work directly with experience and understanding to build their theory on them’ (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2007, p. 22) and where ‘the knower and the respondent co-create understandings’ (Lee, 2012, p. 407). Ontologically, I embrace a socio-constructivist worldview, with the belief that individuals create their own meanings through moulding their previous experiences with new information and through interacting with others in the context (Putnam & Borko, 2000). I believe such an approach is best suited to the study at hand where I research into LA and teacher support for LA, and in which knowledge construction, collective knowledge construction and interpretation of experiences for understanding the subjective nature of knowledge are the guiding principles.

3.1.1 Interpretivism

The Interpretivist paradigm contends that there is no one fixed reality and maintains that there are multiple realities since there are multiple interpretations by different individuals. It is believed individuals interpret events and situations and act accordingly. Therefore, human action is intentional, also referred to as ‘behavior-with-meaning’ in Cohen, Manion and Morrison’s terms (2007, p.21). Individuals make meanings through interpreting their actions/experiences and contexts, and the relationships in these contexts (Cohen et al., 2007).

In the present study I adopted an interpretivist approach. I designed my data gathering with consideration to obtaining participants' views as truly as possible with the maximum amount of data I could collect so that I could interpret participants' views, conceptualisations and experiences appropriately.

3.1.2 Constructivism

In the wide literature covering autonomy, the autonomous learner is characterized as the one who is proactive in their learning (Benson, 2001; Dafei, 2007; Little, 1995; Littlewood, 1996). They assume agency through taking the initiative and actively manipulating the learning process. These learners do not merely act as respondents in their learning but they actively construct their own meanings instead of accepting and reiterating others' meanings (Ackermann, 2001; Baz et al., 2018; Jordan, Carlile, & Stack, 2008; Schunk, 2004), a line of thinking congruent with the theory of constructivism.

In constructivism, experiencing and discovery are the two guiding principles that help shape understanding and knowledge construction (Zoghi & Dehghan, 2012). The wealth of experiences that learners bring to learning contexts constitutes the basis for learning. Constructivism advocates that learners reorganise and restructure their experiences in pursuit of construing meanings (Thanasoulas, 2000) rather than simply reflecting on what they are told or read (Tam, 2000). It is therefore acceptable to claim knowledge is a commodity that is built up by the learner and it cannot be obtained or borrowed from another person in exactly the same way the other person possesses it. The different experiences each person possesses shape the construction of knowledge in a unique way, making it a personal tenet and so differentiating it from others' knowledge. Hence, it is possible to talk about multiple realities in constructivist perspective (Jordan et al., 2008; Schunk, 2004; Thanasoulas, 2000; Von Glasersfeld, 1989). As Thanasoulas (2000, p. 4) suggests: 'knowledge is constructed rather than discovered or learnt'. Moreover, in constructivist thinking, learning is a process that learners make happen; it is not something that is done to them (Gremmo & Riley, 1995; Zoghi & Dehghan, 2012). This line of thinking runs counter to the idea of internalising objective knowledge which constitutes the basis of positivist views (Thanasoulas, 2000). In positivism, there are scientific truths that wait to be learned and it is believed that objective

knowledge reflects objective reality that can be transferred from one person to another. In constructivism, however, learners use their experiences and construct meanings for themselves, which can vary from person to person (Schunk, 2004) through the competence of learning to learn, which facilitates lifelong learning and autonomous learning.

The fact that in the constructivist view, individuals create their own meanings has been taken as the principal belief in the present study. In this study, I aim to explore TEs' and STs' beliefs and perceptions of experiences with respect to LA: how TEs perceive their support for the development of learner autonomy and how STs perceive their own learner autonomy in practice. Therefore, capturing teacher and learner voices regarding their meaning constructions around these concepts is important for me.

Socio-constructivism

Vygotsky (1980) introduced the social aspect of learning into constructivism. Vygotsky's socio-cultural constructivist perspective emphasizes the role of social environment in the learning process, affirming the part played by the context, teachers and peers as discussed under 2.3.3 Interdependence.

Putnam and Borko (2000) propose social interactions one participates in are vital in shaping what is learnt and how it is learnt. They suggest the role of others in the learning process is more than providing stimulation and encouragement for individual knowledge construction but that interactions with others 'are major determinants of both what is learned and how learning takes place' (p. 5). Hence, learning taking place in social settings and with the help of social interactions becomes more meaningful and fosters cognitive growth, leading to development (Schunk, 2004). It is therefore argued that learning cannot be dissociated from the context. This reminds us of the notion of situated cognition which claims the physical and the social contexts in which learning occurs constitute a fundamental part of what is learnt (Smith 2003, 2009; Putnam & Borko, 2000; Schunk, 2004).

The concepts under constructivism such as situated cognition, apprenticeship (p.47) and ZPD (p.48) all stress the importance of collaborative meaning making

and form the theoretical basis of the present study. The support learners receive through the notions of apprenticeship and particularly ZPD is in fact a reflection of teacher support that is considered to be helpful for learners' development and implementation of LA. They all hold that the role of others in learning is inescapable: people work together to create meanings. Thus, collaboration among peers, where people learn from each other by challenging perspectives and where the responsibility is distributed among participants, is greatly valued. Since socio-constructivism relies heavily on collaboration among participants, other learners and teachers, constructivist teachers encourage learners to reflect on their experiences in order to be able to construct their own meanings. They talk about what is learnt and how it is learned. In that way, learners learn from each other particularly during reflection episodes. They not only help each other in terms of content to be learnt acting as '*objects of comparison*' (Fox & Riconscente, 2008) but while reflecting on their learning, they can pick up effective learning methods from each other. That is, besides learning from each other, collaboration enables learners to review and reflect on the way they approach learning, which is underscored in autonomous learning and in the present study.

3.2 Research Design

Creswell (2013, p. 21) posits 'Certain types of social research problems call for specific approaches'. Having committed myself to a constructivist ontology and interpretivist epistemology, I adopt a qualitative methodology for my research, case study, and make use of qualitative data collection methods for gathering data.

Qualitative research is subjective and is concerned with understanding participants' perspectives rather than seeking to arrive at facts. The aim of the researcher who embraces qualitative research is to achieve *depth* instead of *breadth*. It places significant focus on individuals and the context, and is more concerned with reliability/trustworthiness or transferability of research findings to similar social settings rather than aiming to arrive at generalizations, hence, those involved in qualitative research attempt to make their research rigorous (Blaxter, Hughes, & Tight, 2006; Burton & Bartlett, 2005; Creswell, 2013). The aim of the present study is not to achieve generalisability but transferability and

trustworthiness. Qualitative studies do not intend to hypothesize or aim at a single truth but instead arrive at a deep understanding in a specific context and offer perspective with the hope that the findings will be relatable to similar contexts (Patton & Patton, 2002). As Fraenkel and Wallen (2006, p. 277) note ‘the problem of quality in qualitative studies deserves attention in its own terms, not just as a justification device’, the main reason behind this being the fact that qualitative studies take place in real social worlds and have authentic consequences with reality being socially constructed.

As the research design, case study within the qualitative paradigm has been utilised in this study. A *case* can be just one individual, a classroom, a school, a programme or an ongoing process which is contemporary and on which the researcher has little or no control, and where the manipulation of actions is out of question since the ultimate aim is to deeply explore what actually is the reality (Burton & Bartlett, 2005; Cohen et al., 2007; Creswell, 2013; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Patton & Patton, 2002; Yin, 1994). Case studies are therefore context sensitive and holistic. In case study research design, the researcher explores a *case* in depth in its real context which is unique and dynamic. With their unique and dynamic nature, case studies have the potential to portray the complex interactions between events, persons and the context. Data is collected by using various data collection methods where the case is identified by clearly defined boundaries such as time and activity, and is narrow in focus (Creswell, 2013; Scott & Usher, 2011). Using various data resources enables the exploration of phenomenon through a variety of lenses and thus revealing multiple facets of the issue under investigation (Baxter & Jack, 2008).

Rich and vivid descriptions are essential to be able to produce a naturalistic account of everyday life and the intention is to understand the perceptions of actors through these descriptions (Cohen et al., 2007; Mays & Pope, 1995). Through thick descriptions, the researcher helps the readers to feel as if they had been active participants in the study and so are able to identify if the research findings apply to their own contexts (Baxter & Jack, 2008). Case studies aim for analytic and not statistical generalisation, so that the results give the researcher the opportunity to understand similar cases (Cohen et al., 2007), which is the purpose of the present study, where insights into similar cases can be obtained.

Although case studies have sometimes been criticised for being ‘unsystematic and illustrative’ (Cohen et al., 2007), I consider this can be eliminated by adopting a systematic approach and making the study rigorous through verifying the credibility and the dependability of the findings as will be elaborated on page 99.

This is an *instrumental case study* where the purpose goes beyond understanding a specific case and intends to understand a phenomenon/similar cases through providing insight into an issue where the case is scrutinized and detailed because it is a means to reach a broader understanding (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Cohen et al., 2007; Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; Stake, 1995). This is a single case study and the study was carried out in a Faculty of Education in a higher education setting in North Cyprus where the focus is on TEs’ support for LA and STs’ autonomy in practice. Rich descriptions of perceptions, an element of case studies, were generated through in-depth interviews and document analysis.

In the study, I established and maintained collaboration with the participants (details can be found under 3.5 Ethical Considerations) which enabled me as the researcher to capture stories of the participants from first hand with details and to portray their experiences as vividly as possible with an attempt to better understand their actions and the logics behind their actions under the specific contextual conditions since it is not possible to delineate boundaries between actions and context in case studies (Yin, 2015). Learners’ practice of autonomy and teacher support provided to them cannot be considered separate from the context because the context is influential in achieving the goal. This gave deeper meanings to how participants behaved and why they behaved in that specific way. I consider that it would not have been possible for me to explore and arrive at the essence of the teacher support provided and the autonomous behaviours of students in the Faculty of Education if I had not taken into consideration the context in which it occurred.

3.3 Data Collection Methods

The aim of this study is to distinguish perceptions on autonomy support and autonomous student behaviours as implemented in practice. To this end, the data collection methods employed are interviews and document analysis (TE and ST

diaries). TEs were interviewed at the beginning of the data collection procedure. Analysing the data from these first set of interviews using content analysis, I compiled a list of methods participating TEs proposed they actually use in their classrooms and categorised the methods under nine headers to create the Teacher Support Model (Appendix 1: Teacher Support Model). It is important to emphasize that I did not have a tool kit to offer them where they would identify which ones they use. Rather everything in the teacher support model came from TEs in the study. I aligned the statements with an existing model (Cooker, 2012) and shared it with all participating TEs as diary instructions before they were asked to keep reflective diaries for two months. TEs were interviewed again at the end of the diary keeping process.

With STs, three group meetings were held where they were required to brainstorm and share ideas on concepts related to LA. They were asked to keep reflective diaries for two months. At the end, five STs were interviewed individually while others were interviewed in focus groups. The aim of holding the meetings was to ensure to set a background for all participants on the related concepts.

These data collection methods seem to be the most suitable ones that have the potential to yield data to answer the research questions of the study (p.19).

3.3.1 Interviews with Teacher Educators

Interviewing is a useful data collection method commonly employed by qualitative researchers since it has the potential to provide valuable data in terms of participants' attitudes, values and particularly perceptions of what they think they do (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006), which is of particular significance to the present study since the aim of the study is to get in-depth data regarding TEs' and STs' perceptions. Interviews allow participants 'to reconstruct their own experiences and reality in their own words' (Yin, 2015, p. 32). In this study, participants' construction and reconstruction of their experiences, and thus understandings, together with the researcher, and both parties arriving at the meaning of the experiential realities is pivotal, and interviews carried out where participants shared their lived experiences made the generation of new understandings possible.

I took extra care in designing the interview questions to safeguard against the probability of bias due to poor questions and paid attention to stepping back after asking the questions so as to avoid interference. Asking good questions is one of the most crucial aspects of interviewing since failure to ask good questions runs the risk of missing information that is critical for the study (Yin, 2015). The design of the interview with aspects taken into consideration such as asking the right questions at the right time in the right way helps to arrive at data significant for the study. I paid utmost attention to the formulation of the first question, which Yin (2015, p. 137) refers to as ‘grand tour question’ ensuring it establishes a broad topic that the participant can expand on rather than feeling limited with an explicit item of interest. I also avoided leading questions, which lead participants to respond in a certain way and which is a pitfall likely to be encountered if questions are poorly constructed. Active listening is another significant characteristic. Thus, caution was taken not to interrupt or steer responses in attempts to get more data. The focus was not on asking but intense listening and prompting when/if necessary (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006).

In the present study, semi-structured interviews, or qualitative interviews as Yin (2015) calls them, were used where I had a spine of a framework of questions (Appendices 12, 13 and 14), in the form of an interview guide that guided the conversations (King & Horrocks, 2010; Yin, 2015), allowing interviewees to raise their own topics (Elliot, 1991) as these seem to best serve the aim. In qualitative interviewing and in semi structured interviews, where it is important for the interviewer to respond flexibly in the course of the interview and deal with the emerging issues in order to be able to uncover participants’ viewpoints, flexibility is crucial (King & Horrocks, 2010). In the interviews, I asked questions to follow-up, request clarification or to obtain details (Seidman, 2013). I avoided *why* questions, which may cause the participants to take on a defensive manner, instead preferred *how* questions, which in fact have the potential to yield a similar response but being asked in a way that the participant finds non-threatening (Yin, 2003). Because of the nature of semi-structured interviews, it was possible for me to return to the same question, may be approaching it differently this time, to get clarification or to give the participant a second chance for reformulating their thinking (Miles & Huberman, 1994). During the

interviews, I tried to make sure I remained nondirective but occasionally prompted in to ensure I got answers to my queries regarding my research questions and to show that I was genuinely interested in their stories. At the same time I tried to avoid interrupting so as to preserve the autonomy of the participants and to permit them to describe their own worlds with their own words in the way they perceived it (Seidman, 2013; Yin, 2015).

I piloted the first teacher interview with a colleague I teach with in the same context. The pilot interview enabled me to modify the questions as well as giving me an approximate idea of how long the interview lasts. As King and Horrocks (2010, pp. 37-38) suggest ‘any insights you gain in the process of carrying out your first interviews should inform subsequent ones’: that is, changing interview guide is not only permissible but also advisable in qualitative research. Therefore, the pilot interview guided me for the later interviews and in fact each interview formed an experience for the subsequent ones. However, it is necessary to note that I took extra care in making changes in the interview schedule to avoid distorting the analysis.

The interviews were conducted at prearranged times in specific environments to allow for privacy and to avoid distractors. Therefore, interviews with TEs were held either in my office or their offices.

In this study, TEs were interviewed on their conceptualisations of autonomy and the support they provide to their learners in terms of autonomy. Participating TEs were interviewed individually at the beginning of the data collection process to let the researcher arrive at an understanding of their views on LA and to make the analysis of the teacher diaries meaningful. The second round of interviews took place after the diary keeping process ended: they were individual interviews and the diaries were used as reference. Permission for recording the interviews were obtained prior to the interviews and so all the interviews were audiotaped. Nine of the fifteen interviews with TEs were held in English while the other six were conducted in Turkish and translated into English.

The aim through these interviews was to explore experiential realities and hence although I had a given agenda, the follow-up questions and how the interviews proceeded depended on the responses of the participants since experiences

change from one person to another. Initial interviews took approximately up to one hour, while the later ones lasted at least half an hour.

The first round of interviews with the TEs were conducted to arrive at the participants' conceptualisations of LA and how they generally support autonomy in their practice, while the aim in the second round of interviews was to understand the participants' lived experiences from their perspectives, by having them reconstruct their experiences with details, thus, arrive at an understanding of how, when and why they support LA.

In the second round of interviews, where diaries were used as reference, participants were asked to verbalise their thoughts/ideas with the help of questions such as 'you mentioned Could you please explain what you mean?' These questions helped me to arrive at deeper insights into the participants' thinking frameworks by making it possible for me to enter into deeper dialogue with the research subjects (Martinez, 2008).

3.3.2 Group Meetings with Student Teachers

I considered asking students to participate in group meetings rather than holding regular individual interviews would motivate students to attend. This enabled me to capture more of their views rather than limited data from a small number of volunteers.

I piloted the group meetings with the class I was teaching at the time before holding it with the participants and modified the content as necessary.

I held three fortnightly workshop meetings with STs where I intended to uncover STs' composite conceptualisations of LA and where STs were able to discuss and construct their own frameworks around the concept of LA with the help of a series of reflective questions (Appendix 2: Group Meetings) that formed the essence of LA. These sessions aimed at raising awareness on autonomy and establishing a background STs could refer to when reporting the autonomous actions they exhibit in their learning.

At the end of the first group meetings, I distributed notebooks I prepared for STs, with diary keeping guidelines on the first page (Appendix 3: Diary Keeping

(STs)), and asked STs to keep a reflective diary on how they put LA into practice, considering the issues discussed in the meetings.

As the researcher I maintained ongoing contact with the participants. I gave all the participants details on how to contact me and encouraged them to do so whenever a need arose. It was pleasing to be contacted later on issues they were not clear about. This gave me the chance to help participating STs not to waste unnecessary time on issues that could be dealt with easily while at the same time assuring they were on the right track.

I held the second group meeting two weeks after the first one. At the beginning of the second group meeting, I elicited examples of autonomous behaviours STs recorded in their diaries. Following the examples of STs' expression of their experiences, I asked them some reflective questions intended to help them deliberate upon their experiences. I also asked them to tell me why they think these experiences are autonomous, which helped to clarify what was expected from them in their diaries. Eliciting examples from them in the meeting was helpful in easing their tension about the reflective diary keeping process, a process that they are not really used to. We later focused on different components of LA, again through reflective questions. At the end of the second group meeting, I asked STs to consider the issues discussed in both meetings when making entries in their diaries. In the third group meeting a similar procedure was followed and two more issues regarding LA were discussed for considering in keeping diaries.

3.3.3 Interviews with Student Teachers

In the present study, at the end of the diary keeping process, interviews were held with STs. There were 27 participating STs and with 5 of them individual interviews were held. I met them at convenient times for STs, in my office to avoid any distractors. Each interview lasted for about an hour.

With 22 participating STs, I held focus group interviews. Although individual interviews are the commonly preferred technique for interviewing, I consider focus group interviews have their own advantages. They enable gathering data through group interaction and thus, are advantageous in arriving at what people think they do with the reasons behind their actions, which the present study aims

to find out (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006; King & Horrocks, 2010). They have the potential to explore realities at a different level since the context created in interviewing in groups is more naturalistic and participants feel more comfortable to participate. With the advantages it offers, such as the encouragement for recall, the stimulation for elaboration and re-examination of standpoints as participants, focus group interviews enable enhanced responses and valuable insights (King & Horrocks, 2010).

In focus group interviews, the risk of dominating participants leading the interview is a risk that needs to be attended to. From experience from group meetings, I observed that the majority of participating STs took joy in sharing their opinions and experiences while some preferred to remain silent. Therefore, in forming the focus groups, I paid extra attention to have a mixture of the ones who contributed more with those who kept relatively less silent to create a context where all had the opportunity to voice their experiences and opinions. I considered taking the most dominant students individually would help maintain a balance and hence, five STs who participated more than the others in the group meetings were interviewed individually.

Group size is a factor that needs to be considered for the interviews to be effective and to ensure active involvement of all participants (King & Horrocks, 2010). Since sustaining discussion in small groups and controlling discussion in large groups may be problematic, I considered four to be an optimal number for the focus group interviews.

3.3.4 Diaries

Interviewing is useful for collecting data concerning what participants think they do in practice but it is important to triangulate data from different sources to increase the trustworthiness of the data collected by using different data collection methods. Particularly in case studies, documents are perceived to be significant in corroborating and augmenting evidence from other sources (Yin, 2003). Hence in the present study, teacher and learner diaries were also utilised. These documents provided valuable data while at the same time serving as stimulus for interviews (Burton & Bartlett, 2005, p. 162).

Diaries are significant with their potential to generate in-depth data for the issue being explored and the diaries utilised in the study required participants to provide life narratives (Bouma & Ling, 2004). Life narratives are helpful in collecting data about the experiential realities due to the fact that they give the participants the opportunity to narrate their stories in their own ways. This method is similar to interviews in what it aims, yet, because participants make their entries in their own time, without the presence of the researcher, they have the potential to represent the reality in a more open manner through identifying and prioritising their own focus. To this end, participants' expression of their everyday roles, experiences and feelings in a free writing style in a diary where they feel free to take note of whatever they consider is worthy of attention is particularly helpful in understanding their frameworks (Yin, 2015).

Diaries are self-reports of particulars of life and diary method offers the possibility of 'capturing life as it is lived' (Bolger, Davis, & Rafaeli, 2003, p. 579). According to Bolger et al. (2003, p. 580), diaries involve the investigation of 'social, psychological, and physiological processes, within everyday situations', which is the aim of the study that aims to capture the experiential realities of the participants as they are lived in their natural contexts. It is important that self-reports in diaries are reflective in nature rather than providing mere descriptions as reflection on what is going on has the capacity to enhance consciousness and development. To this end, in the present study, TEs were asked to reflect on their perceptions of teacher support they provided with reference to how their support is influenced by different factors, while ST gave examples of autonomous experiences as they are lived in their everyday lives. Thus, with every entry they made in their diaries, they were expected to demonstrate both their understanding of LA together with how they experience/support it in the learning process.

Diaries can be designed as structured or unstructured (Gibson & Brown, 2009). An unstructured design without prompts provided can be perceived as more revealing with participants focusing on what they consider deserves attention. It also gives the researcher the chance to identify themes that may have been overlooked in advance (Gibson & Brown, 2009; Oxbrow, 1999). Yet, I consider when it is left completely open, it is possible that the data collected may not meet

the research interests or it may end up with mere descriptions of experiences. Hence, I provided prompts/reflective guiding questions to enable participants to record data relevant to the research focus and to reflect on the actual lived episodes, yielding data that is more meaningful for both the participants and the researcher (Burton & Bartlett, 2005). Giving prompts also enhances the chances of maintaining consistency among data collected from different participants (Gibson & Brown, 2009). Hence, after considering the drawbacks of both structured and unstructured approaches, I decided to design the diaries as semi-structured. That is, it should guide the participants in the selection of data to be recorded but at the same time give them the freedom to record anything they think is significant and related to the research study, allowing new understandings to open up new paths to emerge naturally. The semi-structured diary keeping guidelines with reflective questions I designed served this purpose. To avoid leading questions that would affect learner entries I provided general questions.

TEs and STs were asked to record in their diaries their actual experiences and required the act of reflection on experience, aimed to be attained through the reflective questions provided. Thus, the outcomes of this reflective exercise were not only thick descriptions of actual practice but as was observed later, they also gave the participants the chance to ponder about what was actually taking place and therefore served for raising awareness. In the present study, the fact that diary keeping is a demanding process that requires commitment and dedication was considered when designing this data collection method and the researcher tried to design the instrument in a way that it did not take too much time and that it was straightforward. Hence, the questions provided served as prompts with which participants were guided in identifying relevant information and so limiting the risk of omitting relevant examples (Bolger et al., 2003). Participants were provided with special notebooks with the reflective questions on the first page so that they could easily refer to them every time they made an entry.

Acknowledging diary keeping as a demanding and time-consuming process, I contacted the participants after they started keeping their diaries. I realised from contacting both TEs and STs that they were really happy to be contacted and to be told that they could contact me whenever a need arises.

Teacher Educator Diaries (Appendix 4: Diary Keeping (TEs))

TEs were asked to keep diaries on their perceptions of support they provided to their learners in the process of developing and implementing autonomy and so teacher diaries were self-reports of teachers' perceptions of instructional behaviours. TEs kept their diaries for two months with only one group of students they were teaching depending on their preference.

Although it was not intended to put pressure on TEs by giving a fixed timing schedule, they were requested to write in their diaries on the same day they taught the specific group in order not to miss the details. Therefore, the reflective diaries utilised in this study were retrospective self-reporting diaries where the aim was to arrive at 'reliable person-level information' (Bolger et al., 2003, p. 581). These were retrospective diaries in the sense that they were kept after the lesson rather than during the lesson, yet not long after the lesson which runs the risk of forgetting details and generating faulty responses with bias.

Some of the TEs had three hours on the same day with their class, so they wrote in their diaries once a week reflecting on the three teaching hours. Some others had two hours on one day and one hour on another day, so they made entries in their diaries twice a week, again reflecting on three teaching hours.

I provided notebooks for TEs with the *Teacher Support Model* (generated using the responses of the TEs and whose constitutive elements I aligned with an existing model as one of the checks I used in the process of selecting/discarding statements to help ensure their integrity (Cooker, 2012) (Appendix 1: Teacher Support Model) on the very first page and the Teacher Diary Keeping guidelines (Appendix 4: Diary Keeping (TEs)) on the next page to ensure they had the opportunity to have a look at them when/if necessary.

Student Teacher Diaries (Appendix 3: Diary Keeping (STs))

Student diaries were also retrospective self-reports. Students were asked to record the autonomous behaviours they exhibited in their learning for two months. They were asked to make entries in their diaries three times a week, considering their autonomous experiences both inside and outside the classroom. They were asked to give details about their experiences and also explain why they consider these experiences to be autonomous with the intention of

encouraging participants to use their stories to reflect on their experiences (Burton & Bartlett, 2005).

Approximately one week after they were supposed to start writing in their diaries, I contacted all on the phone to ask if they needed anything. I realised that the majority were concerned about whether they were doing the right thing or not. This was because in the first meeting I had told them I wanted them to be reflective in their diaries rather than descriptive. Some had questions to which I tried to provide explanations and clarification. Some wanted to share examples from their diaries to make sure they were on the right path. I paid attention not to lead them in these interactions. When they told me they were not sure whether what they were writing was what was expected from them, I asked them to give example experiences and rather than answering them as 'You are doing the right thing' or 'No', I asked them some questions (i.e. What makes you think this is an autonomous experience? etc.) that would help them reflect on their experiences and decide if their entries were on focus or not by themselves.

At the beginning of the second and third group meetings I spared time to elicit autonomous behaviours learners displayed in their learning in the previous weeks before moving on to the contents of the present meeting. The intention behind these elicitation episodes was twofold: to check they were being reflective and to provide examples of reflective experiences to the ones who found reflecting difficult. What I realised from these episodes and from individual feedback from participants is that the majority found reflecting challenging. They had a tendency to describe experiences but could not easily reflect on them.

At the beginning 31 STs volunteered to participate in the study. However, a few weeks after the beginning of the diary keeping process, four participants informed me that they would like to drop out because 'this diary keeping process is too demanding for them'.

Data Collection – Teacher Educators

1st round of interviews with TEs	February-March 2016
TE Diaries	March –June 2016
2nd round of interviews with TEs	June 2016

Data Collection – Student Teachers

Group Meetings	
<i>1st group meeting</i>	16 March 2016 17 March 2016 18 March 2016
<i>2nd group meeting</i>	28 march 2016 30 March 2016 1 April 2016
<i>3rd group meeting</i>	26 April 2016 29 April 2016 3 May 2016
ST Diaries	March-June 2016
ST Interviews	June 2016

3.4 Research Participants

For the identification of the research participants, voluntary sampling method (Cohen et al., 2007) is chosen for this study. After getting consent from related bodies, I emailed all the TEs in the Faculty of Education, informing them about the aim and the procedure of the study and asked for volunteering participants. 15 TEs volunteered. After receiving consent from these TEs to take part in my study, I asked them if I could spend 5 to 10 minutes in their classes. I attended

12 classes at the end of their teaching sessions and informed the students in these classes about the aim and the procedure of the study, and asked for volunteering STs (Appendix 17). 31 STs volunteered. Later, four STs dropped out with the reasons explained earlier (p.92), and hence, 15 TEs and 27 STs constituted the population of the study.

15 TEs in the Faculty of Education in a university in North Cyprus

11 female	4 male
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Number of TEs	1	1	2	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1
Years of Teaching Experience	4	5	12	16	17	19	21	22	23	25	30	31

27 STs in the Faculty of Education in a university in North Cyprus

21 female	6 male
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1 st Year	2 nd Year	3 rd Year	4 th Year
3	8	9	7

Elementary Education	5
Foreign Language Education	7
Educational Sciences	9
Special Education	6

3.5 Ethical Considerations

The BERA framework requires that research is conducted within an ethic of respect for persons, knowledge, democratic values, quality of educational research and academic freedom (2018). I hence acknowledge that ethical concerns carry a great importance in good educational research and while conducting my research I made sure to follow ethical procedures set by the

School of Education and the University of Nottingham. Before commencing the research, I received consent from concerning bodies: the Research Ethics Coordinator of the University of Nottingham and the Faculty of Education in my institution to get permission for access to the research setting. All the participants were informed about the purpose of the study and how the data would be used. I obtained written consents from TEs and STs participating in the study. Participating TEs and STs were informed they would be asked to keep diaries on autonomy support/autonomous behaviours and interviewed individually/in focus groups. I made sure the participants were aware of the fact that their participation in the research was not compulsory, that they could withdraw anytime and that all the data collected would be kept confidential and anonymous. Thus, pseudonyms have been used in the research paper if/when necessary and it was made clear to participants that they would be given access to the research results. I made sure to exclude details in some quotations besides some descriptions to maintain privacy/intractability both from external sources but also as regards insider knowledge of who might be who.

I had no power relations with the participants. I share the institution with the participating TEs. They are my colleagues from the same university, some of them friends I meet from time to time in the context I work, but we are from different sections and do not have a close working relationship. Participating STs are in the Faculty of Education. They have never been my students and will not be since I do not teach in this department. I only met the STs for interviews and group meetings and I had no further contact with them beyond the research aspect.

3.6 Analysis Methodology

I decided to use content analysis as an analysis methodology as the dataset was large and I wanted both to apply coding based on my RQs and to allow any unforeseen themes to emerge. 'Content analysis takes texts and analyses, reduces and interrogates them into a summary form through the use of both pre-existing categories and emergent themes in order to generate or test a theory' (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 476). Patton and Patton (2002, p. 453) define content analysis as '... any qualitative data reduction and sense-making effort that takes a volume of qualitative material and attempts to identify core consistencies and meanings'.

Content analysis consists of three stages: ‘data condensation’, ‘data display’ and ‘conclusion drawing/verification’ (Miles & Huberman, 1994). ‘Data condensation refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting and/or transforming the data that appear in the full corpus (body) of written up field notes, interview transcripts...’ through acts of coding and categorising (Miles, Huberman, & Saldana, 2013, p. 12). Following data condensation, a display is designed (matrix, graph, chart etc.) to gather data in such a form that enables the researcher to draw and verify conclusions (Miles et al., 2013), which in the present study are the code schemes prepared as a result of the data condensation process (Appendix 5: Code Scheme).

I transcribed all the interviews as soon as I conducted them. Transcription can be seen simply as recording in print the conversation that took place between the participant/s and the researcher. However, I consider that the analysis process begins with the interview itself with transcription as the second step in the analysis process since while carrying out the interview and then transcribing it the researcher cannot help but reflect on the data as it emerges and start to make sense of the data. After transcribing interviews, I transferred the diaries into electronic format and I used atlas.ti for data analysis.

At the beginning, I read each interview twice without taking any notes or attempting to code. I intended to get a sense of the whole to be able to delineate units of meaning. I only put an asterisk next to the parts that attracted my attention. Then, I read each interview with more attention to details and took notes of key words which are the initial codes in the analysis of the raw data.

In the coding of the data, both a priori codes (codes defined before the examination of data that are directly related to the research focus) (Appendix 6: A priori Codes) and codes that generated while the data was being explored (Appendix 7: Emergent Codes) were made use of. Given the context of autonomy, on which there is a huge literature review, there are certain themes/categories/codes that are expected from any treatment of the overall subject of LA, therefore, some a priori codes were identified before the analysis of data. An in-depth analysis of literature review on LA enabled me to identify *metacognition* (Anderson, 2002; Tassinari, 2011; Wenden, 1998), *learner*

training (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; McDevitt, 1997), *motivation* (Deci & Ryan, 2011; Dickinson, 1995; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; Spratt et al., 2002), *interdependence* (Aoki, 1999; Benson, 2011; Little, 1995; Littlewood, 1996), *choice* (Assor et al., 2002; Reeve et al., 1999; Reeve et al., 2004; Stefanou et al., 2004), *learning environment* (La Ganza, 2008; Núñez et al., 2015; Tan & Chan, 1998) *active engagement in learning* (Kohonen, 2007; Oxford, 2003; Tassinari, 2011) and *teacher autonomy* (Cárdenas, 2006; McGrath et al., 2000; Smith, 2003a) as a priori categories which are the key concepts in LA. Later, while analysing, careful consideration was given to how these categories/codes fitted in the particular data I gathered. Other categories/codes emerged from the actual data I collected which my knowledge of the literature helped me to organise.

I decided what data to code depending on their relevance to the research focus. Knowing that coding is iterative and is a cyclical process rather than a linear one, after I coded one participant's interview transcript, I went back to check what I indexed with the same code in the previous transcripts to see if they fall under the same heading or if it starts to change focus, which was quite easy with atlas.ti. This helped me to remain consistent in the coding process. During this coding stage, there were times I felt the need to rename some codes and merge some others, collapsing a number of redundant ones.

Given that some a priori codes were identified in advance, it was possible to code on a more general level that made both the coding and the analysis more manageable considering the large data set. To this end, with regards to participants' definitions of LA, I decided to code as *metacognition* rather than *reflection* (Appendix 8: Sample Coding for Categories and Themes – Transcriptions).

I started with words actually used by participants. For instance, in the data, some of the actual words TEs used referring to autonomous learner characteristics are 'question', 'judge', 'rejection', 'evaluate', 'not believe', 'filter'. These came together to form 'ability: metacognitive skills' (Appendix 9: Sample Coding: Ability: Metacognitive Skills). Later, I got the output 'ability: metacognitive skills' and identified various metacognitive abilities. For the words mentioned, I created the heading 'development of criticality'.

The sub-code 'ability: metacognitive skills' with some others came together to make up 'Definition of LA', which clustered with some others to form the more general concept 'Conceptualisations of LA'.

In the group meetings with STs, I asked general questions related to the concept of autonomy (Appendix 2: Group Meetings). I stepped back after asking the questions. Responses of participating group members led the discussions. I only asked questions where I considered clarification or elaboration could be useful, such as 'Can you clarify this? Can you give examples? What do you exactly mean when you say xxx?'. For their diaries, I provided questions to guide them in the process so as to keep their focus on related concepts (Appendix 3: Diary Keeping (STs)). In each meeting, discussions on different components of autonomy were conducted and students were required to add the new items discussed in the specific meeting to the list provided at the beginning and take note of all the items discussed till that day in their diaries. In the final interviews, I asked general questions and stepped back, with only prompts for clarification and elaboration. Students were free to bring up any issue they considered significant. The questions directed to students did not necessarily include words used for codes/categories. Other than *reflection*, *motivation* and *self-assessment*, I tried to formulate the questions with everyday words. However, I realised during the meetings/interviews, many students themselves were familiar with the educational terms and they used these confidently in their responses. This is not surprising considering that these are students from the Faculty of Education and they take courses on education.

After reading all data gathered from STs several times, I started coding. When I started creating codes/categories, I realised most overlapped with the codes/categories I used for teacher educator data. I created new codes/categories where needed and renamed some of the teacher data codes/categories as required. For instance, 'encouraging responsibility taking' in teacher data is coded as 'assuming responsibility over learning' in student data. Yet, 'Incentive to undertake learning outside class' is a code created only for the student data. For the naming of codes, again, while some of the code/category names are the actual words used by participants, I created most based on my knowledge of literature similar to what I did for teacher data. In some categories such as

‘adopting an active role’, I clustered all responses related to active student roles in their learning even though words ‘active’ and ‘role’ were not necessarily used in their responses but where they provided evidence of being actively involved in their learning.

Almost all data from STs was gathered in Turkish, with an exception of two students from English Language Teaching Department who preferred to write in diaries in English. For the analysis, I used English for codes/categories. I did not translate all data but translated the parts I used as quotations in the present paper. A sample of translated transcript material was given to a native English speaker who checked and raised any issues on language and these were resolved by discussion.

The recurring patterns helped me identify themes. Later I compared and contrasted the themes, and explored the relationships between/among them (Gibson & Brown, 2009). Atlas.ti eased the coding process and helped me categorise and thematise the findings, enabling easy access to each category/theme. Therefore, the analysis of the data gathered enables me to propose three themes which are in line with the research questions:

1. How TEs think they support LA
2. How STs think they put LA into practice
3. Factors influencing TEs’ support and STs’ implementation of LA according to the perceptions of TEs and STs

In order to verify the trustworthiness/rigour of the findings through ensuring dependability/reliability and validity/credibility, and with the aim of minimizing bias and maximizing accuracy, there are several techniques researchers make use of, some of which were exploited in the current research. Gathering data using different data collection methods helps reduce bias that might result from using only a single-method (Denzin, 2017), by ‘bringing different kinds of evidence into some relationship so that they can be compared and contrasted’ (Elliot, 1991, p. 82). In the present study, use of interviews and diaries served this purpose. Gathering data from both TEs and STs also gave me the chance to arrive at similar data from different sources and thus capture multiple perspectives (Patton & Patton, 2002). Supporting facts by triangulating data with

different methods and from different sources helps corroborate the facts and so helps to increase the accuracy and credibility of findings. Later in the analysis process, data from these multiple sources were braided together rather than dealt with individually to be able to reach an understanding of the whole phenomenon (Baxter & Jack, 2008). To this end, interview scripts and diaries of each set of participants as well as two different sets of data from the two were compared and contrasted to arrive at a deeper understanding and to crosscheck the consistency of information derived from different parties obtained through different methods (Patton & Patton, 2002). Each data collection step enabled me to ask questions to previously gathered data and make formulations. Through amalgamating, and thus reviewing previous findings in the light of the new ones, I verified findings with each new piece of data gathered (Beuving & De Vries, 2015; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002). Moreover, collecting data through phases (from TEs: first round of interviews, diaries and second round of interviews; from STs: a series of group meetings and focus/individual interviews) gave me the chance to check ‘the consistency of what people say over time’, strengthening the credibility of the findings (Patton & Patton, 2002, p. 559).

I also considered it significant to keep different versions of each document I prepared rather than overwriting. This allowed me to go back from time to time to check how my work evolved and how I reached the point I currently was. I also kept a reflective diary, particularly more intensely at the beginning, which helped me ease my tension and frustration with the challenges I confronted. Going over the notes I took in the diary later enabled me to face my earlier experiences and beliefs/perceptions in a new light and realise the reasons behind my actions. This gave me the assurance for some aspects while enabling me to make changes as/if necessary in others (Beuving & De Vries, 2015).

It is also necessary to analyse data in two cycles. As soon as the data was collected, it was analysed. The data was analysed again after some time to validate that similar findings are arrived at (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I also considered analysing in different forms would be useful in maintaining trustworthiness. After analysing both data sets in two cycles, I organised findings

in different display formats other than the code scheme (Appendix 5: Code Scheme) with the consideration this would clarify the implications of the data. To this end, I organised summaries of data according to what each participant expressed (Appendix 10: Teacher Data General Notes) as well as putting each participants' name under each category to arrive at an understanding of the whole picture (Appendix 11: Teacher Support Table). This allowed me to spot similarities as well as differences among the responses of participants.

Two teacher educator and four student teacher interview transcriptions were given to a critical friend who has experience in content analysis and who is familiar with the topics being investigated to read and categorise the data (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Yin, 2003). Later, the categories created by the researcher and the critical friend were crosschecked (Busch et al., 2005). Any discrepancies were resolved by discussion.

3.7 Conclusion

The present chapter introduced the epistemological and ontological beliefs underpinning this study and presented the details of the methodology the research study employed with reference to the instruments and the procedures for data collection. It provided details concerning the participants and ethical considerations. Finally, it elaborated on the analysis methodology.

Having discussed the literature and having presented the methodology of the thesis, the rest of this thesis will deal with the extensive data gathered. To this end, the next six chapters (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10) have a similar structure: first presenting data (from the 15 TEs and 27 STs: from two rounds of interviews with TEs and TE diaries, and group meetings, focus group/individual interviews and student diaries) and then discussing the findings. Chapter 4 focuses on Conceptualisations and Background of Participants, Chapter 5 on Contextual Factors Influencing the Support and the Implementation of LA, Chapter 6 on Metacognition, Chapter 7 on Atmosphere Conducive to LA, Chapter 8 on Learner Training, Chapter 9 on Interdependence and Chapter 10 on Affect in Learning. Chapter 11 synthesizes the findings of the previous chapters considering all the data collected with the implications it suggests.

Chapter 4: Conceptualisations and Background of Participants Regarding Learner Autonomy

This chapter presents and discusses the findings on the participants' conceptualisations of LA, and their backgrounds and prior experiences related to LA. The conceptualisations and background of participants are significant since they are likely to be influential in shaping their practice. TEs' conceptualisations and background affect the support they provide to their learners, and STs' conceptualisations and background shape their actual autonomous behaviours and response to opportunities to act autonomously. I would like to make a reminder that student data is in a different form of analysis due to the fact that a considerable amount of the gathering of the data relied on group meetings. Therefore, the presentation of student data does not usually give precise numbers but rather reflects the views of participating STs.

4.1 Presentation of Data on Conceptualisations

The data proposed the following categories regarding participants' conceptualisations:

1. LA importance
2. LA definition
3. Importance of Teacher Support for LA and the possibility of building autonomy at higher education level

4.1.1 Learner Autonomy Importance

In the present study, there is absolute unanimity among TEs that LA is a significant principle in the learning process, which is also acknowledged by the majority of STs. Participating TEs propose learning is not likely to happen or continue without the capacity to manage one's own learning, directing attention to the significance of autonomy in learning. On this issue Meral succinctly expresses her feelings:

Learning is individual, I mean, teaching does not guarantee learning. So if they don't have the autonomy, if they don't have control over their learning, it's not learning. (TE11)

All TEs suggest they consider learning to be a lifelong process with the majority pointing out they do not view LA related only to university studies and suggest

before learners graduate, teachers need to give them the habit of learning by themselves, LA, so that when they graduate they will not stop but add on their body of knowledge and continue to develop throughout their lives. They suggest unless learners are autonomous in their decisions, learning ceases to continue since learners who are not autonomous have an inclination to be dependent on others. Selvi remarks:

If they are not autonomous, once they are out of the university, they won't be able to be lifelong learners because there won't be a teacher around to spoon-feed the information or to give the content. (TEI1)

Teachers in classes may not be able to address the needs of all learners and it may not be possible for them to guide each and every learner in line with their aims. Hence, it is crucial for learners to have the skills to control and lead their learning according to what they want to achieve because it is never the case that all learners have similar aims with a teacher guiding all accordingly. Accepting that teachers are not a kind of '*panacea*', in Imge's words, learners' ability to control their learning has the potential to provide a solution to this problem. Imge proposes:

Imagine a student is studying business and taking a related course, if this student aims to produce and export something, he needs to develop some other skills but if he doesn't aim to produce but to import, he needs some other skills. A course delivered will not be addressing all the needs of those who study business. Teacher gives general knowledge, the book gives general knowledge but the students, to improve in a specific area, need to do research in line with their needs outside what is given by the teacher or the book. (TEI1)

The majority of STs consider LA to be highly significant for both personal and academic development as well as in their future careers. However, two STs suggest learning can happen without the ability to be autonomous, though they later propose such learning is bound to be ineffective. On the significance of LA, Tarik suggests:

... important for academic studies and our career life. If one is autonomous, whatever stage in his life, he will be able to deal with problems, establish a discipline and manage his life. (GM3)

Some suggest LA helps learners develop mainly because it helps learners to

become aware of learning strategies and make informed choices about the ones they use in their learning, highlighting the importance they dedicate to learner strategies, particularly cognitive ones (8.1.2.3 Learners and Learner Strategies).

On this issue Sinem proposes:

Autonomy is important because it raises awareness on different learning strategies and learners know the best strategy that works for them. (GM3)

Autonomy in learning leads to increased assumption of responsibility and decision-making. Learners accept the consequences of decisions made, which students consider result in better management of learning process as well as managing life in general. They propose without the capacity to manage learning, learners are bound to be stuck to what is given and cannot draw their own routes.

Ferzan:

Learning what the teacher presents takes you only to a specific point and you need to be autonomous to be giving direction to your life and achieving what you want to achieve. Otherwise, you only achieve what others see fit for you. (GM3)

Two STs, Sinem and Gencay, link LA to specifically teaching practice and argue they need to be autonomous as learners because they will be teaching in the future and will need these skills in their careers.

4.1.2 Learner Autonomy Definition

To arrive at participants' definitions of LA, data obtained from questions '*What comes to your mind when you hear 'learner autonomy?'*' and '*What are the characteristics of autonomous learners?'*' were utilised as well as specific learning examples they refer to when clarifying meanings. In their definitions, there were times when STs preferred to provide examples, therefore, for some of the following sub-categories references to following chapters are made where STs explicitly exemplify their autonomous behaviours. Data gathered suggests TEs and STs in the current study view certain characteristics distinctive to autonomous learning which can be categorised as metacognition, socio-affective and cognitive strategies, and learner dispositions.

4.1.2.1 Metacognition

Both TEs and STs make references to metacognitive knowledge and strategies.

4.1.2.1.1 Metacognitive Knowledge

Awareness of Self and Learning Methods

Four TEs tend to relate awareness of learning methods with LA. They underline the significance of approaching learning tasks according to individual differences, highlighting that autonomous learners are aware of how they learn best and adapt their learning accordingly. Imge proposes:

It is personal. Some have photographic memory, others keep in mind better what they hear, and some use/create formulations to learn. That is, they know themselves well and use appropriate learning methods. (TEI1)

STs on the other hand suggest they are conscious about their learning preferences, such as whether they work better with others or on their own. Merve:

Some can only learn when alone, others can learn in the presence of others. We need to know, there is no good or bad, we just need to know. (GM1)

Some say they need to have music on, while some need to engage in something different such as a game or social media to be able to keep themselves focused. Many stress the significance of taking regular breaks for efficient learning as a result of their experiences. Sezgi suggests she can only learn if she takes notes, and goes on to suggest notes taken by others are of no use for her:

I have to take my own notes, otherwise, I can't learn. I can ask my friends to give me their notes but I cannot learn from notes taken by others. (GM2)

Awareness of Internal and External Factors

Awareness of internal and external factors are considered to influence learning by both TEs and STs. Cemre points out it is not only learning processes that one needs to be aware of but other factors also need to be considered:

With some students external factors are very important either contributing or preventing. For some, internal factors are important. Some students like to study when in a very good mood, when psychologically well, some study better with a cup of coffee, enough light, good physical conditions. (TEI1)

Similarly, some STs suggest autonomous learners have an idea about where and when they study more efficiently. Erim succinctly summarises this:

Autonomous learners know where they study better. Some study well in the library, others get disturbed. Some study at night, some learn better during the day. It is important for me for example to study when I feel happy, so I listen to music to cheer me up while I study. (GM1)

Awareness of Aims

Awareness of aims is another characteristic attached to autonomous learners emphasised by two TEs. They propose autonomous learners are aware of what they want to accomplish and know what they need to do to reach their aims. These learners are also alert to their surroundings. Gamze suggests:

Autonomous learners are self-aware of what's going on around. They know what they need to learn, what they need to do to learn. They are aware of both their own needs and what the course offers and how well what the course offers matches their needs. (TEI1)

Some STs suggest learners who set goals have a better motivation to strive for it. Tarik suggests: 'to have the motivation, one needs to have a target'. Bircan adds to this:

Although there is a curriculum followed in each programme, students' needs determine what they learn. Students learn things they think they need now or will need in the future and disregard the rest. (GM2)

According to STs, autonomous learners follow their interests. They learn something because they can see what it offers to them in terms of their immediate and long term goals, and not because it is directed to them, be it 'their families or teachers' (Gulce).

Awareness of Teacher and Learner Roles

Few TEs suggest it is crucial for learners to be aware of their own roles and responsibilities to have command over the learning process, not expecting everything from the teacher but first doing what they need to do as students. Some TEs suggest making students aware that they study and identify their specific weaknesses before they consult teachers for help is learners' responsibility and is a significant autonomous characteristic (Selvi). Some STs relate autonomy with the assumption of responsibility as elaborated on p.180.

4.1.2.1.2 Metacognitive Strategies Mentioned by TEs

This section provides TEs' and STs' references to metacognition in their definitions of LA. The metacognitive skills/strategies mentioned by the two parties are elaborated in Chapter 6 when participants explain and exemplify their perceptions of how they support/implement these strategies.

Development of Criticality

Almost all educators appreciate the prominence of developing criticality, for which educators use different terms such as 'questioning', 'rejecting' and 'filtering' interchangeably. They propose autonomous learners do not readily accept the information they encounter or what is presented by the teacher but are able to question and criticise, then filter and differentiate right from wrong or what they need from what is trivial to reach their aims. This necessitates rejecting unnecessary or surplus information and looking for information that has the potential to take them to their aims without 'believing whatever comes out of the teacher's mouth' as Cemre (TEI1) points out.

Reflection and Monitoring Learning

Nine TEs suggest learners who know how to learn can determine their aims and know the ways that can carry them to their aims. To this end, they are able to manage their time, plan their work and practise reflection to be able to monitor their learning. They manage to identify their weaknesses and strengths, through the use of a number of tools and take precautions as necessary. Gamze suggests:

They monitor and identify their weaknesses. They know how they learn best, how they can rectify their weaknesses. They're able to monitor, self-assess, if they reached their targets or not. They question the level they have learned. For self-assessment, they use tools: for example exam results, projects, comparing themselves with other students in class, homework. (TEI1)

Centring Learning

Half of the participating TEs stress linking new learning to previous learning as an autonomous learner characteristic. They say comparing new learning with what has already been stored in their memories leads to updating what they already know and helps learners achieve meaningful learning. Nesrin proposes:

Get important information, differentiate it and save it to a correct file so you can recall it when you need it. Our brain is a computer I say to my students. We save in it but if you don't know the name correctly, it is very difficult to reach it again. New information should be hooked to the old ones so that it can be recalled easily. (TEI1)

Having Initiative

Having initiative in learning is another significant autonomous learner characteristic according to three participating TEs. They emphasize autonomous learners have the capacity to take and carry out decisions. They do not expect the learning atmosphere or teacher guidelines to be too structured as opposed to the non-autonomous ones who expect to be given clear and strict guidelines. They can initiate their learning according to their own aims, interests and needs in their own time and at their own pace. Cemre suggests:

Autonomous students immediately shape their thinking. They ask questions after starting because they are not dependent on the teacher. They are self-initiative. (TEI1)

Managing Resources

The majority of TEs talk about the significance of learners' being able to identify and access the resources they need. Autonomous learners know there are different resources they can utilise and do not view the teacher or the book as the only source of information. They know where they can find the resources and are able to evaluate the resources. Gul remarks:

They wouldn't need my guidance. They are self-regulated learners: view me only as a resource. I am not the only source and I am not at the centre. They use different resources, for example the internet. What I give is not crucial. He can progress from what I give. (TEI1)

4.1.2.1.3 Metacognitive Strategies Mentioned by STs

Utilisation of Learner Strategies

The majority of STs refer to the ability to select and exercise appropriate learner strategies. They suggest learners need to be aware of the ways that foster their learning. Gencay proposes:

Autonomy, success and learning strategies go hand in hand. Each individual is unique and they learn best using strategies they experienced during their studies, according to their individual differences. (GM1)

Being Organised and Planned: are stressed as leading to autonomy by a considerable number of students. While some perceive planning as something done on paper, others consider having plans in mind is also acceptable. Despite disagreement in conceptualisation, they consider planning is significant in leading learning. Sinem posits:

When you plan, you are prepared for what comes next, and it eases learning... planning the stages, what strategy to use, when and where to study. (GM2)

4.1.2.2 Socio-affective Skills/strategies

Having the capacity to manage social relations as well as intrapersonal factors are significant in the management of learning according to TEs and STs.

Managing Social Relations

Being able to organise social relationships is mentioned by six TEs. Data reveals TEs consider being able to consult different parties in learning an important autonomous learner characteristic. Cemre proposes:

They know how to ask good questions at the right stage to the right people - not necessarily the teacher. During the learning process they need to be in contact with different people depending on their projects, activity. (TEI1)

STs' conceptualisations of managing social relations are elaborated under 9.1.2 How Learners Manage Relations in Learning.

Managing Emotions

Managing emotions is also identified as significant in autonomous learning by a few TEs and ten STs. TEs estimate autonomous learners have the capacity to deal with their feelings, eliminating negative ones and cherishing positive ones. In order to be able to manage anxiety and stress, which are natural in the learning process, TEs highlight that the use of correct cognitive and metacognitive strategies promotes the management of affect, suggesting that the ability to manage all skills; cognitive, metacognitive, social and affective are interrelated.

Data suggests learners who are able to use cognitive and metacognitive strategies effectively are in a better situation to deal with stress and exam anxiety as is present in Selvi's words:

When you say autonomous learner, I think of learners who can manage that side (*affective*) as well... If you apply correct cognitive strategies, if you monitor what you are learning, how you are learning, if you can use metacognitive strategies, then this helps you to deal with anxiety and stress that is part of the learning process; not separate from each other, I see them as interrelated. (TEI1)

Though by only two TEs, LA is also associated with taking responsibility for one's own actions in learning rather than putting the responsibility on others. This is an important finding directing attention to the notion of 'locus of control'. Regarding this issue, Hulya remarked:

Individuals taking responsibility for their learning, having an internal locus of control, individual effort putting in learning. That's saying 'how effective I am as a learner', rather than 'how effective the teacher is as a teacher'... rather than putting responsibility on others or their behaviours, or other sources. (TEI1)

Conceptualisations of STs on the influence of emotions on learning and the ways they deal with emotions are elaborated under 10.1.2 Stress Management.

4.1.2.3 Cognitive Skills/Strategies

Five TEs highlight the significance of cognitive skills in the learning process while a considerable number of STs refer to cognitive skills and their role in managing their learning. TEs suggest autonomous learners make use of some of the cognitive strategies in their learning. Nesrin directs attention to reading skills, advocating they enhance learning and help learners develop autonomy:

Our learners struggle with lots of information and they can't get the information they need. For example, a good reader reads the article for the information he needs. That is, he skims and scans. For an autonomous learner this should be one of the strategies to have. (TEI1)

On STs' side, what they mainly refer to is being aware of learning strategies that work for themselves and utilise these to manage their learning (elaborated under 8.1.2.3 Learners and Learner Strategies). As Feray clarifies:

Teachers teach but students learn using their own strategies. Some learn by reading, some by writing. That is, teacher gives information but it is up to the student to adopt a way to learn it. (GM1)

The cognitive skills mentioned here are specifically the ones that learners utilise in disciplines related to social studies since participants are mainly from Social Sciences.

4.1.2.4 Learner Dispositions

While both TEs and STs characterise dispositions autonomous learners possess as self-concept, motivation and active involvement, determination is only mentioned by TEs.

Self-concept

Five TEs talk about self-confidence and self-esteem. They suggest learners who trust themselves and their capabilities are the ones who depict more autonomous behaviours. They achieve better and take the initiative in a more confident way ‘not because they understand perfectly but because they are confident’ (Cemre).

Cemre elaborated further on the idea of confidence when she talked about how confident students are characterised by a willingness to engage in study, to take time and to challenge themselves and support others to enhance their learning:

Autonomous students understand what they have to do as soon as you set the task. They know how they can shape it in the way they want. They are interdependent, initiative, confident... Not finding excuses, not going away and doing the minimum of what is required. They are ready to challenge things. (TE11)

Self-confidence is regarded highly significant by the majority of STs. They express learners with high self-confidence tend to perform better. As Bircan suggests ‘self-confidence, knowing that you can achieve takes you a step higher’. Gulce, on the other hand, who is a proponent of self-confidence as a significant factor in autonomy, advocates ‘self-confident people express themselves better, and they have auto-control’.

Motivation

Having motivation is another autonomous learner characteristic quoted by participants. Six TEs refer to having internal motivation as one of the most

important qualities autonomous learners possess. They suggest autonomous learners are generally willing and prepared to go beyond what is required. They enjoy challenges and are not satisfied with what is given to them by the teacher or the course, but question and hunger for more. Hulya suggests:

Unless there is a desire for learning, learning cannot take place I think. In fact if a student has the desire and motivation for the subject matter, he himself will try to learn. (TEI1)

Motivation is unanimously significant for STs. When talking about motivation they refer to the role of both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and conclude that both have their own merits. Gencay says:

I don't believe that a student who lacks either intrinsic or extrinsic motivation can be successful. Both are equally important in learning. (GM1)

Most value intrinsic motivation and acknowledge it is a *must have*. On this issue Bade suggests: for autonomous learners 'learning is a passion, not something they have to do'. She goes on to suggest the feeling of success at the end of a learning experience cannot be related to any other type of satisfaction.

When I succeed, I gain self-confidence and feel I can do more, better. (STI)

Only three STs suggest they would not need extrinsic motivation because they are able to motivate themselves. Yet, almost all accept motivation provided from outside is particularly effective, if not more effective than intrinsic motivation. They acknowledge they employ self-motivation strategies but do need to be motivated by others. Such external motivation usually comes from mainly teachers, families and peers, and urges them to study more. Some expect to hear they are 'capable'. This confirms their feelings about themselves while for others help build confidence they do not really possess. Some need the assurance they can achieve better than what they perform now to be able to set higher goals. Tolga refers to a specific example to clarify the role of external motivators:

When my teachers told me I can do better, I started thinking and I found out that I have weaknesses. That's when I started to think what I can do to be better and I gradually improved. (STI)

Aysegul posits:

Teacher reinforcements invoke the desire in me to study more and get higher marks (STD).

Melek maintains:

Teacher expectation is a motivator. If a student knows teacher holds high expectations of him/her, that student is motivated to set high goals. If he knows teacher trusts him, he trusts himself better. (FGI)

For the majority, exams and grades are highly motivating which in essence are extrinsic motivators. They accept they study and learn with the intention to pass or get high marks in the exams. Some suggest the exam grades serve as catalysers, as in Gencay's words 'the only thing that motivates me is the exam results', contradicting his previous proposition that both intrinsic and extrinsic are essential.

The majority of students express their main objective as obtaining marks to pass a course. Contrary to the majority, there are students who study to learn rather than to pass. Sezgi posits:

They teach us but I learn not because I am taught but because I want to learn. And I find it difficult to study during exam period. I want to study only because I want to learn. (STI)

Bircan, who also values both intrinsic and extrinsic motivators, says:

University is only a means to our ends. I need to learn not to pass but to be able to be successful in my chosen career. I know I will need all this information when I start teaching. (GM3)

Active Engagement

Most TEs refer to active learner roles in their definitions of LA. Active engagement in autonomous learning is emphasized with the suggestion that actively constructing knowledge rather than passively receiving it is what autonomy calls for. Selma comments:

LA includes active involvement in the learning process. Autonomous students are proactively involved in the learning process, it requires students' active construction and reconstruction of knowledge, not only involved in the learning process, they simultaneously think and reconstruct in order to reach the aims. (TEI1)

This issue is dwelled on by STs when they explain and exemplify their autonomous behaviours under 7.1.1 Active Involvement.

Determination

According to five TEs, autonomous learners have a strong determination to learn. Participants suggest autonomous learners either disregard the problems so as not to block their way to their learning or insist on finding solutions to whatever problem arises, eliminate the problem and arrive at what they aim for. As Cemre notes:

Autonomous ones accept to get low marks but they themselves want to design their own research and put forward their own ideas. If teacher contests, they can challenge the teacher and not readily accept what the teacher says. (TEI1)

TEs indicate that autonomous learners apply different approaches and never let challenges leave them behind. They have a tendency to put considerable effort in what they are doing to be able to overcome challenges. As Remzi says their ‘obstinacy’ is what takes them to where they want to see themselves.

4.1.3 Importance of Teacher Support and the Possibility to Build Autonomy in Higher Education

When probed about teacher support for LA, all TEs signify the importance of teacher support, yet they provide differing views regarding whether and when autonomy can be developed.

TEs suggest it is possible that learners flourish in LA provided that teachers help their learners with activities, techniques and applications they utilise in their practice. Imge suggests autonomous learning requires a set of skills that can be developed. To this end, educators view specific teacher characteristics to be crucial. On this issue Cemre remarks:

Under the right conditions and with the right support and strategies they can flourish. Teacher support is crucial. If teacher shows students that he is with students, encouraging, warm, patient. If not patient, it is not possible. Teachers need to be flexible, adaptable, enthusiastic, friendly and encouraging to be able to support their learners’. (TEI1)

Asli and Remzi emphasize it is often the case when some learners are faced with new things, such as the requirement to learn independently, they do not readily accept but at first have the inclination to reject. They find it difficult to leave their 'comfort zones' in Remzi's words. In such cases they propose if the teacher is tolerant, patient and motivating, developing autonomy becomes more probable. Asli identifies:

When you do something new they think they will have difficulties. They do not readily accept and their motivation decreases. They react at the beginning but if you show tolerance and understanding, some can continue. (TEI1)

Three other TEs point out it is possible to build autonomy through the necessary guidance but advocate it is not impossible but difficult at university level. They argue LA training should start earlier, suggesting it is difficult to change learners' learning habits at this point when they have other priorities. Mercan posits:

They mainly study for the exams. They don't care about learning by themselves. They want everything ready so that they will be successful in their exams. That is their main concern. It may not be possible but as teachers we should not give up. Learner training is important. You should start from early ages but it doesn't mean that if they haven't gained these kinds of experiences we shouldn't emphasize it. (TEI1)

Three TEs are of the opinion that LA is innate. They believe some learners have an inborn ability to act autonomously. Yet, they stress there is the possibility that learners build autonomy 'depending on how the teacher has the ability to develop interest and curiosity in students' (Meral). These TEs suggest having autonomy as an innate ability is favourable but through encouragement it can actualise. Regarding this Merve proposes:

If innate it's better but through encouragement it is possible that students develop it. (TEI1)

It is also highlighted by four TEs that through support they observe a gradual change in the positive direction in terms of LA. Filiz points out:

Of course we don't have a magic stick, but they change. In the second and the third years step by step we prepare them. If I compare their first year and last year, I think we are doing something about autonomy.

(TEI2)

All participating TEs in the study unanimously consider teacher support for LA to be greatly significant. They concede teachers have a role in helping learners cultivate autonomous learning skills. According to participants, learners change and develop autonomy when teachers create the necessary conditions and atmosphere. If learners are supported, if they are well informed about its significance in the learning process and throughout the whole life span, if teachers raise learners' awareness, progress in the development of autonomy is possible to be observed even if 'not to the favoured extent' as Gamze says. According to Ali, teachers should try to give this character (*autonomous learning skills*) to their students even if they do not view LA to be practical in their system, giving the implications that despite acknowledging its importance in learning, it is possible that in some contexts it may not be welcome or appropriate. Contextual support in the form of initiation of the process is emphasised by Selma in her words:

...just like in social constructivism and cognitive constructivism, Piaget and Vygotsky, there can be certain initiators outside because there are some aspects that you cannot go beyond, you are stuck. You need guidance, support, feedback, scaffolding; you need certain things that you are not aware of. It can be materials, a joint dialogue between the student and the teacher, feedback or a question. Teacher role is of paramount importance. Instructor in the classroom, outside a mother, father can play a role in initiating autonomy. That means we need another person who can widen our horizon, perspective from awareness aspect or practical aspect. (TEI1)

STs alike regard teacher support for LA as highly significant in a number of aspects such as teacher as motivator, creating the atmosphere for autonomous learning, guiding for resources, fostering interdependence and enhancing metacognition.

Teacher as motivator

As mentioned earlier (p.112), STs value extrinsic motivators, mainly from teachers. They regard teacher reinforcements, particularly those helping build self-confidence through the expression of high expectations, serve as strong

motivators, urging students to enforce their limits by putting more effort. Feray clarifies:

I need to hear something from the teacher; that they trust me, tell me that I am capable. If I know that, I aim for higher. (STI)

According to Tarik, a teacher supporting learners in the affective domain carries a crucial role, facilitating autonomy:

If learners are not given the right reinforcements for working autonomously, the expected results cannot be obtained. I believe teacher motivation is really important so that learners start or continue to work autonomously. (GM3)

Teacher as the creator of atmosphere

Urging students to be active, to search rather than giving them direct answers, allowing the freedom to express themselves and take risks, creating opportunities for practice and providing choices are necessary to create a suitable atmosphere for developing autonomy according to STs. Ferzan reviews such atmosphere as:

I feel more motivated when teachers allow us to make decisions. I feel it is my decisions and the consequences of my decisions. (GM3)

Taking the learners' perspective through providing choice is an issue acknowledged by students in creating a convenient context for autonomous learning. A few students appreciate teachers who ask for their preferences regarding assessment, turning to students about the weights of assessment components and the deadlines of projects, which they believe inspires them to feel in control of the process.

Encouragement for taking risks is appreciated by learners. They consider they feel relieved from the pressure of being 'right' at all times and find the room for experimenting. Elvan confirms:

Our teacher tells us the class is the best place to make mistakes, put forward our ideas even if we think it is nonsense. And we feel free to express ourselves, I am more confident in that lesson, nobody feels afraid or threatened. (GM1)

Students propose some teachers stimulate learners to put theory into practice. The following is only one example for such support offered by a Psychological

Counselling student, Deniz:

We had this teacher who would give the theory and then would take us in front of him as counsellor and he as the client. That was the most effective part I would say. I experienced counselling, first-hand experience and he gave feedback, really useful. (GM3)

Guiding for resources

Some students concede their teachers give them hints on the resources they can exploit. Giving slides, suggesting books, encouraging further study even if slides are given and encouraging research are suggested as ways teachers help their learners with. On the other hand, reflecting the view of a group of her friends, Deniz suggests:

We have teachers who do not give answers to our questions but do discuss with us. Then they direct us to go and search saying ‘instead of getting my opinion only, go search and learn about the opinions of some others, and construct your own thinking around it’. It is not telling me this is the truth but directing me to find it myself, I think it helps. (GM3)

Fostering interdependence

Students propose they are frequently encouraged to work with their friends, share ideas or fulfil tasks in groups which they believe encourage autonomy since with such approaches teacher is removed from the centre of the process with learners taking more control. Erim posits:

In group work activities, we discuss with friends, see what others have thought about the topic and become aware of different viewpoints. We share our knowledge and it is different from listening to the teacher. (STD)

Enhancing metacognition

Students concede teachers facilitate reflection mainly through the feedback they provide. Giving learners the chance to go over exam papers, giving feedback on presentations and projects, encouraging learners to make presentations in class with which students ponder about how to present and the extent they are in control regarding the content are the main ways students propose teachers help

them to think about their learning. The role they attach to feedback is summarised by Tarik:

The feedback we get helps us to monitor ourselves, we start thinking what we did, what went wrong and why it is wrong (GM3).

There is a proposition more room is created gradually throughout university years for autonomy. In the final group meeting, Tolga, a fourth year ELT student, tells the other group members in their first years at university:

In time teachers make you feel you have to survive on your own, they encourage you to be responsible. At the beginning it was different; there were many things teachers would do but now we know we have to do, we now have increased duties, responsibilities. (FGI)

Teacher support is viewed as necessary and contributing to autonomy by students as they suggest ‘not everybody can be initiative but there are times they need to be encouraged’ (Sinem). However, it is also significant to note as Melek cautions: ‘the higher the support, the less inclined learners are to put effort: teachers need to find a balance, or learners decrease their efforts’. (GM3)

4.2 Presentation of Data on the Background of Participants Regarding Learner Autonomy

Learners’ educational, cultural and family backgrounds, learner dispositions and expectations, teacher background and dispositions are argued to be influential in the realisation of autonomy by participating TEs and STs.

4.2.1 Educational Background/Learner Preparedness

According to six TEs, the educational background, and hence the learning habits learners are accustomed to determine the type of support as well the extent to which they can be supported.

According to Mercan, when learners are at university level, their learning habits are already shaped, making it difficult for teachers to inspire learners to adopt different ones. He proposes:

At university, it is very hard to change their habits because they come from teacher-centred classrooms. If you suddenly turn the atmosphere into student-centred, they start complaining because they want everything ready. (TEI1)

They suggest if previous education system was not in favour of supporting autonomy but prioritised outcome-based learning as opposed to process-based learning, as is the case in exam oriented contexts, it is challenging for teachers to persuade learners for LA. Imge posits:

The background of our students, they are exam oriented. If you tell them it will come up in the exam, they are motivated to learn, if not, they put it aside. (TEI1)

Some participants identify because of their previous education system, learners are not really competent to work autonomously. Cemre:

Because they have been dependent on their parents and then on teachers. It is part of their culture, part of the education system. Basically in primary and secondary school, we have teacher-centred education system and the teacher is the source of knowledge, and they learn how to become passive learners. (TEI1)

This same issue is maintained by some STs when they argue the education system in high schools does not require learners to make research and the lessons are conducted in teacher-centred classrooms where students are made accustomed to receiving information rather than deciding on the what or the how of what is learnt, resulting in learners shaping their learning around passive learner roles. Melek succinctly expresses:

That's how I am used to learn. Teacher gives what is important and I learn. That's been like this throughout my education years. Now I expect the same. (GM1)

Their previous exam oriented education system is also mentioned by a few students as a limitation for LA. These students believe the focus on entrance exams at each significant stage of their education life makes learners concentrate on passing rather than learning, resulting as a hindrance for LA as in such contexts learning is shaped according to norms as opposed to being encouraged for individuality (Feray, GM3).

4.2.2 Cultural Background of Learners

Four TEs consider cultural differences play a role in adopting autonomous tendencies in learning. They regard in eastern cultures, learners' autonomy is

suppressed and they are not brought up with the skill to make their own decisions.

Meral notes:

Culturally our learners are not autonomous because culturally we do not give them the right to be autonomous. (TEI1)

Similarly Hulya stresses the difficulty of creating a mind-set that accepts autonomy as a significant learner characteristic, referring to the concept of learnt helplessness which she advocates governs learner behaviours:

I think this is something related to our cultural characteristics, in eastern culture, we tend to obey things that happen beyond our control and not tend to create a change. We accept it as fate. Students always blame other things. This is reflected in their learning. They have the perception from the beginning of not being able to create a change. (TEI1)

4.2.3 Family Background of Learners

Four TEs regard family as a significant factor preparing learners to be autonomous and suggest if learners are not given opportunities to practise autonomy in their family contexts, it is difficult to make a change in educational settings. Ali expresses his views on the synergetic relationship between family and educational backgrounds as:

I think education starts in the family, seeds are planted in family. If children are valued, their ideas respected at home, they come to you as autonomous. If family is too oppressive, strict, they may find it difficult. If children are autonomous in their family, if autonomy is developed at home, this is reflected in their learning. (TEI1)

4.2.4 Learner Dispositions

Learner dispositions appear as a significant factor by ten educators. They suggest various learner dispositions affect teacher support for LA. Passive learner tendencies, dependence on teacher/book, relying on extrinsic motivators are given as examples.

TEs express their grievances about learners' passive attitudes, neglecting or not assuming their responsibilities. When probed about his support in the second interview, Ali complains about his learners' lazy manners, which limit their responsibility taking together with hindering the support he wishes to provide:

To be honest with you, I have not been able to do much regarding supporting them. I believe they are used to certain kinds of things and the biggest problem I had was unfortunately our students are a bit lazy when you assign them to do something. (TEI2)

They propose some learners are used to be spoon-fed, expect to receive information and learning materials and do the minimum of what is required. They avoid generating original ideas and tend to reiterate. Remzi suggests learners have an external locus of control and relate their success to outside factors such as lack of handouts in the form of summaries. He notes:

This was the last day before the midterm and almost all of the students were still complaining about the lack of handouts and materials and they said that because of this they would fail. (TED)

Selma considers learners have a tendency to be recipients regurgitating information provided rather than actively constructing their own knowledge:

Last semester I gave them a documentary to watch. And I asked questions. Most of them wrote what we discussed in the classroom, in the same way, with the same words. Very few wrote variety, looked from various angles. (TEI1)

Rejecting working in groups surfaced as a factor negatively affecting teacher support for LA. Regarding this, Mercan identifies:

Sometimes I give them projects, homework so that they can work together and complete but usually they prefer working alone. Whenever I give them pair or group work, some complain from the beginning saying that they want to work individually. (TEI1)

Relying on extrinsic motivation is another factor highlighted. TEs suggest learners would avoid performing a task if there are no grades allocated to it. They do not do tasks for the sake of learning and need external motivators. Hulya remarks:

They usually display behaviour to obtain something or avoid something as a result of it. If the students' aim is not only a grade-because grade in itself is one of the reinforcements, he needs teacher praise, appreciation, being a good student in the eyes of the other students, other students wanting to study with him, asking him questions. (TEI1)

TEs suggest learners are reluctant to actively take decisions. Whenever they are

asked to make a decision, they would refer to their teachers and expect help. According to Filiz, some learners ask for help in choosing the topic to work on:

They keep coming to my office and asking ‘teacher, which one should I choose?’ They want me to choose for them. But I tell them this is your task. My likes and your dislikes are different. (TEI1)

The following examples given by STs themselves also signify specific learner dispositions influence both LA and its support.

Some students suggest each learner is a unique individual and expect teachers to cater for individual needs expecting teachers to be a *panacea*, proposing just the opposite of TE suggestions. Feray:

I believe each learner differs from others and a teacher needs to consider these differences and adapt their teaching accordingly to address each and every learner. (GM1)

There are opposite opinions regarding grades allocated to assigned duties exemplified clearly in the following two student views. Gulce confesses she would not put effort into an activity if no points are allocated or she believes the allocated points are not worth putting the effort, saying ‘I wouldn’t bother to do an activity if it brings only 2-3 points’. Gencay contradicts her suggesting achieving a goal is more important than gaining points:

This is behaviouristic approach, if you do this, you get this. I am against this. I want to hear ‘if you do this this, you will achieve this, not you will get this’. (GM3)

In fact, with this quotation, this student puts forward the view of a group of his friends but at the same time contradicts himself remembering his previous statement when he said ‘the only thing that motivates me is exam results’. This is an indication learners do not have fixed views and can change depending on the situation or it can also imply how their views changed over time which can be considered as a side effect of the present study. It can also be linked to the fact that they are students at a Faculty of Education with theoretical knowledge they have not internalised.

4.2.5 Learner Expectations

Four TEs suggest learner expectations affect their autonomy support. They respond that some learners have a mind-set which views learning as a one way

process, with teaching being the responsibility of the teacher and learners as passive recipients. Meral suggests in her attempts to encourage autonomy, she is criticised by her learners for not fulfilling her duties:

They tell me: ‘what kind of teaching is this? It is us doing everything’.
And I tell them they should be doing everything because I already know the things being covered and they should be responsible for their learning. (TEI2)

On the other hand, Mercan confesses he feels tied up with learner expectations and changes his style to address these so that he does not get blamed:

You are limited. You can't follow your own path. Students have the xxx exam in front of them. You have to teach them in line with the exam so that when they graduate they will not say ‘our teacher didn't teach us’.
(TEI1)

Two STs admit they believe teaching is the teachers’ responsibility. While Dilek conveys ‘I want to learn from the teacher, learning is not something I can do on my own’, Aysen confirms:

I know I have responsibilities but teaching is the teacher’s responsibility.
They are the ones to teach. And if I cannot learn, I believe there is something wrong with the way s/he teaches. (GM2)

4.2.6 Teacher Background/Education

The way teachers themselves were educated influences how they support their learners. Half of the TEs suggest teachers do not provide many chances to their learners to develop autonomy since they themselves were not educated in such an environment and do not feel the need to help their learners develop such transferable skills. Ali posits:

Most of the time teachers try to raise or educate learners in the way they had been raised or taught. (TEI1)

4.2.7 Teacher Dispositions

Teacher dispositions towards learning have an influence on the extent autonomy can be encouraged. Teachers conceiving autonomy essential in learning put effort in its promotion while teachers who do not regard it important tend to ignore it.

Hulya proposes sometimes teachers tend to do more than they should do which ruins learners' autonomy. According to her, learners at higher education level need to be in charge of their learning and their dispositions towards learning. They should not expect external motivators considering they are in chosen departments.

These are adults and they need to be putting more effort than the teacher.

They need to be taking more responsibility because they are studying to gain expertise in their chosen fields. (TEI1)

She later proposes teachers, including her, sometimes have the tendency to be overprotective which deprives learners of the chances to experience and learn from their experiences. Knowing learners will fail when they exceed the attendance limit, teachers do not write their learners absent. Doing so, they prevent learners from encountering the consequences of their actions.

In the way parents are overprotective, I just noticed that we as teachers are overprotective. My not failing the student from attendance is an example. I should have let him experience and not do it again. (Hulya: TEI1)

4.3 Discussion of Findings on Conceptualisations and Background of Participants Regarding Learner Autonomy

The findings suggest that the conceptualisations of the participants on LA and their background influence their actual behaviours in terms of support/implementation of autonomy.

4.3.1 Conceptualisations of Participants on Learner Autonomy

How participants define LA, the significance they attach to the concept and whether they consider it probable to be actualised in their context are fundamental aspects of how participants conceptualise LA and are influential in its accomplishment.

4.3.1.1 Conceptualisations on the Importance of Learner Autonomy

Participating TEs and STs highlight the significance of LA which is in line with literature; it is not at all possible to acquire early in life all the knowledge that people will require later in their lives (Claxton, 2002; Hoskins & Fredriksson, 2008; Taras, 2002). We live in an era where we educate our children with the

required knowledge, skills and competences that are needed now and that we presume our children will need in the future. However, in the rapidly changing globalised world, we can never know or predict what skills and competencies our children will require in the coming years, let alone their lifetimes. Hence, learners need to be equipped with autonomous learning skills and autonomous learning mind-set in order to be able to survive and be successful in the competitive world where knowledge keeps changing day by day and to be able to guide their learning throughout their life time so that they benefit themselves as well as their communities. As Wirth and Perkins (2012, p. 5) succinctly put it ‘learning is not something you just do for a few years in college. Learning is a lifelong commitment!’

The significance STs in the present study attach to LA reflects the findings of an earlier study conducted by Chan (2001a) in which 95% of the undergraduate participants acknowledged autonomous learning as important. The common aspects participants in the two studies highlight are the decision-making abilities and the learning methods applied by students in their learning as significant tenets in autonomous learning.

4.3.1.2 Definition of Learner Autonomy

Conceptualisations of participants regarding LA are one of the factors that influence how LA is actualised in the context. At the outset of the study, when the first round of interviews were conducted with TEs, it was evident more than half of the participating TEs already had a developed view of LA. In response to the questions ‘What do you think of when you hear LA?’, ‘What do you think the characteristics of autonomous learners are?’ and ‘Do you think you support your learners in the development and implementation of LA? If yes, how? Why?’, they were able to give definitions and examples from their practice on how they view as well as how they support autonomy. These educators were able to provide definitions in an integrated view rather than focusing on different elements of autonomy in isolation and could back up their definitions with related classroom experiences. In their definitions, they provided terms as ‘taking responsibility/control’, ‘a process in which students plan, set targets, monitor and identify their weaknesses to manage learning’, ‘being able to study in line with needs and goals’, that echo the scholarship which clearly associates

LA with taking responsibility for the whole learning process (Benson, 2011; Dam, 1995; Holec, 1981). The conceptualisations displayed by these educators were not subject to any great change throughout the study. Their views and description of their provisions at the end varied little from those at the beginning. These were the educators who at the beginning expressed they were familiar with and interested in the concept. A few others had a general view on what autonomy is but had a tendency to use the buzz words such as 'learners learning by themselves', 'individual differences', 'different learning styles', 'being creative', without being able to get deeper into the essence of autonomy. They provided definitions mainly related to efficient learning. At the beginning of the study these teachers gave examples from teaching and learning in general but offered more related examples and support at the end, referring to support methods they used in the two months.

Regarding STs, it is possible to suggest many were able to talk about many aspects of autonomy discussed in the meetings (list of topics in Appendix 2: Group Meetings). In their definitions of LA, they made references to related concepts such as responsibility taking and following interests. Yet, there were situations, particularly at the beginning of the data collection process, when they were making use of the theoretical knowledge they have around these concepts such as the advantages of working in collaboration or motivating oneself, without providing examples from their own learning process. They were making general statements and creating scenarios. The data suggests as we progressed in the study, most students had a more developed understanding of LA and they were more confident in talking about their own experiences and personalising concepts discussed, with the exception of one who started and ended the study with reference to teaching and not learning, and the conceptualisation that teaching is the duty of the teacher, a dependent learner as characterised by Öz (2005). This student attended the group meetings, expressed their position and understanding whenever possible, but handed in the diary with only few entries, suggesting they could not find much to write about. It is not surprising considering they were asked to note their autonomous behaviours and this student did not have much to say.

Reflecting the key role metacognition plays as a stepping stone in autonomous learning in various definitions in the literature (Benson, 2001; Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2019; Dafei, 2007; Holec, 1981), TEs have a tendency to emphasize the importance of metacognition for the management of learning (6.1 Presentation of Data on Metacognition), an area covered but emphasized less by STs in their definitions. While TEs make references to a number of metacognitive strategies, STs mention some of these. Although in their definitions they do not make explicit references to reflection and monitoring, STs later provide evidence of practising these in their learning process. This may be because they actually practise these but needed to be overtly reminded in the group meetings that these are useful in the regulation of learning.

Metacognitive knowledge is considered as a crucial knowledge base in managing learning (Livingston, 1997; Öz, 2005; Pintrich, 2002; Wenden, 1998). Pintrich (2002, p. 221) posits that awareness of what one knows and what one lacks: 'the breadth and depth of one's knowledge base' is an aspect of self-knowledge significant in LA. This resonates with being aware of one's strengths and weaknesses, an issue highlighted by some of the participating TEs. The current research reveals that learners' being conscious of what they know and what they do not, and how they can fill in the gaps is an indication that they possess autonomous learning habits since identifying strong and weak areas lead to revisiting areas that need to be worked on.

Self-awareness is underscored in the present study. This can be linked to person knowledge under metacognitive knowledge (Flavell, 1979; Pintrich, 2002; Wenden, 1998). Although Wenden refers to this self-knowledge mainly with relation to self-efficacy beliefs such as capacities or competencies, the findings of this study suggests one's own motivations and the power of external factors are significant aspects of this knowledge base with their potential to influence the learning process.

When learners know what they need and are also aware of what is offered to them, they are in a position to adapt their learning to be able to address their needs. This view of participants matches with the related literature. Learners

have specific needs in the learning process and it is important to identify how their learning will serve these learning needs (Wenden, 1998).

Awareness of responsibilities in learning also has been identified as important by some TEs and only a few STs in their definitions of autonomy. According to TEs, it is crucial that learners view teaching, in Imge's words, as a 'two way interaction' and do not consider it as the job of the teacher solely, expecting transmission of knowledge (Ranosa-Madrurnio et al., 2016). On the contrary, learners need to be aware that they have to be active in constructing their own knowledge and applying the means that can take them to where they want to see themselves. Little (1991) suggests learners take their first step towards autonomy when they recognize they are responsible for their own learning. The more learners attribute their success and failure to their own efforts and appreciate the extent they themselves influence their own learning, the more they are inclined to acknowledge their own responsibilities. This can be linked to locus of control, put forward through the attribution theory (Dickinson, 1995) (see *Attribution theory* (Dickinson, 1995; Weiner, 1972)

In line with the literature, the findings suggest internal locus of control is desirable as it is perceived as a means through which learners link increased effort to success, which helps taking responsibility, eventually enhancing LA. This is linked to the idea that learners who perceive their intellectual capacities as assets that can be developed as opposed to being fixed tend to be more resilient in their efforts, suggesting that mind-set is a determinant in achieving success (Yeager & Dweck, 2012), also echoing the significance of determination in learning.

Awareness of learning strategies is also signified in the study by TEs as well as STs. In fact, it is an area STs stress with their frequent references to learner strategies or methods they find effective in learning. Although there is ample research carried out regarding learner strategies, there is controversy whether the use of learner strategies leads to effective learning or whether it is a set of specific strategies or random use that make learning efficient (Little, 1995; Rees-Miller, 1993). However, although there are grievances from some TEs that learners are not well-equipped with strategies they require for successful

learning and management of learning (p.170), most STs confirm they are aware and make effective use of learning methods with particular reference to their awareness and employment of cognitive strategies (p.187).

The role of social relations in learning is emphasized in the study by TEs. Some TEs have a tendency to use the term 'independent' yet when probed during interviews, they clarify that what they refer to is self-regulation rather than working in isolation, which is compatible with the relevant literature suggesting the prominence of social relations in autonomous learning (Benson, 2011; Kohonen, 2007; Littlewood, 1996). It is interesting, however that social relations has not surfaced as significant in ST definitions of LA. None of the participating STs referred to social strategies at the beginning when probed about abilities of autonomous learners. I consider this is mainly related to the fact that they had a misconception at the beginning of the study to view autonomous learning as independent learning which changed for most but not all towards the end due to the discussions that took place in the group meetings throughout the two months period. Yet, many provide evidence they make use of social strategies when they talk about how they practise LA, though some express a preference to working mainly on their own (9.1.2 How Learners Manage Relations in Learning).

The affective element of LA surfaces as moderately significant in the definitions of particularly TEs, though both parties make frequent references to it in their experiences. Managing the affective side of learning in the regulation of the process is a significant factor previously stated by various scholars (Dickinson, 1995; Little, 1991; Littlewood, 1996). The data suggests learners who are able to cope with and govern their feelings can be more self-regulatory in their learning since negative feelings are an inevitable component of the learning process. If they are a natural part in this process, the capacity to handle them can result in a more professional approach to oversee learning. Findings on the importance of controlling emotions and being able to self-motivate reflect the views of scholarship (Dembo & Seli, 2007; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; Oxford, 2015; Ryan & Deci, 2000a; Schunk, 2004). Thanasoulas (2000) specifically points out that learner attitudes towards learning in general determine how they handle the process.

Learner dispositions commonly appear in TEs' conceptualisations of LA. They regard intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2011; Ryan & Deci, 2000b) and self-confidence (Bandura, 1993; Öz, 2005) as greatly important, which are concepts also emphasized in the literature, with both of which learners are able to set higher goals and achieve better results. As indicated in the literature, with learners possessing high self-esteem, achievement of hard goals becomes more probable since these learners have the belief that they can attain better results (Shannon, 2008; Spratt et al., 2002). STs on the other hand underline self-concept and motivation as significant but emphasize the role of extrinsic motivation as opposed to TEs who value intrinsic motivation over extrinsic motivation.

Active participation in the learning process seems to be greatly significant for the participating TEs. The majority stress that autonomy requires learners to reject passive learner roles and engage actively in all stages of their learning. They propose learners need to view themselves at the centre of the learning process and take on roles favourable in learner-centred learning (Ackermann, 2001; Brown, 2003; Camilleri, 1999; Thanasoulas, 2000). Rather than expecting to be taught, autonomous learners themselves make learning happen through actively constructing their own knowledge besides constructing the learning to learn competency. Similarly, learners provide evidence of active participation in the learning process and back up their proposition with experiences (7.1.1 Active Involvement). However, as has already been noted, there are some students who consider teaching to be the responsibility of the teacher. Taking into account that this study employed volunteer sampling and that the participating students mostly have a positive attitude towards learning, it can be suggested the number of students with similar views of expecting teacher-led lessons is possibly higher in the immediate context. It is also significant to point out that learners expressed their criticism for the lack of opportunities they are provided with for being proactive, an explicit limitation hindering autonomous initiatives which will be elaborated in 11.5.3.2 Teaching Approach.

None of the learner dispositions/characteristics participants provided in the study appear in the conceptualisations of teachers and students on its own, but in combination with one or a number of other dispositions/characteristics

suggesting different variations. Hence, while each is significant on its own deserving attention, combinations need to be considered as well. Regarding dispositions, while two teachers propose confidence and motivation are interrelated, the presence of one enabling the existence of the other, such as confident learners being more intrinsically motivated, and motivated ones having a higher self-confidence, three teachers advocate autonomous learners are determined, self-motivated and confident, and three suggest they are determined, motivated and active in learning.

4.3.1.3 Importance of Teacher Support and the Possibility to Build Autonomy in Higher Education

What is suggested in terms of support for LA is in line with studies conducted in the related field. When supported properly within conducive contexts, it is possible to help learners build autonomous skills (Black & Deci, 2000; Lamb & Reinders, 2008; Nicolaides, 2008; Pelletier et al., 2001). At this point, it is possible to suggest TEs acknowledge the crucial role teachers play in the development of autonomy. It is evident that TEs value and support LA, yet their complaints around learners' failure to work autonomously when required (p.115) and passive learner tendencies/dispositions (p.121) may give the implication that TEs expect learners to possess LA and to be ready to act autonomously in their learning. Moreover, a few others suggest LA is innate and mention the difficulty of developing autonomy at university level which draw attention to the possibility of promoting the idea of LA rather than viewing it as part of their role to develop it through concrete supportive task design. Some have a tendency to consider that the optimum period for developing autonomy is in early years of education or better in their homes through the support of their families. However, they also propose at each and every step autonomy should be given a chance and be promoted so that learners find the opportunity to be 'sufficiently autonomous even if not perfectly autonomous' as Cemre comments. As emphasized by authorities in LA (Dickinson, 1995; Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Little, 1995; Louis, 2006; Reinders, 2010; Thanasoulas, 2000), and also expressed by TEs: 'LA is a cumulative process, something achieved as a result of experiences' (Selma, TEI2).

From learners' perspectives, teacher support occupies a considerable place in adopting autonomous roles in learning. Teacher motivation is highly valued; however, a sense of dependency on teacher motivation is felt. Reinforcements are useful for helping learners gain self-confidence. When learners have high self-concept, they perform better and achieve higher outcomes, thus positive teacher reinforcement acts as a catalyser as advocated by Bandura (1993); Öz (2005); Spratt et al. (2002). However, when learners refer to the role of teachers in the promotion of autonomy (p.98), it becomes evident that it is not mere support that is expected from teachers but regular reinforcements which can be regarded as addiction (Briesch & Chafouleas, 2009). It can be suggested that these students have a psychological need for approval. La Ganza (2008) maintains students from particularly teacher dominated educational settings need the approval of their teachers to make the move from dependence to independence more smoothly but the data suggests some of the participating STs need confirmation from teachers on a regular basis to be able to feel motivated and satisfied with what they are doing.

Creating an atmosphere convenient for autonomy is valued by STs. They propose when teachers encourage learners to apply the principles of autonomy such as taking responsibility, taking risks, taking decisions, expressing their opinions, managing resources, and place learners at the centre of the process besides encouraging the practice of reflection, they feel more in control (Jungert & Koestner, 2015; Núñez et al., 2015; Williams & Deci, 1996).

4.3.2 Background of Participants Regarding Learner Autonomy

4.3.2.1 Learner Background

Learners themselves may pose as obstacles to teacher support and LA practice with their backgrounds, agreed by both TEs and STs. Learners from educational/cultural/family backgrounds which did not require or even suppressed autonomy find it difficult to develop autonomous behaviours, resisting to take active responsibility in learning (Ponton, Derrick, Confessore, & Rhea, 2005; Trebbi, 2008). The previous learning experiences of learners greatly influence the behaviours they depict in their new learning context (Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2019; Cotterall, 1995). Adverse learner beliefs and

dispositions concerning learning is a limitation. The results of a study conducted by Borg and Al-Busaidi (2012) suggest teachers consider learner beliefs and previous experiences to restrict their autonomy which is in line with the findings of the present study. If learners have a misconception learning is a task to be completed rather than an active process of construction and reconstruction of knowledge, teachers may find it challenging to support their learners (Benson, 2011; Cotterall, 1995) and learners may find it challenging to exercise autonomy. As discussed by Cotterall (1999), learner beliefs have an impact on their behaviour. Moreover, in circumstances where learners are not motivated to exercise autonomy and resist despite repeated teacher endeavours, teachers may give up and return to traditional learning/teaching (Reeve, 2009; Reeve et al., 1999; Reeve & Jang, 2006). Although brought up by only a small number of participating STs, some may perceive teachers to be mainly responsible for the teaching process, with themselves as recipients (Biggs, 2011). This finding supports the finding of an earlier study by Chan (2001a) who proposes learners have ambivalent attitudes towards teacher roles. I consider it significant to remind that participation in the present study relied on volunteer sampling and it is probably the case that volunteer students are responsible students who aim to improve themselves while TEs refer to a much broader cohort. This leads us to suggest that the number of students who assume passive roles in their learning expecting the process to be led mainly by the teacher may be higher in the broader student population, which is an area that needs to be explored in later research. In a similar vein, although learner background can well influence the practice and support of LA, it is not at all possible to suggest all learners in the context have a similar background, therefore, it is not possible to generalise this finding to the whole student body in the context.

The findings of the study suggest some teachers consider the culture of their students is a limitation for attaining autonomy. Although there is a view that cultural differences have an impact on autonomy, individual differences matter more than cultural differences in developing autonomy (Ivanovska, 2015; Littlewood, 2000; Smith, 2003b), and I consider under right circumstances every student has the potential to develop autonomous behaviours.

4.3.2.2 Teacher Background

This study has directed attention to the role of teacher education in autonomy support, suggesting educators who do not have a background in autonomy in their experiences either as learners or teachers, may find it demanding to support their learners to develop related capacities (Ahmadzadeh & Zabardast, 2014; Breen & Mann, 1997; Camilleri, 1999; Chuk, 2003; Demirtaş & Sert, 2010; Edelhoff, 1984; Kahraman, 2015; Little, 1995; McGrath et al., 2000; Smith, 2003a; Smith & Erdoğan, 2008; Trebbi, 2008; Vieira, 1999; Vieira et al., 2008), suggesting ‘how we teach now is sometimes mirrored by how we were taught ourselves’ (Sert, 2006, p. 187).

Teacher dispositions are another factor determining teacher support. With regards to their own educational background or their beliefs around what learning is and how it should be approached, teachers may have personal tendencies to be motivating or controlling which as a result demonstrate variances in the support they provide, an issue suggested by participants as well as scholars (Hui, 2010; Pelletier et al., 2002; Reeve, 2009).

4.4 Conclusion

The current chapter presented and discussed the conceptualisations and backgrounds of participants to provide a basis for participants’ perceptions of teacher support and LA practice as their conceptualisations and background shape what they actually do in their practice.

Chapter 5: Teacher Educators' and Student Teachers' Perceptions of Contextual Factors Influencing the Support/Practice of Learner Autonomy

The present chapter first presents and then discusses the findings on the contextual factors influencing both STs' practice and TEs' support for LA according to the perceptions expressed by the two groups. These are: *The Present Education System* and *Teacher Autonomy*.

5.1: Presentation of Contextual Factors Influencing the Support/Practice of Learner Autonomy

Participants in the study suggest the educational context is influential for both the support and the practice of LA with reference to the present education system and TA.

5.1.1 Present Education System

Student overload, assessment, class size, teaching approach, other teachers in the context and the rapport between teachers and students are underlined as influencing the actualization of autonomy.

5.1.1.1 Student Overload

The majority of TEs (14) suggest that the policy in their context is to provide as much information as possible which is hazardous in two ways: (1) when learners are given everything, they do not feel the need to put extra effort, (2) the overload makes them bored and tired. Meral reports:

Our students are taking 8/9 courses in one semester. How do you expect LA here? How do you expect the learner to go and learn something on their own? We think the more we give, the better the students will be. NO. We are killing their creativity. (TEI1)

Similarly, STs maintain the overload they experience due to the fact that they take many courses in a semester is a limitation for LA. Because learners find themselves dealing with the many requirements, they tend to put the least possible effort. Gulcin suggests:

I took nine courses this semester; it means nine projects, homework, readings for each, too much to do, no time to devote to other issues such

as thinking about what to do to learn better or more. I try to save the day.
(FGI)

5.1.1.2 Assessment

Some TEs use assessment which relies on memorisation and reproduction of knowledge due to standardization concerns and large classes, which they consider as a limiting factor. This may be because of limited TA. Imge referring to his technology class suggests:

There are 16 groups and to maintain a standard, there is only one exam, usually a multiple-choice test, so it is not a task that requires them to use what they have learnt in an authentic way. We test what's in the book. We give them education on technology use for teaching purposes but instead of testing how well they can use it, we give them a school type test. (TEI1)

This is contradictory with what some other TEs suggest. They propose they include alternatives in their assessment. They add they are against testing book knowledge. With reference to how she assesses her learners, Cemre suggests:

It's all open ended. It's case analysis, relating the theory with their own ideas. I gave them the theories we have covered and I asked them to tell me which parts of the theory they're going to use in their fields and why, providing their own justification. (TEI2)

STs also express their criticisms regarding assessment. They suggest the way they are assessed encourages rote learning. Students acknowledge large classes force teachers to prepare multiple-choice exams. While some students are happy with multiple-choice, suggesting they are easier to study and get high marks, few complain these hearten learners to adopt lazy learning habits and suggest they would prefer to provide their understanding of the topic rather than choosing from alternatives if they were given the chance. They argue multiple-choice exams affect the way learners behave in class and the effort they put into their learning as well as their expectations from the teacher. Tarik:

Knowing the exam is multiple-choice, some students expect teacher to finish the lesson early since less effort is required for getting prepared for such exams. (GM3)

5.1.1.3 Class Size

The majority of TEs suggest large classes limit teachers in their practice besides LA support in a number of ways. Selvi talks about the restrictions she experiences in terms of monitoring and assessing learners:

There are limits to what you can do with 47 students. There are limits to how well you can assess them, limits to how well you can monitor their learning. I love providing as much feedback as possible so that I can monitor and give them formative feedback but I cannot monitor independently every single of those students. I cannot give them continuous feedback. So I cannot follow what kind of support they need during the process. (TEI1)

Gamze points out they eliminated a number of significant components that have the potential to promote autonomy because of large classes such as active class participation and application based activities, like mini research and micro-teachings:

We have a course called ‘Scientific Research Methods’. We give theoretical knowledge but do not ask students to do research because of the number of students in the classroom. You need to monitor the process for research but it is not possible with 50 students. So we don't have this as a component anymore. ... but knowing the theory does not guarantee that they are able to put it into practice. (TEI1)

A considerable number of students draw attention to the fact that teachers require a lot of group work, resulting in inconveniences for learners. Fatma clarifies this issue as:

Because of the class size, we are encouraged to work in groups of at least four, meaning we have to work with others most of the time, sometimes with people we may not work well with... really demotivating. (GM3)

5.1.1.4 Teaching Approach

The way teachers approach their practice and the atmosphere they create in the classroom can vary from teacher to teacher. While some teachers create the context conducive to autonomy, others are too structured in their practice, not creating room for autonomy to flourish. This is manifest in the teaching episode

detailed by Gul where learners were not provided with any chances to make a decision:

For projects, we put them into groups and ask them to do the activity.

Topics are given by the teachers. Date is decided by the teacher. (TEI1)

On the other hand, Selvi advocates just the opposite:

One option I have is to give them the definition and talk about the definition. If I do it this way then I need to allocate a different time for group-work. Instead I write a question on the board ‘what is scientific research?’ They discuss that in groups. I monitor their group. I ask a lot of questions. They get complicated. They see how complex it is. From the confusion they manage to get to the right definition. Because I teach that way I don't need to allocate separate time for group-work or different activities. (TEI2)

Some TEs admit there are times they conduct their lessons in a teacher-centred way as a result of large classes, not devoting the time they wish to devote to certain aspects. This makes them believe they are not really effective. Meral confirms this is contrary to what they are teaching as their learners are teacher candidates:

They are observing me doing teacher-centred education so how can I expect them to practise student-centred teaching in school? The message I give is: learn it, keep it in mind and if you find the opportunity with a small group of students, you can go back to theory and try it. (TEI2)

The same view comes from a few students who maintain there are teachers who teach ‘Student-centred Education’ course in a teacher-centred way.

In fact, most students suggest that the approach teachers adopt in their teaching has an impact on student efforts regarding autonomy. Erim posits:

If a teacher uses discovery technique rather than presentation, then it becomes possible for learners to adopt a learner style compatible with that. If a teacher requires learners to do research, learners start to integrate research into their learning rather than expecting to be presented. A teacher presenting is usually giving the information he considers important and that will come up in the exam, why should we feel the need to do something else? (GM1)

According to Bade, dominant teachers have a tendency to provide unnecessary

guidance to their students with a good intention but by doing so they give the message that their learners can rely on them. Such practice makes learners lazy, expecting things they themselves can do from their teachers:

As students we need to do certain things to reach our aims and in our efforts we do need some guidance. But I believe the guidance our teachers provide is way too much, not helping us find direction but showing the direction itself. This I believe prevents self-awareness.
(STD)

There is a criticism students are usually made passive because of the teaching style of the teacher. Most STs complain some teachers use a presentation technique which does not give learners the opportunity to be actively involved. Meliha proposes:

I am alert to find opportunities to participate. I like discussions but we are not encouraged for these. Teacher explains and then asks ‘understood?’ to which we all nod. (GM2)

Overreliance on the book and the teaching materials/slides is also criticised by learners. Almost all complain teachers find it their duty to cover the specific content without really considering whether learners are able to follow or whether the content addresses their needs. Gulcin:

We have teachers who talk throughout the lesson. It is so boring. We lose concentration after a while but the teacher covers what he intends to.
(GM3)

Sinem clarifies:

Because we are not in charge of our own learning, the majority of the class cannot be successful. I think the teacher should change her teaching style because there is higher success in classes where LA is in action.
(STD)

5.1.1.5 Other Teachers

The tendencies of other teachers in the context is also viewed as a factor limiting or promoting teacher support for autonomy, since in Hulya’s words ‘learners play each lesson with its own rules or the teacher’s rules’.

Some argue other teachers who spoon-feed raise learner expectations to follow the same route. Remzi:

Some teachers give a list of resources, websites, books; spoon feeding, this is our fault, and they expect the same from me. We are supposed to promote but we are the ones who kill autonomy. (TEI1)

He further suggests teachers who are of the same opinion with him serve as a support:

There are some other teachers who think like me. If we are teaching partners, I observe that student quality changes. (TEI1)

Some STs suggest at university there are efforts to inspire learners to adopt autonomous learning habits by some teachers, and students attempt to actualise these but they advocate such efforts would have been more productive had they started earlier in their previous education and had they had more teachers with similar efforts, reflecting the views of TEs (Bircan, GM3).

5.1.1.6 Rapport

TEs signify the role of rapport between learners and teachers, and suggest good rapport between the two encourages learners to put more effort to please the teacher, where the rapport serves as extrinsic motivation at the beginning, which is later internalised.

Because of the rapport, to make me happy, some students do some tasks I give. Later when they achieve successfully, they see they can do it, they start to become autonomous. This is intrinsic motivation; from extrinsic it turns into intrinsic motivation. (Nesrin, TEI1)

Almost half of the STs consider the rapport between teachers and students significant in the efforts they put into learning. They say it influences their motivation and thus taking responsibility, reflecting TEs.

When we have a good relationship with the teacher, when we feel we are valued by the teacher, we do not want the lesson to end. I want to spend more time with the teacher and her lesson. I study more for this lesson. (Dilek, GM3)

5.1.2 Teacher Autonomy

Participating TEs provide evidence for suggesting a link between TA and their support for LA. While some TEs perceive themselves to be fully autonomous, others believe their autonomy is restricted due to fixed course outlines and assessment, which they view as significant factors influencing their autonomy

support. The substantial element in restricting teachers in their autonomy is whether they are teaching a course with other educators or alone. If there are other people teaching the same course, it is in the university regulations to have a common exam, which means they have to cover the same content in a designated time span. Gamze proposes:

Instead of presenting, I would prefer to take resources and students discover what needs to be covered. But because of time limitations, I gave up. If I were the only instructor of the course, free to do whatever I wanted and to cover to the point I consider ok, I would do differently. There is TA for delivering the lesson in the way I want but because of prescribed syllabi, it doesn't function. We need to keep a standard. (TEI2)

Cemre on the other hand offers just the opposite, which may be because she is the only teacher teaching this specific course:

We definitely have full TA. We adapt our course descriptions. We are flexible in content and this is very supportive. I can change my own content in whatever way I like, taking into consideration student feedback. I can design my own exams, the way I evaluate my students, assessment and measurement techniques. (TEI2)

Four TEs are content to be teaching the same course with others, advocating having another person to be accountable to does not limit, but to the contrary empowers teachers. One teacher on the other hand remarks she would prefer to be the only instructor of a course because she considers coordinated courses limit TA and hence her decision-making regarding her practice.

Teachers teaching coordinated courses view themselves autonomous in the way they deliver their courses, the material they take to class as long as they cover course objectives and the way they govern their relations with learners, as Nesrin openheartedly expresses by saying 'the classroom is my territory'.

Two STs who are in their fourth year at university refer to TA as a factor affecting LA. They suggest they can relate to their teachers since there is a fixed syllabus to be covered; however, they discuss teachers who do not have the opportunity to adapt the contents of the course tend to ignore learner needs and expectations. This they argue results as a limitation for LA since teachers feel

obliged to present the content rather than using other more effective teaching strategies with the potential to help build autonomy (GM3, Erim, Bircan)

5.2 Discussion of Contextual Factors Influencing the Support/Practice of Learner Autonomy

The present educational context and TA are factors participants perceive as influencing the support TEs provide to their learners for autonomous learning as well learners' practice of LA, mainly in a negative way. I consider it significant to emphasize that although education system and TA are factors that can be generalised to the whole context, data from TEs constitute their view of the whole student population over time, while ST testimony refers to their own period of study and classroom experience, and represent their personal dispositions, beliefs and competences. Therefore a certain amount of disparity between TE and ST testimony is inevitable.

The findings suggest on the part of TEs and STs that a high level of guidance is provided by teachers. This line of thinking is not in line with the concept of autonomy which presumes that learners need to be guided to develop autonomous learning habits so that they can manage their learning rather than expecting guidance in each and every step. It is not the number of courses offered that makes a difference in learners' academic life but the fostering of a mind-set that views learning as a lifelong process (Wirth & Perkins, 2012) with learners themselves achieving through following their needs and interests, and making remedies when and if necessary. It is not the quantity but the nature of and quality of support that is significant, since guidance on issues learners themselves can manage impedes the development of autonomy (Samah et al., 2009), which will be explored in more detail under 11.5.3.6 Resources.

STs complain about their overload. They say they are obliged to take nine or ten courses each semester, each with its own homework, projects and presentations, and this does not allow them to put the effort they would like to but they do their best to save the day since they struggle with time constraints. Though it can be argued this in itself requires autonomy to organise their resources and time to handle such overload, it may also result in learners' focusing on learning rather than understanding content and neglecting the assumption of more responsibility

regarding issues on how they learn best and what they can do to improve. Focusing on content solely may appear as the easy option for some learners. As Camillieri (1999, p. 21) suggests unfortunately there are learners who will ‘do as little as possible as long as they reach the ultimate goal’, which is passing the course in this context. Provided that they can reach their goals, they would not be bothered with other issues that have the potential to further their studies. TEs also complain about their overload, linking this to the present education system in favour of delivering the most possible ready-made content to students and the large classes. Moreover, the findings reveal TEs feel restricted in their support due to time constraints that arise from fixed syllabus and standardised tests. This finding is consistent with previous findings (Roth et al., 2007). With the overload they experience and the limitations of accountability standards, some teachers suggest they have an inclination to opt for presentation styles of delivery, which leads learners to adopt passive roles in learning. This is a criticism expressed by both parties in the study. A study conducted in North Cyprus also signifies that unless the curriculum is aligned with the principles of LA, it is difficult to actualise its realisation (Tanyeli & Kuter, 2013). It is vital to realise LA cannot be supported through individual attempts but there needs to be an institutional endeavour that lifts the pressures of the teacher, allowing more freedom to both teachers and learners in a climate where there is room for ‘flexibility, risk taking, adjustment, experimentation and decision-making’ (Camillieri, 1999, p. 33). On the contrary, it is also accepted that despite fixed syllabuses, teachers have their own way of interpreting and covering their lessons (Camillieri, 1999), which in reality give them autonomy in their teaching.

ST data suggests with the messages teachers convey to their learners through their teaching approach, they influence learners’ actual practice of LA, as in the case of conducting ‘Student-Centred Teaching’ course in a teacher-centred approach. Taras (2010) argues teachers sometimes give their learners contradictory messages. The messages conveyed influence the learning atmosphere and may result in learners’ misguiding their autonomous efforts (Núñez et al., 2015). As Reeve et al. (2004, p. 97) suggest ‘what teachers say and do can have powerful and pervasive effects on students’ intentions for learning’.

Participating TEs regard class size as a significant factor negatively affecting the support they can provide to their learners, suggesting the large number of learners in classes make it difficult for them to identify learner needs and weaknesses besides monitoring their learning. The results are broadly consistent with previous studies that propose similar findings (Reeve et al., 1999; Roth et al., 2007). Moreover, learners demand their teachers act as panacea, remedying all student problems and addressing all student needs since they are unique individuals. This is in sharp contrast with TE views. TEs advocate they cannot be a panacea for all learner needs and emphasize the necessity that learners identify and address their individual needs. I argue these problems arising from large classes and student overload in fact are the exact reasons learners need to be autonomous and should be the motivating factor for supporting LA. The solution to these lie in assisting learners to build the capacity to take control of their learning. Learners know themselves, their individual differences and what their unique needs are, thus, they need to practise autonomy to control their learning to be operating to the highest of their potential.

Both TEs and STs consider the quality of dialogue between teachers and learners as highly motivating. Good rapport between the two parties has the potential to increase motivation and autonomy (La Ganza, 2008; Skinner & Belmont, 1993). The attitudes of teachers in a learning context are influential on learner behaviour, thus, it is significant that teachers build and maintain good relations with their learners (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Núñez et al., 2015). Ruzek et al. (2016, p. 96) maintain ‘...emotionally-supportive teachers provide students with more opportunities for autonomy’. The findings of this study suggest good rapport serves as an extrinsic motivator which can later be internalised, where learners perform behaviours to make their teachers happy and then internalise the behaviours they depicted as their own. This echoes earlier literature: internalisation of extrinsically motivated behaviours leading to autonomy (Pelletier et al., 2001; Williams & Deci, 1996). It is possible to suggest that students’ need for relatedness is satisfied, resulting in increased motivation, higher engagement and more commitment (Deci & Ryan, 2011; Hu & Zhang, 2017). On the other hand, it is noteworthy to point out that rapport does not directly support the actualisation of LA but is significant in creating the

atmosphere conducive to LA since a high quality relationship between the teacher and students encourages learners to develop and experience autonomy (Reeve & Jang, 2006). Similarly, Yasmin and Sohail (2018) point out that the authoritative approach of the teacher limits them in attending to learner needs and abilities, which impedes LA.

Both TEs and STs suggest there are efforts to actualise LA and that there is significant success on behalf of both parties. However, it is also suggested by both TEs and STs that had there been consistent efforts, with more teachers with similar intentions, there would be more students valuing and exercising autonomy, drawing attention to the role of collaborative efforts or institutional endeavours in the creation of an optimal atmosphere (Camillieri, 1999; Roth et al., 2007).

The presence/absence of TA is argued to be a factor influencing the way TEs approach autonomy support. It has been emphasized by most TEs they are not really autonomous in their practice, content-wise as well as making decisions regarding assessment, which they propose hampers the support they provide, echoing scholars in related literature. Niemiec and Ryan (2009) and Roth et al. (2007) advocate when teachers lack autonomy in their teaching practice, they may find it difficult to help their learners build autonomous behaviours with less TA resulting in less LA. Few STs also acknowledge limited TA to be influencing teachers in their autonomy support. In two recent studies conducted by Stroupe et al. (2016) and Ranosa-Madrugno et al. (2016), the authors suggest that prescribed syllabi limit TA by putting pressure on teachers to cover set objectives and thus have an adverse influence on the actualisation of LA. Teachers who feel under pressure because of accountability standards are usually inclined to conform to the expectations/regulations and behave in a controlling manner, neglecting the autonomy support they could provide that has the potential to lead to more effective learning (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Halstead & Zhu, 2009; Pelletier et al., 2002; Reeve, 2009; Reeve et al., 1999).

5.3 Conclusion

Both TEs and STs refer to a number of contextual factors that mainly negatively affect the support as well as the practice of LA. The present educational context and TA are stated as the main factors.

Chapter 6: Metacognition

This chapter presents and discusses TEs' and STs' views of how they support/practise metacognition. Regarding chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10, it is important to remember that because the study relied on volunteer sampling while TEs make references to their whole classes referring to a broader cohort of students with a full range of abilities, dispositions and motivations, ST data reflects the views of a proportionally much smaller sample group of students. It is also significant to note that the volunteer STs do not match the TEs in any structured way. Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 begin with the presentation of TE data followed by ST data, which are later discussed together in the discussion sections.

6.1 Presentation of Data on Metacognition

Teacher reflections indicate that facilitating metacognitive awareness is an area all participants exercise in their practice. The extent of discussion about metacognition demonstrates TEs consider it as useful support in laying the groundwork for autonomous learning. Regarding metacognition, both TEs and STs refer to planning, reflection and centring learning. TEs also suggest they support the development of criticality, an area not dwelled on by STs.

6.1.1 Planning

Both TEs and STs refer to the role of planning and provide instances from their practice on how they support/exercise it in the learning process.

Guiding learners to prepare learning plans is suggested as autonomy support by TEs. Some also suggest plans can be used as a way to later check out how much learners have achieved. Nesrin contends:

Another thing I underline throughout the course is planning. Planning is very important, having a plan, action plan, knowing what to do first and later. I do a kind of planning session and at the end of the year I ask them if they managed to follow all their action plans for this course, not all of them but some believe as I encourage them to make a plan and they follow this plan, they are more successful. (TEI2)

Planning is referred to by more than half of the STs as a strategy to control their learning although there is controversy on what 'planning' is. Participants suggest

they do not plan in written form, but do so mentally and suggest they benefit from this. Fatma:

I have aims. I aim to finish, let's say, a unit in two days. Without aims, we cannot be successful. (GM1)

With regards to their experiences regarding plans, most suggest they mainly plan how much they will study in a given amount of time. Erim, a keen planner, provides evidence that much of her week is planned:

On Mondays I don't have much time, I study Group Counselling because the teacher explains well and I understand well in class; doesn't need much time. Tuesdays history, and in my two hour break Educational Theories. Wednesday: Behavioural Disorders. But if the teacher gives homework or asks for a summary, this ruins my plan, instead of revising I start the homework. (STD)

Some are of the opinion plans are compulsory for success and postponed duties cause bigger problems. Tarik:

Success and plans are closely related. When postponed, duties turn out to be problems. (GM2)

Most who suggest benefiting from plans propose to be flexible in their plans, with only one student, Erim, endeavouring to be really strict. Bade confirms 'Managing 60-70% makes me happy'. Aysegul is another keen planner. In her diary, she provided evidence of detailed plans in each entry, but in almost all subsequent entries she says she could not keep up with the plans, delaying tasks with varying excuses; coming home late, going to bed late the previous night, a friend asking her to go out etc. However, it is significant to note the feeling of guilt makes her fulfil most tasks, even if not on time. She later refers to a situation where she did not make plans at all: 'did not plan, did nothing' she confirms.

Other than the amount, when, where and how to accomplish a task are considered by a few as part of plans. Tarik:

As soon as a project is given, I start to think about who to do it with, where to find useful materials, when to start and roughly when it can be finished, but these are all rough plans and I am always flexible. (GM2)

There is a suggestion planning aids time management. One third of participants suggest they make plans to be able to use their time more efficiently. Fatma:

I realised I was wasting my time; with many things to do but only some accomplished. So I decided to make plans. I guess we need to prioritise so that we are not left with uncertainties. (STD)

The other half of the participants propose they hate plans and do not view them as contributing to success but rather ‘clipping their wings’ (Elvan). They suggest they would rather be flexible and follow their motivation, mood and the immediate tasks of the day. Some also propose plans which are too detailed demotivate them rather than encouraging them to keep to their plans as suggested by Fatma:

I used to plan the whole day, every minute planned. Then I gave up. There were more things I couldn’t than I could do. (STI)

Planning is valued by TEs and STs as a way to manage the learning process. TEs suggest they promote planning and there are STs who offer evidence of making plans in their learning.

6.1.2 Reflection and Monitoring

Both TEs and STs refer to instances from their practice regarding reflection and monitoring learning.

Seven TEs suggest they provide learners with the opportunity to employ reflection. They remark they use various methods to help their learners develop or improve reflective skills. They believe reflective questions, which help learners reflect/articulate and arrive at self-discovery, forms the basis of teacher support regarding metacognition (i.e. ‘Why do curriculum experts write these learning objectives?’ (Cemre, TE12)). Imge suggests he utilises reflective questions on learner interests and abilities to enable learners to realise their motivation and their capabilities. He expands his view on this by suggesting that learners arriving at such an understanding are able to give direction to their own studies. The use of reflective questions which promote deep thinking rather than book knowledge is also common among educators (Gamze, Gul, Selma) who believe that such questions help learners inquire about themselves and clarify their stance. Gamze suggests:

I have them express their own ideas when I ask a question rather than what everybody knows or what the book says. For example ‘what would

you do in this situation? Why?’ I try to make them think rather than reiterate. (TEI1)

Some say they question their learners at the beginning or the end of each lesson about what has previously been covered to make their learners ponder about the extent they have learnt and if necessary revisit areas they are not happy with. Others prefer to prepare exam type questions regularly to use in class to facilitate monitoring. In such reflection episodes participants consider allowing learners to identify their own mistakes as autonomy support rather than they themselves making corrections. Gamze notes:

I give regular quizzes . . . to motivate my students and also give them the chance to monitor their own learning, be aware of the extent they’ve achieved on previously covered topic . . . they discovered their own mistakes and where they stand compared to others in the class. (TED)

TEs trust giving learners the opportunity to go over exam papers where they can see what they did well and where they failed to meet the expectations has the potential to provoke reflective thinking. As Selvi remarks:

I think it is not questioning whether it was correct or not, but how much you know about that specific content. Because unless you know how much you know about the specific content, what parts of it you know and what parts you don’t, you can’t really decide what to focus on...how to tailor your studies... so at that point asking questions to yourself helps you to see where you are in relation to content and what else you need to know. (TEI2)

Although reflecting on content has been highlighted by all seven TEs who brought up reflection as a way to support LA, only four participants signify they assist their learners in reflecting on the process. Selma reports:

They were asked reflective questions to raise their awareness towards their own learning process- like ‘how do you save new information meaningfully to be remembered later?’ (TED)

Two TEs (Nesrin and Remzi) ask learners to keep reflective logs. That is, after each lesson, they require learners to write down what was covered in class, what they learned/did not learn and how these made them feel. They contend this exercise partly comprises a summary of what has been covered but also requires the act of reflection. This is followed by a general feedback at the end of the

semester where learners write their reflections on the reflection process throughout the semester. This enables learners to be conscious about what the learning process includes/requires. Teachers who exercise this practice suggest this has the potential to raise learners' awareness on their achievements as well as failures. Nesrin suggests

Learners tell me that it is one of the lesson components that pushed them to think what happened in the lessons and it becomes a kind of awareness on learning (TEI1).

However, they later admit only few learners are able to reflect at this level, with majority only reflecting on content.

Selvi suggests she helps learners question the strategies they currently use. Before the final exam, she asks her learners to contemplate the strategies they used for studying for the midterm exams. However, she admits she leaves it at recognition level, without going deeper:

I explained the final exam would have both question types and asked them to evaluate the learning strategy they used to prepare for the mid-term by asking themselves whether that strategy worked to help them achieve what they had aimed for. I reminded them that if their answer to this question was 'no', they should choose another strategy, they should study differently. Of course, I didn't have the luxury to go into different learning strategies, though, I would love to. (TEI2)

Sharing criteria and teacher expectations with learners together with asking learners to express what they expect from the teacher and the course are also considered to enhance metacognitive awareness. Four TEs suggest they share with learners the criteria they have for grading learner work. They suggest this helps learners become aware of what is and can be expected from them, and direct their efforts and resources accordingly besides enhancing responsibility taking. Teachers suggest they usually do this in the first lesson and repeat as/if necessary so that learners have the chance to keep themselves in line with what is required. Filiz says:

Before the peer-teaching I distributed the evaluation checklist we use for peer teaching sessions in the university and formal teaching sessions at schools. We went over the checklist step by step and discussed what STs

are expected to do for each criterion. (TED)

Three TEs suggest they share course expectations with learners in the first lesson of the semester as well as inviting learner expectations to give learners an idea of the objectives of the course. Nesrin notes:

This was the first lesson of the semester. I went to the classroom with the copies of course descriptions and course outlines. It was the lesson when the teacher and the students discussed the necessities of the course. I believed this was the most important lesson of the semester because it was the most appropriate time to discuss the expectations of both the teacher and the students. (TED)

Such sessions where learners are familiarised with course/teacher expectations help learners not only to reflect on their own views but also get informed about what is required from them.

The majority of STs provide evidence of reflecting on their learning at varying levels and imply they make use of reflection in monitoring their learning. They suggest they mainly practise reflection during and after the lesson to check understanding and the efficiency of the strategies they use for learning: Emel suggests whether she can answer questions in class or not, Gulce advocates exam/quiz results demonstrate how well learning takes place. Elvan puts forward a different area for reflection:

I used to study at nights but the results were not promising. I would study at nights because I preferred to socialise in the afternoons. Now that I realised nights are not effective, I try to stay home in most afternoons and study. (FGI)

Deniz refers to her experience of reflecting on cooperation in learning:

I realised I get disturbed when working with others. I work better on my own. So when chance is given, I prefer to be alone. (GM2)

Some suggest they are aware of their strong and weak sides which is a result of reflection. Fatma:

I don't study much. I don't have to. I know where I am weak and I focus on these. I am good with numbers so I spend more time on social subjects. (GM2)

Tolga confirms:

Because I wasted my first years at university, I had to face the consequences recently. I passed only because I memorised but not learnt. Now this realisation before the internship drives me to study intensely to compensate, hope I can. I started revision, to learn, not to memorise. (FGI)

Checking work against criteria is considered as reflection which leads to monitoring. Erim posits:

I check the product. Do I have anything missing? Did I include everything the teacher wants? Is it ready to submit? If not, I go over it and edit my work. (STI)

Students suggest they reflect on the way they approach learning so as to be able to become aware of how well they are learning and to make adaptations where necessary. If they are not content with the amount they have achieved, they say they put extra effort, if they consider there is something wrong with their approach, they attempt to modify it. Gulce suggests:

At the beginning of the semester, I used to read aloud. That's how I studied, then I realised I didn't learn much, I integrated writing into my studies. I started studying by writing. I remember much better now. (STI)

Almost half of the participating students refer to the role of others, specifically their teachers, in reflection in which teacher feedback is viewed as a catalyser.

Bade:

Only after my teacher's criticism on my presentation I realised I had problems with the (*English*) structures. The tone of my voice, my control over the content was fine but many grammatical errors. I decided to study grammar. (FGI)

Tarik suggests he monitors his learning through discussion with others, where he is able realise what he has fully grasped and what still needs to be changed:

I like discussions, through which I reflect on my learning, my learning strategies. If I see them fit, I use them again, if not, I change them. (GM1)

Promoting reflection is commonly practised by seven participating TEs to encourage learners to take more responsibility since it increases both awareness and control over the learning process. Reflection and monitoring through reflection are common practice among STs. They reflect on what is learnt/not

learnt and how learning was approached to arrive at an understanding what further needs to be done.

6.1.3 Centring Learning

Facilitating 'centring learning' is an issue emphasized by four TEs. They suggest they support learners in linking new learning to previous learning as well as linking what is learnt in one course to what is learnt in other courses. Regarding the significance of centring learning, Selvi reports:

Learning is not something that happens in separate boxes. What we learn in different situations, we need to link it and carry it over to new situations so that new learning makes sense. So it is not specific things and specific boxes. Rather it is all related. One thing stops, one thing comes...it doesn't happen like that.... I believe, I helped them see the link between different courses and that learning is an ongoing process through which knowledge accumulates, which, I trust, helped them enhance their metacognitive awareness. (TEI2)

Cemre expands on her experiences on how she supports centring learning:

Link what is learned to what they learn in other subjects and tell me. I appreciate this. For example to Maths, Guidance... If they can link these learning theories to their own areas... if they can link what they know with what theorists say, they reconstruct it and they learn when they're able to do this... link previous learning to new learning and construct something new... Because they should link what they learn in Educational Sciences to their areas. For example Maths and give examples from their field. What is the use of the new information if it is not from their area? (TEI1)

A few participating STs suggest they link what they learn in one course to the content of other courses. These students express their awareness that some courses they take are a continuation of others or that content in some way is linked. Mehtap:

Some courses have follow-up courses. We learn in one. Then use what we have learnt in the following course, or in another related course. (FGI)

There is a common criticism from STs that some courses they take have nothing to do with their departments, leading them to thinking that they can see no logic

in learning their content. This leads to a loss of motivation. Some students express their displeasure against having to take these courses, while some others suggest such courses do have an implicit link with their major areas. One of the courses students complain a lot about is History of Turkish Education. Some students say they wonder why they have this course in the curriculum to which some others respond with reasons. Tarik:

I was like that in the first years at university; thinking wouldn't make a difference to learn such stuff. But now I think we need to know what went wrong in the past to be able to avoid similar mistakes for the coming generations. (GM3)

Centring learning is considered helpful in achieving meaningful learning that has the capacity to serve learning objectives by the participants.

6.1.4 Promoting Development of Criticality

While almost all TEs appreciate the prominence of developing criticality, only one ST refers to its significance in learning. TEs use different terms such as 'questioning', 'rejecting' and 'filtering' interchangeably to refer to the development of criticality. They propose autonomous learners do not readily accept the information they encounter or what is presented by the teacher but are able to question, criticise and refine.

Facilitating the ability to acknowledge different perspectives is considered as autonomy support by two TEs, who consider accepting divergent views enables learners to adopt approaches different from their usual ones. They say helping learners see perceptions change across situations and people has the potential to encourage learners to make informed decisions and thus take more ownership of learning. Ali remarks:

Students should understand depending on the perspectives we take, our RIGHTS and WRONGS and PRIORITIES will change... I was trying to give them the message, that even I myself, I do not know the right answer, because there does not exist such a right answer; it is a matter of choice, it is a matter of evaluating the context and depending on your evaluation from which perspectives you are looking at it,--no prescriptions. (TEI2)

Cemre on the other hand refers to a classroom episode to explain how she

supported her learners in adopting different perspectives:

While listening to each other's work, they were expected to listen very carefully to determine the similarities and the differences... and make criticism over them, especially over the differences... to raise students' awareness towards different ways of thinking and the ways the same topics might be handled. (TED)

Two TEs consider it significant to make learners aware of the fact that issues can be approached differently by different scholars. They propose they take diverse views of scholars on the same topic and ask learners to identify their own opinions as well as directing attention to the necessity to keep updated. On this issue Hulya remarks:

I told them no information is stable; each piece of information is subject to change. What we see in one source may be in complete contradiction with what we see in another, what I say in class may be contradicting what another teacher says in another course. I told them 'If you want to arrive at *correct* information, you need to consult different sources and decide which one is *correct* for yourself'. (TEI2)

Imge highlights that he supports his learners by raising their awareness on information validity and reliability as well as encouraging them to identify what their position is. He explains his practice with an example classroom situation:

In fact what is important is to help students know/accept that not everything they see or hear is correct. They need to have critical thinking skills to evaluate if what he reads is correct, complete, misleading... Last semester while presenting what's in the book, I told them 'this is what the book says, do you think it's correct?' They said 'no' and I asked 'why not?' Instead of just presenting I asked them questions, elicited from them and then I said 'as you see in this book the info is given in this specific way but as you see we are not all in the same idea, it would be more correct that way and you can find this info in such sources...' (TEI1)

However, as can be noticed in this example, the specific teacher educator attempts to raise awareness on the necessity of questioning but rather than giving learners the opportunity to arrive at their own construction, he leads learners to what he thinks is true.

The development of criticality is not an area emphasized by STs. It may be the case that they already practise it but do not need to talk about it. Only one ST refers to their critical stance as suggested in the following quotation:

I am selective with the resources I find on the internet. I don't read the first hits but check some and find the best (FGI).

The development of criticality in the management of learning is underscored by TEs but not emphasized by STs.

6.2 Discussion of Participants' Perceptions of Their Support for/Practice of Metacognition

Metacognition is one of the categories TEs focused on in their support. TEs refer to promotion of planning, reflection, centring learning and a critical stance in support of facilitating metacognition. On learners' side, most name planning, reflection and monitoring learning through reflection. Linking learning to previous learning and to the contents of other courses is a metacognitive strategy mentioned only by a few STs.

Facilitating metacognition can be considered as what Voller (1997) refers to as *technical support* that helps learners develop and implement metacognitive strategies. Planning is a metacognitive strategy significant in autonomous learning (Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1991). TEs advocate encouraging learners to prepare learning plans as learner autonomy support considering learning plans as a tool to later check what has been accomplished in learning, and therefore become aware of achievements and failures. This finding accords well with related literature. Dam (1995) maintains learning plans augment self-assessment with their focus on reflection and foster the management of learning. Benson (2016) argues learners themselves are in best position to set learning goals and teachers have a role in scaffolding learners towards their goals.

Regarding planning, while half of the participating STs suggested they plan their learning, the other half admitted they do not make plans but instead prefer to be flexible. As one ST explains this may be linked to their previous experiences where in some contexts there is a tendency to ask learners to make and follow detailed plans. Since such detailed study schedules do not give enough freedom to learners to personalise their plans, it is difficult to follow them. It can be

concluded that detailed plans is daunting in terms of the effort needed to comply and that the practice also prevents an autonomous planning capacity from developing.

Setting one's own objectives and being realistic (Dickinson, 1995; Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; Nunan, 1996) have been identified as important aspects of autonomous learning in the present study by STs who offer evidence they set objectives, which mostly aim to find solutions for their immediate needs. In a study conducted by Bown (2009), it is suggested learners set mini goals upon whose accomplishment they are in a position to set others. These mini goals accumulate to later set and achieve long term goals. These decisions regarding short-term goals help give direction to their learning to an extent, yet the efficiency of such decisions for long term achievement is open to discussion since in nature some may be made to save the day rather than serving needs. Some STs further propose they set self-imposed deadlines. Although not all could stick to the deadlines, they at least had ownership and the internal pressure assisted them in staying on schedule, even if for not all targets.

Reflection is perceived as a precursor for autonomy (Benson, 2011; Dewey, 1933; Little, 1991) and promoting reflection on learning with the intention of monitoring learning has been emphasized as common practice by half of the TEs. The skills of reflecting and monitoring are associated with autonomous learning skills and is hence of no surprise to appear in TEs' support. However, as Kolb (1984) underlines, reflecting may not be of value without taking action, and in the study, although reflection is argued to be fostered, there is no data to suggest TEs support their learners to rectify their weaknesses after practising reflection. The data also suggests TEs promote reflection but do not overtly emphasize the need to carry out reflection independently rather than as a response to teacher questions (p.150).

TEs suggest they utilise reflective questions in promoting reflection. Yet, the nature of these questions is significant (Thavenius, 1999). These questions should be formulated in a way to help learners realise why things might be incorrect/incomplete. It is the nature of the reflective questions supplied by TEs that is crucial in moving from seeing something is wrong to understanding

how/why it is wrong to building an approach that will prevent it being wrong in the future. In the current study, some TEs attempt to help learners arrive at self-discovery with the questions they ask. However, questions asked by others mainly require learners to reflect on the extent they have learnt.

The data suggests TEs strive to enhance reflection on content mainly, with a few also promoting reflection on process. However, there is limited data from their own testimony about this issue to suggest they inspire critical reflection (p.151), which although is rarely observed due to its challenging nature, has the capacity to modify perceptions (Kember et al., 2000; Thorpe, 2004). In order to be able to control beliefs about oneself, one has to exercise critical reflection and make their deep-seated beliefs visible to themselves. Unless one is conscious about their belief systems and values, it is not possible for them to modify the ones that have the potential to inhibit their learning (Kember et al., 2000). Therefore, it can be suggested that in order for learners to question and change their mind-set about the learning process, reflecting on beliefs, attitudes and values is necessary. Only one participant suggests she creates space where learners have the chance to reflect on teacher and learner roles.

ST data on reflection suggests they check their understanding during and after lessons. They also draw attention to the role of others in the reflection process be it their teachers or friends, emphasising the concept of 'objects of comparison' (Fox & Riconscente, 2008) where others serve as catalysers for initiating reflection, discussed under 2.3.3 Interdependence. STs suggest they compare their work and learning approach to those of their friends and value such comparison since these enable them to judge their work in relation to others. This makes them either feel proud of what they do or take others as models in an attempt to improve their work.

In the present study, learners referred to monitoring and regulating their learning until the end of the course but gave no indication that they evaluate their work/efforts at the end of the course with the intention for future regulations. This may be due to being continuously assessed by others resulting in a feeling of less ownership over the evaluation process. 'In the dominant discourses of education and assessment there appears to be little place for student voice' (Bain,

2010, p. 18) with students as 'passive subjects of others ... to be measured and classified' (Boud, 2007, p. 28). Yet, negotiation and the opportunity given to learners to raise voice on issues regarding learning are significant components of autonomy (Little, 2006). Although students in the study provide evidence of reflecting on their learning with a view to monitoring it, the fact that they are not offered a voice in terms of decisive assessment in real terms (Bain, 2010; Camillieri, 1999) may be the underlying reason for not practising evaluation, since the inclusion of learners in decisions regarding assessment is only brought up by one teacher (p.170). In traditional contexts assessment may be viewed as the responsibility of the teacher (Chamot, Keatley, Meloni, Gonglewski, & Bartoshesky, 2010), with students doing their best to progress during their courses, and leaving the evaluation part to the teacher since this has been the established norm. It is also possible to suggest that this is due to the fact that they were mainly involved in this study in the middle of a term before the end of the course and they were mainly practising monitoring, not evaluating.

Sharing criteria is suggested by TEs as a way to support metacognitive awareness. Besides raising awareness on requirements through reflection, criteria, which has the potential to provide checklists, can be considered as affective support since it helps learners to feel more confident and eases their stress when they check their accomplishments (Oxbrow, 1999). The findings of the study suggest besides sharing criteria, TEs invite their learners to express their expectations from the course/teacher which boosts their ownership over the learning process.

The significance of self-assessment has been highlighted by authorities in the field, in which the benefits of self-driven criteria were particularly emphasized (Benson, 2011; Boud, 2013). The data suggests students use different tools to assess themselves such as reflecting on learning, exam results and etc. TE data suggests they share their criteria with their learners to foster reflection, and ST data suggests they make use of teacher criteria. However, in the literature, there is a suggestion that learners benefit from designing their own criteria for self-assessment (Cooker, 2012). Although data from TEs and STs emphasize the role of self-assessment, neither party refer to learner generated criteria.

The findings indicate TEs find it valuable to support centring learning. Centring learning (Oxford, 1990) is significant in that it entails the link between present learning and previous learning which is of paramount importance in the learning process. This is in line with constructivists' thinking which proposes learners base their conceptualisations on their prior knowledge; therefore, previous knowledge is in fact the raw material for new knowledge (Chamot et al., 2010; Schneider & Stern, 2010). Linking what they learn in one course to the contents of what they learn in other courses requires the act of reflecting and deliberating on content and as such, is a metacognitive strategy that can be used for the regulation of learning. Making such links among the contents of courses helps learners arrive at a deeper level of learning as well as having control over the content through realising different viewpoints it is approached in different courses.

Questioning the validity of the information encountered is considered significant by participating TEs. They suggest they support students to this end to help them generate their own meanings as emphasized in the constructivist view (Poerksen, 2005). The data suggests TEs encourage learners to adopt a critical stance and not accept any information given without scrutinizing it (p.156), reflecting Yumuk (2002) who emphasizes the significance of critically reflecting on new information rather than reciting learned knowledge. Facilitating evaluation of information and resources with a view to ensure their validity as well as to identify stand points is a metacognitive strategy ascertained in the study, mainly by TEs, echoing literature (Mall-Amiri & Sheikhy, 2014; Pemberton & Nix, 2012; Quintana, Zhang, & Krajcik, 2005). Pemberton and Nix (2012, p. 5) suggest critical thinking is significant in that learners become '*producers*' rather than '*reproducer*'s of knowledge and that they can voice themselves without adopting others' stance. STs in the study do not make references to the development of criticality, with the exception of one student who suggests they do not read the top hits on the search engine but choose the ones they think serve their aim.

To refer to the development of criticality as an example of metacognitive strategy, different teachers use different words to express their conceptualisation which can all be found in the literature regarding LA and metacognition.

Questioning, judging, rejecting, evaluating are some of those used by TEs and that are already part of the related literature. Interestingly, the notion of *filtering* is referred to as an autonomous learner characteristic in the present study. I consider it significant as a finding from the current study that filtering is named by TEs while not appearing in the previous literature as a metacognitive strategy. It is a skill that has the potential to deserve significance, especially in the current climate of new technologies and social media since it necessitates the ability to refine information to what one needs and exclude unimportant or incorrect information.

6.3 Conclusion

The present chapter presented and discussed the methods participating TEs use to facilitate metacognitive enterprise and the metacognitive strategies STs suggest they utilise in the regulation of their learning. Reflecting the literature on metacognition, TEs suggest they facilitate planning, reflection, centring learning and the development of criticality, and STs propose they practise planning, reflection and centring learning. In the present study, filtering emerged as a significant metacognitive strategy TEs consider necessary in attaining autonomy, which is not present in previous literature. While some of the teacher support in metacognition is reflected in ST practice, there is a certain amount of disparity between TE and ST testimony, which will be discussed in detail under 11.5.3.3 Metacognition.

Chapter 7: An Atmosphere Conducive to Learner Autonomy

Teachers are the main actors creating the atmosphere conducive to LA; hence, a considerable part of the present chapter mainly focuses on TE views. All participating TEs suggest they endeavour to create an atmosphere where they support their learners to develop and implement LA. They do this by a variety of approaches they apply in their practice such as *actively involving learners* and *providing choice*. STs suggest there are certain autonomous behaviours which the present learning atmosphere either promotes or limits, particularly in *showing a willingness to make choices in learning* and *putting theory into practice*. (Other active learner roles will be discussed in Chapter 8 when referring to example situations where learners assume responsibility over their learning). TEs also suggest *acknowledging different learning methods*, *encouraging risk taking*, *taking learner perspectives*, *avoiding interference* and *being careful with the messages they convey in their practice* as strategies they utilise to make the learning environment conducive to LA. The current chapter presents and discusses participants' views of such an atmosphere.

7.1 Presentation of Data on the Learning Atmosphere

TEs draw attention to the significance of the learning atmosphere teachers create and signify that learners should be given chances to practise autonomy in their learning rather than solely being informed about it as a useful concept. Ali emphasizes:

We should not suffice 'oh, LA is good; you need it, do it'. You have to push. Give them tasks and, it is a matter of giving them the chances to experience LA. (TEI1)

7.1.1 Active Involvement

TEs say learners should be active in all issues regarding their learning and propose they put learners in the centre of the learning process. They suggest they make their learners handle parts of the learning process in class. That is, if necessary teachers do presentations but mostly elicit the content from learners. They later set tasks, projects where learners actively apply what they learn to real life or similar to real life situations. Nazan refers to a classroom episode to give clarification:

Discussing the meaning of 'ethics' was the first step of the lesson. Before giving them the meaning of the word they were asked to discuss it in their groups and come up with their own definition. It was a very important skill for students: giving a definition using their own words. (TED)

TEs suggest they make learners actively involved and they themselves act as guides, through which learners take all decisions and responsibilities that lead to having a better command over the learning process. Filiz suggests:

...they were all on their own. I was just there to guide them, they asked for help, they asked for suggestions but they were the decision makers. (TEI2)

The practice of using scenarios and cases to identify significant elements of content is also referred to by three TEs through which learners obtain the opportunity to empathise and express their stand points. On this issue Hulya remarks:

We went over example scenarios possible to be encountered in actual classes. I asked them to interpret the situation and make comments. I asked them questions on teacher and learner behaviours in the scenario and also what they would do if they were the teacher, or what kind of advice they have for the teacher in the scenario. This not only made learners active in the class but helped them realise what kind of problems they can face in the teaching profession. (TED)

As part of making learners active in class, three TEs put forward they give their learners the chance to put into practice what they learn in theory. They suggest they manage this through microteachings, discussions on issues with links to their immediate context or project work. Meral notes she created a forum of discussion where learners had to use their knowledge to analyse and compare education systems and to identify where the education system of their own country rests when compared with other countries, the process of which more than the content itself promoting autonomy:

... they analysed the education system and then compared it with their country's education system and as a final project they looked at the relationship between education and development. Then I asked them to look at the Pisa reports and the OECD reports, to see where their country stands in both and talk about the education system; how comparative

education helps develop or overcome these problems, what they would take from which country and how they would adapt it in their country. Because you cannot just take something and directly bring it without adaptation: this is also LA because they are linking what they are learning to real life. (TEI2)

Twelve STs suggest they put what they learn in theory into practice as a representation of being actively involved in learning. Some of these students suggest they make use of their school learning to cater for related needs in their surroundings such as family and neighbourhood. Bircan, a Pre-school Education student, suggests she lives in a big family with lots of children with differing ages which gives her the opportunity to observe as well as practise what she learns at school. Gulce argues in her neighbourhood where people know she studies Special Education, families of children with special needs refer to her knowledge. She posits she guides such families with what she knows and spends time with these children. Mehtap, a Psychological Counselling and Guidance student, advocates her family consults her at times they feel the need and she gives them advice.

Meryem is a fourth year student in English Teaching Department. She says she has taken courses on testing and assessment. She argues students like her are in a position to evaluate tests they take and she advocates putting this into practice. She refers to an experience where after an exam she and her friends criticised their teacher for the exam, which is a manifestation they are using theoretical knowledge for real purposes:

We have taken courses on test design. We told the teacher frankly. What she taught and what she tested didn't match. (STI)

Some suggest they attempt to link theory to real life. As Beril suggests:

We are learning about first aid for mother and children health. I try to see the link with everyday situations, how I can use what I learn in my immediate context. (STI)

Sezgi argues applying what she learns in everyday situations motivates her to learn. Referring to her linguistics class, she says she makes attempts to apply linguistic rules in real life. These help her communicate more efficiently as well as feeling more confident in speaking in community.

Dilek suggests she has not had the opportunity to put in actual practice yet but she often times finds herself thinking how she would make use of information she learns in courses such as Behavioural Disorders and Learning Theories in her future practice as a teacher.

There is also a complaint from participating students they are not offered enough opportunities for practical aspects of teaching. The majority agree they should be offered more chances for practicum. Dilek:

It is my third year at university. We have been bombarded with theoretical information and feel the need to put these into practice. But we are not given chances. (STI)

Students in the Faculty of Education are required to do internship in the last year of their university studies. However, more than half of the students agree this is not enough and propose the practical aspects need to be integrated into the courses from the first year. Gulce:

We cannot experience what we learn. There is too much book knowledge. They say we will have practicum in the fourth year. And seniors say we learn everything, most of what we learn at university in the last year. I wish we did have chances for practice earlier on. (STI)

7.1.2 Choice and Decision-making

In supporting autonomy, thirteen TEs suggest they give alternatives to their learners to choose from with the belief that this enhances learners' responsibility taking. They say when given alternatives to choose from, learners have a tendency to assume more ownership over learning. Ali suggests the ability to make decisions is a prerequisite for LA and that he supports his learners to do so in his teaching:

I was trying to give them this message that they are the ones who are the right person to decide what to do rather than me telling them what to do. (TEI2)

The choices provided by TEs are succinctly summarised in Asli's quotation as giving the learners the freedom to choose who to work with, the topics they want to work on and alternative deadlines for submitting work. Asli refers to a classroom episode when she provided choices:

I told my students to get into groups of three or four, with people they

think they can work with. Then I told them to choose the topic they would prefer to work on from the list I provided, and I took note of each group's topic. We later as a class decided when each group would do their presentation. (TED)

Meral's alternatives give an example situation where she gives learners the opportunity to make informed choices related to their interests:

I give them projects. For this course there are four projects included, which require them to do a little research and outside reading and literature review and so on. But I give them another choice, on neuro-diversity: an issue we do not have the time during the semester to dwell upon which deals with specific learner needs. This is another project. I give them the choice: either do the four projects or this one. (TE11)

Regarding the formation of groups, some contradictory comments are made by TEs. While most suggest they let learners choose who to work with, some others suggest they use lottery drawing or teachers themselves forming groups. Imge exemplifies forming the group himself with the following logic behind:

I didn't let them choose their group mates and I tried to put them in groups according to their midterm exam grades so that each group had one student with a good grade and a student with a lower grade. (TED)

However he admits it did not work and learners showed resistance to work in their allocated groups, and so he was not successful at what he aimed.

When probed about what kind of support they provide, one TE says her learners are allowed to choose the format of the homework, that is, the technical issues, giving the implication that her learners are in fact not allowed opportunities to make meaningful decisions.

Many STs express their comfort and excitement in making choices in their learning when opportunities are provided as an indication of active responsibility taking. Bircan, as a representative of the majority:

When we are allowed to make decisions, in terms of what to work on, who to work with etc., I feel I have better control over what I am doing. I hold myself more responsible for both the process and the product, and I put in more effort. (GM3)

However, students express their grievances on the narrowness of the range of opportunities they can make decisions in. They suggest they are not usually provided with alternatives to choose from, especially with regards to the content and assessment but are given fixed course outlines with prescribed assessment and are told they have to follow these. Meliha notes:

We can choose who to work with but we are usually given the topic by the teacher. This year one of our teachers let us choose the topic, first time in four years.

Some STs offer they do not really ponder about decision-making because the education system does not often allow or require them to make decisions. However, some suggest they would prefer to have a (more) voice on the flow/presentation of the lesson, assessment and content. They say they would prefer to be able to choose courses but because they usually have packaged programmes, they have to take all the courses offered.

Although criticising the lack of opportunities provided for selecting courses/instructors, when opportunities are provided, Sezgi says many students choose instructors who they hear are generous with grades, which she disapproves, saying she opts for instructors who she hears teach effectively rather than give high marks. She believes it is the knowledge she will need in her practice, not the high marks.

With regards to decision-making, it is mainly learners' expression of welcoming and demanding alternatives offered to them for making decisions, and their grievances on the narrowness of cases where they can actually make decisions.

7.1.3 Range of Learning Methods

The findings indicate that TEs find it significant to acknowledge and encourage learners to find and employ their own methods in their learning, which is important in creating an atmosphere conducive to LA as well as promoting metacognition. Five TEs confirmed they supported their learners in expanding their learning repertoire in the two months period, each with their own style and approach. One TE, Merve, suggests at the beginning of each semester she talks to her learners about how different people can approach different tasks to raise awareness, also referring to learner styles. She further suggests she repeats such

episodes throughout the semester whenever she feels learners need it. Cemre, referring to a class episode, maintains allowing learners to approach learning in their own ways facilitates autonomy:

They were given the freedom to elaborate on the principles using different strategies as they wished. This was done to foster their autonomy because individuals feel stronger and more confident when they follow the route they prefer and reconstruct the ideas in the way they prefer. (TED)

According to data, TEs not only acknowledge a range of learning approaches but also encourage their learners to become aware of their peers' learning styles. To this end, two TEs deliberately focus on different ways of learning. Gamze, after asking learners to come up with their own chart as a summary of a topic in groups, asks all groups to share their charts with the whole class and on learners' persistence for identifying the best chart, encourages them to distinguish the good points of each, rejecting that there is one best among the alternatives. Gul, on the other hand, says she uses the blackboard in her presentation of a lesson but discourages her learners to copy from the blackboard, trying to raise awareness there are different ways everybody deals with new knowledge and insists that learners find their own one:

What is on the blackboard is the way I organise my thinking and reflects how I learn. You have your own way, do it in your way I tell them (TEI2).

Another TE also refers to learning range but provides contrasting data. Remzi is of the opinion that some learners have no idea of how they learn best because the way they study is inimical to effective learning. He suggests he proposes alternative study habits to learners and encourages them to use the ones learners find fit for themselves. However, he later criticises the individual ways learners adopt for their learning, demonstrating his stance as if learning needs to be approached only by certain specific ways. Regarding this he remarks:

Some students tell me they can do something in front of the TV. Is it possible? How come? Not even aware of effective learning (TEI1).

7.1.4 Encouraging Risk-taking

Three TEs consider encouraging risk taking greatly significant and suggest they thrive to invoke a culture where their learners are eager to take risks. Ali

proposes he inspires his learners not to accept whatever the teacher says but to challenge him:

When you look at our system, teacher is the authority, he knows the right answer. What he says is okay, so you can rely on him. Just the contrary, I kept trying to encourage them to challenge me because what we know, and especially in this era, you know young people are very good at using technology, much better than we, the old generation, so I was constantly trying to encourage them to use these things and not to rely on me. (TEI2)

Ali further suggests he encouraged learners to generate their own ideas rather than relying on book information.

I kept telling them ‘Don't write the sentences from the book. I would rather prefer seeing your own words, with your own comments’. (TEI2)

Cemre suggests she tried to provoke her learners to be creative and put forward original ideas:

I challenged them a bit by telling them the more original and different dimensions they came up with, the more successful their products would be accepted. (TED)

STs refer to teachers who encourage them to take risks and suggest such teacher efforts foster autonomy as exemplified on page (p. 117).

7.1.5 Taking Learner Perspectives

Taking the learners' perspective is considered as contributing to the class atmosphere by four TEs. They say where possible they take into consideration learners' views on the progress of the class which encourages learners to think, generate ideas and conform to them. Merve says:

I sometimes ask for their suggestions. ‘Do you have any suggestions on how to do the lesson?’ I tell them ‘next week we will learn this. How do you think we should cover it?’ instead of asking them to read and come.

Selvi suggests she involves learners in determining the assessment component of teaching/learning process, which as a result makes learners to take more ownership since they have a mutual decision. Asking learners how they would like to be assessed among the alternatives given stimulates the feeling of being in control she declares. She remarks she consults learner opinions on the weight of assessment components as well as task types to be used in exams, which

learners find surprising but also highly motivating. She proposes teachers always have the advantage of persuading learners to what is favourable through giving logical explanations, but the fact that decisions are mutual makes learners feel in control. She refers to her classroom episodes when she turns to learner opinions:

I say 'you have the option of telling me whether you want the quiz to be a test type or open-ended type. Or the midterm to be all open-ended questions with the final with test type questions'. We decide on this together. (TE11)

Similarly Nesrin suggests besides sharing grading criteria with students, she invites learners to express their expectations from the course/teacher which makes learners feel more in control of the process (p.153).

There are a few students who suggest they are motivated when their teachers ask them to express their preferences regarding assessment, turning to students about the weights of assessment components and the deadlines of projects, which they believe inspires them to feel in control of the process (Erim, Turan, Bircan, Sezgi).

7.1.6 Avoiding Interference

Six TEs refer to avoiding coercion or allowing freedom in making the atmosphere optimal for autonomous learning. They concede they strive to create an atmosphere where learners feel free to express their opinions (Cemre, Gamze, Selvi, Filiz), where they are comfortable in asking questions or challenging the teacher (Filiz, Ali, Asli) and where they know their ideas will be welcomed by the teacher without judgement (Ali). It is suggested while learners are working on a topic, whether alone or in groups, teachers avoid interfering. They find it important to step back and allow learners the freedom to work following their own routes.

I do not interfere with how they do because everyone has their own learner styles and I cannot interfere with that. If I interfere with this, I interfere with the whole process: I kill their productivity; I prevent them from thinking freely. This is against constructivism. If I tell them you do this in this way, I impose my way of constructing knowledge on them. Students should be free to construct their own knowledge on their own, following the way and the strategies they want and they feel confident

with. (Cemre, TEI1)

Selma and Cemre consider feedback to be essential in learning. Although, Cemre favours allowing learners freedom to follow their own routes as can be seen in the previous quotation, she admits she considers getting feedback as a compulsory component in the course grading criteria. Selma confirms that she has already done so to force her learners to consult their teachers and apply their suggestions. Selma implies there are cases she holds onto the traditional teacher roles:

I expect them to come and see me. I force them because I believe if students are all alone they won't be able to produce something of good quality. If they lease with me, get into contact with me, they will learn from me. To me, teacher plays a critical role in providing guidance and providing feedback and scaffolding students. (TEI2)

7.1.7 Being Careful with Messages Given to Learners

Few TEs suggest LA is supported not only with what teachers do but also with the messages they indirectly convey to learners. Selvi argues she supports her learners by giving the message that she is not the only authority and owner of all responsibility:

I am trying to make this distinction. I am not the authority; it is not me deciding on everything, because it is their learning. If there is no distribution of power, we cannot talk about LA I think. If I give them the responsibility, then I should also give them rights too. It wouldn't work otherwise. Isn't it taking control? I believe we leave out the control concept out in everyday teaching. (TEI1)

Similarly, a few TEs consider it significant to adopt the principles they give instruction on in their actual teaching practice. To this end, Gamze, Gul, Cemre and Selvi propose they conduct learner-centred classes as they focus on LCL in their course content.

I teach Student-centred Education and my aim in this course is not only to give the principles/techniques of student-centred education but I have to be in line with what I am doing and what I am saying, I have to implement the course using student-centred approaches (Cemre, TEI2)

According to STs it is not whether a course is difficult or not that influences student efforts but whether they receive positive messages from the teacher or not:

We have teachers who we label as ‘difficult’ but we do not give up because we can feel the good intention towards us. They don’t make us feel pressured or threatened. On the other hand, there are teachers who from the beginning give the impression he is the teacher, we are the students, two opposing teams. We are not welcome to give our opinions but learn from them. They make us lose all the eagerness for learning.
(STI)

TEs suggest they create a learning atmosphere conducive to LA through the use of a variety of strategies. Taking on responsibility for active learning and readiness to make choices regarding their learning are the main areas participating STs provide evidence they apply that reflect the support they are provided with.

7.2 Discussion of the Atmosphere Conducive to Learner Autonomy

The creation of an atmosphere that encourages and facilitates the adoption of autonomy in learning is highlighted in the study and in the related literature (Aoki, 1999; Jang et al., 2010; La Ganza, 2008; Núñez et al., 2015; Sheldon & Krieger, 2007; Tan & Chan, 1998; Williams & Deci, 1996). To this end, participating TEs propose they encourage active learner involvement through the design of their lessons where they adopt inductive modes of learning rather than using presentation style, create opportunities for learners to put into practice what they learn in theory, acknowledge different learning ways, encourage risk taking, refer to learners for their opinions, avoid interference, allow criticism and pay attention to the messages they indirectly convey to learners. Reflecting teacher support on the learning environment created, STs refer to active roles they take on and their willingness in making choices.

Learners need to be active in their learning to be able to construct their own meanings and relate it to their personal needs. Engaging learners actively in their learning has been acknowledged as helpful by all TEs, which is an issue stressed by scholars (Ackermann, 2001; Benson, 2011; Thanasoulas, 2000).

A few STs in the study suggest they look for and make use of opportunities to relate their school learning with real life experiences, reflecting Camilleri (1999, p. 38) who suggests ‘Regarding active engagement, many learners suggest they are alert to opportunities to link theory to practice’. Linking learning to real life situations is an autonomous learning characteristic emphasized by both participants and scholars (Nunan, 1997; Ting, 2015).

Provision of choice (Oğuz, 2013a, 2013b; Reeve et al., 2004) has been identified as part of the support teachers provide to their learners on the way to become more autonomous in their learning which is echoed in the present study. Allowing learners to take their decisions has also been highlighted as autonomy support by participating educators. They consider they give their learners opportunities to make decisions, which is a cornerstone in autonomous learning highlighted by scholars (Benson, 2011; Holec, 1981; Little, 1991, 2004b). TEs confirm they provide alternatives to learners to make decisions mainly regarding topics learners prefer to work on and allow learners to work in pairs, groups or individually according to their preferences, which is considered to enhance autonomy (Núñez et al., 2015). Having alternatives to choose from makes it possible to follow interests and can be considered as nurturing inner motivational resources as discussed by Reeve (2009). It should be taken into account however that according to data, teachers offered choices in a comparatively restricted form (see 11.5.3.4 Provision of Choice). Another issue that needs consideration is the fact that making choices has the capacity to lead to autonomy provided that they are not trivial but meaningful choices. Otherwise, offering choice may not have the envisaged results (Cárdenas, 2006; Stefanou et al., 2004). As Littlewood (1996) puts it choices learners make rest on a continuum from low-level choices to high level choices and it can be suggested that learners in this context are offered choices close to the low end, which have relatively less influence on the governance of learning. In the present study, while it is common to let learners choose their group friends, three teachers suggest they provide choice but behave in ways inimical to the idea: one allocating topics to learners through a lottery drawing and two not allowing learners to work individually giving the reason the class is too crowded. They force their learners to work at least in pairs.

It should be noted that learners do not make references to making decisions regarding the what of their learning but are only allowed to make choices with regards to who they work with, the topic of the projects/assignments, and rarely the deadlines, implying they are allowed very limited choice over the content, which results in limited control over learning. This replicates the findings of a previous study conducted by Halstead and Zhu (2009). Smith (2003b) argues referring to learners for the selection of content leads to greater learner participation and motivation. The data collected provides evidence learners are aware of how they learn better and make conscious decisions on how to approach their learning. There is also proof they set step by step goals; however, as has been emphasized by the STs, learners do not have a role in the determination of content. This is also maintained by TEs who accept they have fixed syllabus they have to cover and most do not have the autonomy to adapt these (p.146), which suggests that learner needs and interests are not well catered for. The assertion by students which is also accepted by teachers that in some departments, students cannot even choose the elective courses highlights the severity of lack of meaningful opportunities for making choices. Given the fact learners are not offered alternatives or that the structured system does not allow them to direct their learning according to their individual needs and interests, they are not inclined to claim a big share in decision-making. These come together to remind us of what Stefanou et al. (2004) argue: meaningless choices not having an impact on learner's autonomy. Provision of choice has a significant role in the promotion of autonomy provided that the alternatives are academically significant.

Empowering and encouraging learners to find their own learning methods and styles is significant in the actualisation of LA (Camillieri, 1999; Ranosa-Madrugno et al., 2016). According to the findings, one third of the TEs acknowledge and encourage different routes learners adopt in learning and propose to support learners to this end. What TEs suggest regarding learning approach is in line with the literature: the intervention of teachers in learners' preferred learning approaches diverts learners' focus and even if the teacher intends to help, the results may prove to be contradictory (Assor et al., 2002; Reeve, 2009). This finding enhances the validity of earlier findings by Núñez et

al. (2015) who propose minimizing pressure to complete tasks in a certain way, besides acknowledging student decisions and feelings, providing meaningful rationales, offering alternatives and choices lead to greater engagement in learning and changes in learners' autonomy in time.

Taking risks is an issue proposed as an autonomous characteristic (Oxford, 1990). Yet, in the present study only three TEs provide evidence of encouraging learners to take risks by suggesting that the classroom is the optimal place where learners can exercise this skill. STs propose there are teachers who encourage learners to take risks (p.117), yet they do not provide evidence of taking risks.

Taking learners' perspectives is considered significant in autonomy support (Reeve & Cheon, 2016). As Demirtaş and Sert (2010) suggest referring to learners for their opinions increases their motivation for learning, which in return positively influences their autonomy. Only a few TEs suggest they allow their learners to voice their opinions in areas such as the conduct of the lesson, the deadlines or with regards to assessment. Regarding assessment, Taras (2002) argues that since autonomy entails the insertion of the learners at the heart of learning and requires responsibility taking, it is not possible to attain autonomy without including learners in the assessment process, be it formative or summative. Borg and Alshumaimeri (2019) argue LA calls for engaging learners in decision-making regarding the what and the how of learning, and assessment to a lesser extent. However, the fact that this is not an area intensely dwelled on by participants suggests teachers are wary of sharing significant decisions regarding assessment (Camillieri, 1999), with little or no learner involvement (Dickinson, 1993). One TE suggests teachers have the opportunity to persuade learners to adopt teacher's viewpoints. They consider this makes learners feel they are in control and facilitates autonomy, which in reality is pseudo-autonomy.

The findings highlight the significance of avoiding coercion and interference, and creating an atmosphere that is not strictly structured. Avoiding coercion and interference are suggested as autonomy-supportive ways in the literature, with close monitoring, asking controlling questions, giving deadlines, guiding towards predetermined answers/solutions and the introduction of

rewards/punishments identified as autonomy suppressive behaviours (Niemiec & Ryan, 2009; Reeve et al., 1999). The findings suggest interfering with the learners' natural rhythm inhibits LA, proposing when teacher intervenes in a step, they actually interfere with the whole process, which is an issue underscored by Assor and Kaplan (2001). However, although participating TEs suggest they avoid pressure, there are cases they provide evidence of pushing learners in specific directions they consider to be of benefit to students, such as making some course components compulsory rather than letting students experience the consequences as in the case of feedback sessions.

Allowing criticism is considered as autonomy support by Assor et al. (2002) but is proposed to be practised by only one TE in the study who suggests he encourages his learners to challenge him and his ideas. I consider this is a significant issue that deserves consideration since oppressing learner views can suppress learners' willingness to handle their learning.

Participating TEs propose they endeavour to be consistent with what they teach. They say they put the effort to provide models to their learners with their teaching styles, as in the example of conducting Learner-centred-learning in 'Learner-centred-learning' course. This is significant as giving contradictory messages distort the internalisation of what is aimed at (Taras, 2002). Yet, they admit they sometimes feel obliged to conduct teacher-centred lessons which will be explored under 11.5.3.2 Teaching Approach.

7.3 Conclusion

The learning atmosphere is greatly influential in the practice of LA. To this end, TEs suggest they endeavour to make the environment conducive to LA. STs propose the atmosphere affects their autonomy practice and exemplify their autonomous behaviours facilitated by the learning environment. They make references to their active involvement in learning as a result of the atmosphere created and acknowledge TE efforts in taking learner perspectives and encouraging risk-taking. However, it is obvious that learners are allowed only limited freedom in terms of decision-making which will be discussed in detail in 11.5.3.4 Provision of Choice.

Chapter 8: Learner Training

This chapter presents and discusses TE views on how they train learners to adopt autonomous learning habits and ST views on their assumption of responsibility and involvement in learning.

8.1 Presentation of Data on Learner Training

All TEs unanimously suggest they support their learners in autonomy through providing learner training in different areas regarding the learning process with the intention of assisting learners in the regulation of learning. The support they provide cluster in four main headings as encouraging responsibility taking, learner strategies, information literacy and time management. STs suggest they assume responsibility for their learning and continue their studies outside the class, make informed use of learner strategies and manage resources and time.

8.1.1 Responsibility Taking

Eight TEs explicitly emphasize and provide evidence that they encourage their learners to take responsibility for their learning rather than relying on the teacher, which they view as a requirement in the learning process. Regarding his views on what learning is, Ali posits:

I have become very firm with the idea that teachers are not in a position to teach everything, they can only guide. Learning is not a matter of what somebody gives you or imposes on you, but rather something that you want to learn. (TEI2)

Awareness raising on learner responsibilities is signified by Selvi:

The first class/day/hour, I spend it to talk about my and their responsibilities. What I remind them is that I am someone who is ready and here to support but not someone who grabs their arms and get them to my office. It is their responsibility to seek support. I talk about the responsibilities they have but also what this means... who I think a responsible student is. I sometimes ask them what they need to do to become successful and they do tell. (TEI1)

With this view of active responsibility taking in learning, TEs refer to persuasive reflective conversations with their learners where they try to help learners develop a mind-set for taking responsibility and raise awareness on appropriate roles learners need to take on in learning to be able to govern the process. Meral

maintains:

I make it very clear to them that learning does not just happen in class. Whatever they wish to know about, they should try and discover it themselves... They shouldn't wait for the teacher to give them projects or things like that... Instead of just studying from the notes or from the book, there are other ways of learning new things and experiencing things. (TEI2)

The same participant referred to an experience in her practice in the two months when she gave her learners a project to work on outside the class which she considers supported autonomy in the following way:

By this project, they will have learnt quite a lot of information that I do not have time to cover in class. Besides, hopefully, I will teach them a lesson that learning does not only happen in classrooms with the presence of a teacher. People can learn on their own and even can have more fun doing so. I am hoping that this will develop their intrinsic motivation on their way of becoming language teachers. (TED)

One TE, Gul, suggests she encourages group work but requires that each member of the group should take responsibility and hence asks learners to indicate their contribution to the whole task by using a different colour pen. By doing this, she advocates she pushes the ones who have a tendency to rely on their friends to be accountable for their responsibilities. (TEI2)

Two TEs, Gamze and Imge, provide evidence of urging learners to fulfil their duties instead of relying on teachers. Imge notes:

In my teaching practice I prefer not to give direct guidance to my learners and I prefer to get them struggle. I help them if there is a direct request for help and if they cannot get help from their partners. I prefer my learners to spend mental and interactional effort over a sustained period of time while defining tasks and subtasks and using and developing a variety of knowledge and skills to complete the task. (TED)

Mercan suggests he goes over student answers in quizzes/exams in class, giving/eliciting correct answers which he believes helps students notice their own mistakes. He considers by doing this he encourages responsibility taking.

Some STs suggest they take responsibility for their learning in a number of ways. Some of these propose they check the content of the following lessons and study

accordingly before the lessons. Others put extra effort after the lesson, helping peers learn the subject as a way to better internalise the content or prepare questions to self-assess. Beril's words are representative of this group of students:

I had xxx quiz, a very difficult lesson. I read the notes I had taken, summarised parts I felt the need, then I explained it to a group of friends. I believe it helps me learn better. Then, I prepared a quiz for myself- a cloze test because I find it difficult to keep terminology in mind. (GM2)

A Pre-school Education student in her last year at university doing observations clarifies how she adapted the form provided after each observation to better serve her future needs:

There is this form I have to fill. I do fill it and submit it to my teacher but also keep notes for myself for things not asked on the form... because I know they are important, things I need to take care of for my teaching practice, both positive and negative behaviours displayed in the lesson. Observations show me model behaviours I can adopt in my practice and behaviours I need to avoid (Bircan, STI)

Erim suggests she has a willingness to engage in non-obligatory learning tasks to which points are not usually allocated, an issue brought up only by this specific student. She considers points are not the main concern in learning but what she strives for is extending her body of knowledge to the best possible level:

Sometimes our teacher gives homework but she says no points will be given for it. I always do these. It is not only the points I care. Recently, a teacher asked us to summarise 100 pages from the book. I did it. No points were allocated to it. I knew that but I did it because I learnt while doing it. (STI)

A few other students suggest they would take personal steps or intervene in the lesson because they are disturbed by other students, which is an indication they take responsibility and behave accordingly. One said she would go to classes early to be able to sit in the front (Huri), the other personally warned friends in class who were displaying disruptive behaviour (Feray).

Few students criticise their friends saying that they do not take responsibility but later blame others for their low achievement, portraying their stance towards responsibility assumption in learning. Fatma suggests:

Now that exam results are being announced, I hear people saying ‘this teacher always asks difficult questions’. They don’t think about what is wrong with them but they blame others... doesn’t help them improve but go deeper. (STI)

Regarding goal setting, learners offer proof they are able to set objectives with regards to their immediate learning needs, without serious consideration of long-term accomplishments. One student suggests:

We have an aim, the big xxx exam, and I study for it, but I learn the things I will need for the exam only. If I had the chance to see the exam questions, I would only study the answers to these questions. (GM2)

Some students express their displeasure with lessons conducted in presentation form. They propose some teachers use only presentation technique, which they find useless and boring. The majority reflect they would prefer to be actively involved in the lesson, doing activities rather than receiving information only. Ferzan:

I do not remember cases where I learnt only by listening to the teacher. I need to be active, to do myself, put my own effort, struggle to be able to learn. If the teacher uses presentation technique, I can’t concentrate and at home learn by myself. (GM3)

Taking the incentive for outside learning is common among STs. In their endeavours to manage their learning, participating students make frequent references to their efforts to extend their learning outside limited class hours. To this end, some say they seek and utilise opportunities such as doing volunteer work. Some others suggest they attend seminars, conferences, events in their contexts related to their fields of study.

Three students from Special Education Department say they personally looked for centres providing special education and volunteered to work with the intention to get involved in the everyday life of this occupation as well as easing the discomfort they experienced regarding the complexities of their future job. They suggest ‘the more exposure they have to their fields, the better they will be

in their careers' (Aysegul). They say they would not need their teachers to organise this for them since they are university students and feel capable of arranging themselves although one ST, Meryem, disagreed saying 'We may be at university but we are young. I think teacher initiation is necessary'. Emel suggested:

If I need to learn something, I don't always need the teacher to initiate, I am at university, I can arrange what I need. I make research, I consult people if necessary and I organise. (GM2)

Some students even confessed that was the reason they were present in the meetings held for the present study: they were aiming to make use of every single opportunity to extend their knowledge and experience.

The majority of participating STs suggest they do make the effort to learn in class but almost always back it up with outside class research/study. The use of extra resources, mainly the Internet, is what they generally utilise. After a class is held, some deepen their learning with more examples from their own lives and surroundings as well as from other sources, while some watch videos or read articles online to reinforce in-class learning. Tarik:

Today I was not satisfied with my learning. I went home, studied the notes I took in the lesson. I was still not satisfied. I watched online videos to get a deeper grasp. (GM2)

On this same issue, Erim suggests:

If teacher gives one example in the lesson, I find three more at home. When you start looking at extra resources, one thing leads to another, one topic to another, and at the end of the day you end up learning many different things. (GM2)

One ST contradicts these students saying class is the best place to learn and if she fails to learn in class, she finds it difficult to learn outside (Mehtap). It is necessary to stress this student has not provided evidence that she has attempted to study outside class but expressed her stance as being active in class, where she believes most learning occurs.

One ST, Sezgi, said one of the courses she is taking is offered both in English and in Turkish in the university and though she is enrolled in the English one,

whenever she has the chance she attends the Turkish version to broaden her understanding, as an example of extended effort on the side of the student.

For the assumption of responsibility, learners mainly suggest they take agency to study before/after the lessons and engage in activities which are not required from them but which they themselves opt to perform and extend their learning to out of class studies with a view to develop their learning. They also express they would prefer more student involvement during their courses.

8.1.2 Learner Strategies

TEs suggest they provide support through introducing a range of learner strategies and giving learners the opportunity to try different ones. STs argue they are aware of different learning strategies and utilise them in their learning.

8.1.2.1 Raising Awareness and Introducing Learning Strategies

Six TEs suggest they introduce alternative learning strategies to learners. On the significance of raising awareness on different ways of approaching learning tasks Mercan proposes:

We should train them on how to learn. Not always teach them the subject matter but teach them how they can learn themselves. I think that is very important. (TEI1)

According to Cemre, giving suggestions on strategy use is favourable, distinguishing suggesting from forcing:

Learners have their own strategies. I do not want to interfere. But sometimes I see that it is a wrong strategy. Then I question the student: 'Do you do this deliberately? Wouldn't it be better if you do it this way? I give option. In class activities and term projects we give ideas about learning strategies, we make them aware but then let it to them. You can't do anything by forcing. A teacher's persuasive skills are important. We can direct our students to correct strategies. But we should keep in mind that sometimes what is good for us may not be good for the student: trying to be good we can be bad to students. I give ideas, but if a student doesn't want, I step back. Some like and embrace the idea. That means the student was using a wrong strategy and we showed them the right one. (TEI1)

Remzi and Nesrin emphasize note taking which they argue is a strategy their

learners are reluctant to exercise and not very competent in practising. Remzi identifies:

That was the first lesson and the introductory part of the course. At the beginning of the lesson we discussed the importance of taking notes during the lessons and then revising the notes to see what they had learnt in that lesson. I warned the students that they needed to take notes during the class hours seriously because I would give the course notes at the end of the semester. (TED)

Four TEs remark they introduce their learners the use of graphic organisers to control the content through categorising it. Selma assures:

The topic was ‘the factors that influence what we teach’. I drew a concept map on the board and elicited students’ answers through questions and prompts. We discussed why we need these factors in the curriculum design. It was good in the sense that they could see the relationship between concepts. (TEI2)

However, Selma expresses her hesitation with this practice, suggesting she herself is the one who draws the concept maps because learners want it, but she questions herself whether she supports her learners by doing this:

The point is when I drew a concept map on the board and tried to list down the aspects I raised, student became happy. I felt they wanted me to list down the aspects I explained. However, in the previous lesson, we did them, talked about them. It was obvious they did not take notes. They told me ‘we want you to write them on the board’. As university students, I expected them to take notes.... When I categorise them on the board, they write because they want to get the knowledge there. One of the students said ‘teacher this is better when you write on the board’. And I don’t know if this is right or not. Maybe they just want to be spoon-fed. (TED)

Nesrin on the other hand refers to the support she provides in introducing reading strategies which are important in social sciences. Referring to her course ‘Literature Reviewing and Reporting’, she proposes:

We always blame our students they do not read. We need to show them the strategies. When they get an article... we talked about the important points that should be in the summary, also they need to know how to

skim and scan an article, they cannot read every article word by word ...where they should look, aim of the research etc. (TEI2)

Remzi proposes:

Sometimes I interrupt my lesson if there are many students in the same situation and I inform them about learning strategies, teaching strategies, modelling... But I only tell them. (TEI2)

I deliberately use 'raising awareness' since some participants mentioning learner training admit what they do is only in the form of persuasive conversations without offering further opportunities for actual practice. They say they hold care and share sessions in their classrooms and introduce some learner strategies to learners. The fact that they have a tendency to leave it at awareness raising level may be due to the fact that they do not have the luxury to dwell on many things as they wish because of the reasons discussed in Chapter 5 when discussing factors influencing LA.

8.1.2.2 Giving Opportunities to Practise Learner Strategies

Four of the six TEs who introduce learner strategies maintain they create situations where they give their learners the chance to practise new strategies they think are useful in approaching learning tasks. TEs consider they require learners to make use of graphic organisers or other strategies after they introduce them in their practice. Gamze suggests the use of comparing and contrasting strategy:

When I finish a topic, I ask students to see the relationship between them, bring out the similarities and differences. For example after we covered inductive and deductive learning in class, I asked them to draw a table showing how they differ because that way they internalise I think. (TEI2)

Nesrin and Remzi consider reflective logs where learners are required to reflect on their learning as well as content as support in terms of learner strategies. Nesrin contends writing in diaries requires construction of meaning which is favourable in autonomy. She says:

I observe some of my students. They have the slides and they only read them, they don't take notes while they are reading the slides. When you take notes, it means that you are writing it in your own words, and also you are seeing it in a different way. It helps them. So I ask them to keep

reflective logs. (TEI2)

8.1.2.3 Learners and Learner Strategies

The majority of STs provide evidence they are aware of different cognitive strategies and what works best for them. These mainly include note taking, summarising, rewriting notes/summaries, watching videos, reading aloud and making research.

Erim is a great proponent of revising through rereading. She makes many references to her way of studying to indicate she is firm with the idea that this is the most effective way for her:

First I read and underline. The second time I read I circle important points. The next time I highlight, sometimes same points, sometimes different points attract my attention. This works for me. (STD)

Ferzan says:

I had to study grammar yesterday; so boring. I closed the book, got my favourite novel, underlined each sentence I found the grammar rules we are assigned for the exam with. It was a good practice and fun at the same time. (STD)

Some students express their firm opinion of what their most favoured strategy is while some provide evidence of adapting their study methods to serve their aims. Two students, Bade and Emel, argue they have changed the strategy they have been using for years because they realised it is no longer useful. Bircan says that she uses a different strategy for each lesson: she reads for some, takes notes or prepares questions for others. Beril suggests for the 'boring' history lesson, she draws tables in which she takes short notes. This helps her to get motivated as well as remember the information better. Gulce posits she adapted her study method to get better efficiency:

I adapted a different strategy during exam week. I had to because I couldn't study before the exams. I imagined myself as the teacher, trying to spot what is important. I focused on these parts. And the results... they were ok. (GM3)

Similarly Gulcin:

I use memorisation technique for 'Anatomy'. I read the notes over and over. (STD)

TEs provide training on learner strategies and STs give many examples on how they practise learner strategies in their learning.

8.1.3 Information Literacy

Supporting learners on information literacy as a means to enhance autonomy is brought up by nine TEs. They mainly make endeavours to raise learners' awareness that there are different sources of information, and they encourage learners to find and utilise different sources. Encouraging learners not to get stuck only with one book, but motivating them to refer to different books is another suggestion. Merve remarks she encourages her learners to bring books other than the course book to utilise in the classroom or allows learners to use their mobiles to access information in class as autonomy support.

Selvi succinctly summarises support in information literacy as:

They usually rely on the teacher and the course book for answers. These are their only resources, for most, and the internet. So during group work activities, I give total freedom, they can use the internet, they can use each other's brains, they can ask me questions but not for the answers, to help them find the answers they can ask me questions, but I don't give them the answers myself. (TEI2)

The same TE advocates that she does not force learners to buy the book and does not give course notes to her learners. She encourages her learners to take notes in class:

I give the option. If they take notes and participate in class, ask when they don't understand, they will be ok without the book. I don't stick to the book. It's one of the resources, not the only one. (TEI1)

Hulya remarks rather than directly giving website addresses for the projects learners work on, she suggests example key words learners can use for finding articles for their research. In a similar approach Imge suggests:

Instead of me presenting the lesson and guiding students in a step-by-step approach to create their products, I directed learners to resources to be able to achieve the expected objectives. (TED)

Cemre considers avoiding giving any resources is a clear message given to learners that there are different ones they can make use of and they need to be looking for a variety in their learning. She affirms:

In order to make their creative skills develop, their critical skills develop, and to make them open to different sources, usually at the beginning I don't give them any source. I usually give the sources at the end. (TEI2)

On the contrary, Mercan suggests he gives ready materials to learners as a way to support learners on the use of resources:

The aim of the lesson was the education types of xxx education system. It is divided into two as formal and informal education. Before the lesson, on our Facebook page, I shared the related power points so that prior to the lesson, the slides could be printed by the students. Also I prepared 15 questions so that they can answer by reading the slides. (TED)

Training learners on how and where to find reliable information is a component signified by three teachers. Regarding this Mercan says:

The other part is how they can find the relevant information/trustable/right information because they use the internet a lot. You can train them about the websites. For example if it is 'com', it is for money, if it is 'org', it is a non-profit organisation. We can trust them more. (TEI1)

Managing resources is a significant characteristic in attaining autonomy and the resources STs in the present study refer to are mainly internet, slides/books, teachers, peers, context and family.

Internet

Internet is viewed as the *super* resource by STs and they unanimously suggest they make use of it in their learning. Students say the internet is easier to access and has answers to all questions so they prefer to use the internet more often than they use other resources. They usually refer to the internet for extra practice and when they need clarification, such as after a lesson they are not satisfied with. Gulcin:

I study the slides, refer to the book but almost always search on the internet too, and take note of missing points on my notes. (GM2)

Similarly Ferzan advocates:

As I was studying for my course 'Educational Psychology', I found myself overwhelmed by the complicated subject I'm assigned with, so instead of reading the book for ten times and still not getting anywhere,

I finally decided to get some extra information about the subject from the internet and not limit myself with only the book advised by the instructor. Getting extra knowledge and point of view from several other resources helped me absorb the subject with its details. Now I feel ready for the exam and I'm expecting to get a good grade. (STD)

Tarik suggests besides in-class learning, he frequently utilises videos, documentaries, experiences of expertise from the websites he trusts provides valid information to arrive at a deeper understanding. These are not always in the form of theoretical knowledge but more in the form of sharing experiences which aid learning by presenting it in a more manageable format.

A few students admit they either do not attend classes or listen carefully in the class, after which they make use of the Internet where they can access abundant resources to make up for their loss.

Slides/Books

Although there are books for each course, there are differing views whether students buy and use the book or not. Some students say they would buy the book only if they are obliged to, if not, use notes for studying since books are too detailed and difficult anyway. Some students suggest in some courses they are obliged to buy the books but teachers do not use them in their teaching, thus, they view books as waste of money. They prefer the use of copies of power point presentations used by teachers in the presentation of the lesson (slides), sometimes readily provided to students by teachers, sometimes only given on persistent student demand as they consider these as succinct summaries. Erim:

Some teachers follow slides, all the important information is given on slides, sometimes I take notes on slides, if I feel the need. I only refer to the book if there is something I don't understand. (STI)

However, it is also stated not all teachers give slides, and some who give slides also require learners to use the book. Ada argues:

It is difficult to pass only with the slides. Teachers give slides but they do not always ask from them. They say we are responsible for the information in the book too. (GM2)

There are also students, who are only a few, who buy and use the book for deeper learning. Tarik:

Teachers use slides mostly but I almost always go over the topic from the book. The book has details, more examples. It helps me learn better.

(STI)

Learners confess the habit of using slides leads to rote learning and deprives students of the chance to explore and internalise. Yet, because they find it easier to study from the slides, they find themselves inclined to follow this procedure frequently. Bade proposes:

If we have the slides which are the summaries, we tend to learn from them without trying to get a deeper understanding. For one course, I only use the slides, I memorise them. My only aim is to pass this course.

(GM2)

Friends, Teachers, Experienced People, Families

Friends, teachers, experienced people, families are also considered to be resources STs refer to in their learning. Referring to people who have first-hand experience in the topic studied is very common among participants. Some say they consult experienced people they have access to. Beril:

I had a paper to prepare on mother-child health. I know somebody who works as a nurse. I contacted her and asked her to share her experiences with me on the specific issue. (GM2)

Similarly Meryem suggests:

For this project I had to talk to certain people who know lot more about the problems in education in Turkey. (FGI)

Bircan, a Pre-school Education student, suggests her family is the greatest resource for her. She has a large family with lots of children she can observe besides putting into practice what she is learning.

There is controversy among students on the usage of the course books. Most view it as the responsibility of the teacher to cover or allocate pages from the book but do not use their initiative to use them for improvement. However, they are confident in using other resources, particularly others such as teacher and peers, and the internet.

8.1.4 Time Management

A few TEs signify time management as an important autonomous skill. Filiz

suggests in her dialogues with learners, she talks about its importance and strives to help her learners become cognizant about time management as well as put it into practice. In her conversations with her class, she refers to her previous learners as examples, stressing how the ones who could not manage their time failed their aims. Referring to her internship class in English Language Teaching department:

I give examples from my previous experiences. For example some students, they couldn't even pass from the pre-reading stage to the while reading stage in 40 minutes. Talking about these examples show how they can manage time, what they can do when they realise that they are short of time. So we talked about different strategies for managing time in the classroom, what kind of things can happen in the classroom if they fail to catch up with the time... we discussed all these things on the basis of different cases and different examples. (TEI2)

Similarly, some STs refer to their experiences of managing their time, particularly in relation to their practice of planning which they consider aids time management (6.1.1 Planning).

Training learners in taking responsibility, learner strategies, information literacy and time management are considered significant by TEs. STs suggest they are actively involved in their learning, make informed use of learning strategies and resources, and make plans to manage their time.

8.2 Discussion of Data Related to Learner Training

The findings indicate eight TEs explicitly encourage learners to take responsibility for their learning, a characteristic attributed to autonomous learners by academics (Chitashvili, 2007; Dickinson, 1995; Little, 1995; Reinders, 2010; Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011). They encourage learners to realise and assume appropriate roles in learning through emphasizing the fact that in the teaching/learning process, learners have significant responsibilities. However, one TE who suggests to encourage responsibility taking considers going over answers to questions in class helps learners see their weaknesses which makes them take responsibility for their learning, not realising this approach does not automatically lead to what he suggests.

Although TE views propose STs prefer to remain passive in their learning (11.5.3.1 Active Learner Roles) referring to the whole student body in their context, ST data (in 8.1.1 Responsibility Taking) suggests they have a proactive view with regards to their learning. Twenty participating STs propose they are actively involved in learning through assuming different roles such as assuming responsibility over learning and continuing learning outside class. Actively engaging in learning leads to better management of the learning process (Pintrich, 2000). Active engagement is at the heart of autonomous learning as well as experiential learning (Kohonen, 2007; Spratt et al., 2002) and socio-constructivist learning (Vygotsky, 1980). Learners take an active role in their learning that enables them to manage the process as a whole. Active participation necessitates the presence of motivation that drives learners to take action (Dörnyei & Ushioda, 2013; Ushioda, 1996). It can be suggested that learners in the present study have a willingness to assume agency in their learning rather than passively receiving information. This finding is in line with earlier studies conducted by Ahmadzadeh and Zabardast (2014) and Yıldırım (2008) (who found that most of the students who participated in their studies wanted to be active rather than passive in their learning) and Joshi (2011) (who suggests learners perceive they have an important role in learning). Yıldırım (2008) proposed learners in their study in a higher education context were ready to take responsibility over their language learning. Similarly, a study conducted in North Cyprus highlights that learners use ICT outside class to back up their language learning, which is a representation of assuming agency in the learning process (Çelik, Arkın, & Sabriler, 2012).

There is evidence some learners seek additional resources and situations to expand their learning experiences outside class hours. They suggest they do more than what is expected, with one new step opening new doors to other topics, and learning much more than classroom content. For this purpose, they attempt to make use of what is available in their context or create their own alternatives, replicating the findings of a study conducted by Bown (2009). Participating learners used different sources, mainly internet, attended activities in the context and participated in volunteer work. On the other hand, there are many students who admit they have an inclination to limit the scope of their

outside studies to particularly what they learn in class reflecting earlier findings of Kember and Gow (1991). In their departmental studies, some learners accept following guidelines provided as the main decision-making activity they undertake, which is contrary to what they suggest about the importance of LA. They suggest they mainly focus on what is presented and only occasionally follow their individual interests. This gives the implication that they are aware of the benefits of autonomy but fail to comply with what it requires. It can also be linked to the lack of meaningful opportunities for making choices that limits students in personalising their learning (7.1.2 Choice and Decision-making).

Learning to learn is considered to be a key competence (Hoskins & Fredriksson, 2008) that can help learners sustain in ‘the learning profession’ throughout their life span. This competence is identified as a ‘second order learning’ with its main focus on the learning process rather than learning specific content (Hoskins & Fredriksson, 2008, p. 19). In the present study as well as in literature, explicit training on learner strategies has been identified as significant with the potential to equip learners with the learning to learn skill to be able to lead their own learning (Camillieri, 1999; McDevitt, 1997; Nunan, 1996; Tan & Chan, 1998). This is what is specifically termed as *Learner Training* where teachers aim to equip their learners with strategies to control the process (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Oxford, 1990; Poerksen, 2005; Sinclair, 2008; Wenden, 1991). Ertürk (2016) suggests the results of the study they conducted demonstrates teachers have a role in raising awareness on learner strategies as a result of which learners make increased use of strategies and expand management of learning. Likewise, TEs suggest they introduce learner strategies to raise learners’ awareness. Yet, it is significant to note that some leave it at this level and do not provide chances to learners to practise these, which is greatly significant in developing target behaviours (Louis, 2006; Reinders, 2010).

Learners in the present study refer to mainly cognitive strategies as the ones they actively use in their learning and suggest they know and make use of effective ones to manage the learning process (p.232). Awareness and active decision-making related to learner strategies are proposed as assisting learners in their autonomy. On this issue Benson argues, ‘autonomy might also be described

largely in terms of the capacity to make use of strategies that are clearly associated with the idea of control of learning' (Benson, 2011, p. 97).

In the literature persuasive conversations are emphasized for psychologically preparing learners for LA (Chitashvili, 2007; Dickinson, 1995; Harrison, 2000; Reinders, 2010; Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011; Thanasoulas, 2000). In the present study, TEs remark they use persuasive conversations to convince learners to try and use different learning strategies. However, the data also suggests these conversations do not necessarily prove to be useful in reaching the aim. TEs expressed their insistence on their learners' taking notes or adopting a critical stance, which they mainly used persuasive conversations to deal with. Yet, at the end of the study, after two months and after repeated efforts using persuasive conversations, teachers were still criticising their learners for insufficient improvement in the specific targets. This suggests that persuasive conversations on their own may not lead to desired outcomes and need be accompanied by other strategies to create an environment where learners do exercise target behaviours to have first-hand experience to be convinced of their value (Louis, 2006; Reinders, 2010). It is possible to suggest these educators have an internalised view of what learners need to do but do not have an established view on how they can help their students to gain these skills. Similarly for the management of time, conversations around the experiences of previous students appear to be the established norm. It is advocated that autonomy and time management are interrelated (Núñez et al., 2015; Vansteenkiste, Zhou, Lens, & Soenens, 2005), yet the efficiency of merely talking about an issue needs to be questioned.

Information literacy is a category findings suggest TEs regard significant in the promotion of autonomy. The findings indicate TEs raise awareness and encourage learners to make use of different resources as supporting LA, referred to as *pedagogy of resources* by Camilleri (1999). According to Camilleri (1999) pedagogy of resources entails the training of learners to effectively make use of available resources. While some TEs have a tendency to give direct resources, others attempt to show learners how accessing alternative sources can develop criticality and support learning approaches. Although suggesting resources such as books or websites is considered as autonomy support, provision of ready-

made solutions, such as giving ready materials need to be approached cautiously. Provision of resources, among which learners choose which ones to use, is acceptable in the promotion of autonomy; yet, guiding learners to find materials that can help them find solutions is more favourable as it enables individual knowledge construction. When learners experience they themselves solve their problems, they are inspired to deal with complexities and look for alternatives. Referring to provision of ready-made materials, Samah et al. (2009, p. 82) argue 'such provision may result in the inhibition of the development of independent thinking and learning'.

It was proposed by two participants that answering questions directed to them by their learners could be considered as autonomy support. Two other participants suggest they provide academic scaffolding to their learners with the hope that it will lead to motivation. They suggest they give suggestions to learners in terms of content, sometimes the outline of the essay. Scaffolding carries significance in assisting learners (Schilling, 2017; Vygotsky, 1980) and also has a place in supporting autonomy. It is suggested that minimal guidance is not effective (Kirschner et al., 2006) and learners need to be scaffolded to perform closer to their potential (Vygotsky, 1980). Yet, providing too much guidance, which can also be referred to as spoon-feeding, needs to be critiqued since it has the risk of making learners keep their expectations high from teachers and not force themselves to use their full potential, as well as inhibiting autonomy. Learners need to be guided to find the answers, and if only not, teachers giving the answers directly. In teacher authoritative contexts, giving direct answers to student questions is the common norm where the teacher is the main source of knowledge, yet doing so deprives learners of the chance to experience the satisfaction of accomplishing by themselves: spoon-feeding 'may impede independent learning and can deter creativity and innovativeness among the learners' (Samah et al., 2009, p. 82). Similarly, Benson (2016) argues asking learners to find out things themselves rather than providing answers/solutions is LA support.

It can be suggested that the learning atmosphere should be structured in a way to guide learners so that they do not get lost (Assor & Kaplan, 2001; Jang et al., 2010; Sierens et al., 2009; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012). Vansteenkiste et al. (2012)

and Reeve (2006) argue it is more effective when autonomy support is provided together with structure to reduce chaos for students. While literature refers to lack of structure as detrimental to autonomy, the findings of the study adds to this, approaching the issues from a deeper perspective and arguing that too much structure is limiting for autonomy.

When they say managing resources, participating STs refer to books, the internet and people in the context. They suggest the internet is the *super source* they make use of and make frequent references to using the internet for various reasons, with its potential to empower learners with greater autonomy and support in both formal and informal learning (Ting, 2015). However, a considerable number refer to making use of slides provided by course instructors, which can be perceived as ‘an adaptive strategy for dealing with exam assessment demands’ as discussed by Chan (2001a, p. 286). This at first sight is not readily considered as managing resources but as taking the easy way out. However, it can also be regarded as a decision made among alternatives, and thus a management of resources, considering student overload exploited under 5.2 Discussion of Contextual Factors Influencing the Support/Practice of Learner Autonomy, although its efficiency is controversial in the regulation of their learning. It can be concluded that some STs simply use the best resources to pass exams while others attempt to deepen their learning.

On the other hand, their reluctance to buy the book if not obliged demonstrates their stance towards book use, putting responsibility on this issue on the teacher. It is interesting that they refer to people they know as resource, an issue also related to managing relations. It is possible to suggest sometimes they may have an inclination to reach direct knowledge rather than making research and constructing their own meanings.

8.3 Conclusion

Chapter 8 presented and discussed the findings on the methods TEs use to train their learners to be more autonomous in learning and how such training is reflected in learner practice with reference to assumption of responsibility, management of resources and time, and learner strategies.

Chapter 9: Interdependence

The present chapter presents and discusses TE and ST views on working in cooperation as well as how it is supported by TEs and practised by STs.

9.1 Presentation of Data on Interdependence

9.1.1 Providing Opportunities for Interdependence

Supporting interdependence is a commonly referred to area with thirteen TEs suggesting they provided support to their learners in the two months. TEs emphasize the significance of collaboration as a life skill and refer to situations they had their learners work together, suggesting it is a factor positively influencing LA. Some participants use the term ‘independent’ to refer to autonomous learners. It is important to note that when participants say independent learning, they do not associate autonomous learning with learning in your own cocoon, but see it as something that happens in the presence of others as is summarized by Selvi:

When I say independently I don't take it as one person thing. I don't imagine a lone learner. Independent learner for me is someone who knows where to get support, from whom to get support. (TE11)

To facilitate interdependence, TEs employ different strategies which include promoting discussion among learners in groups/pairs or as whole class, encouraging peer correction rather than teacher or self-correction all the time, stimulating questioning sessions among learners and directing questions asked to teacher to the class rather than teacher giving answers. Imge says:

I prefer to have students working together, better ones with less able ones, help them learn from each other in collaboration. Because I believe they can learn from each other. On the way to standing on his own feet students need to work with some others to develop their strategies; cognitive, affective and interpersonal skills, so group work really helps them. (TE11)

Cemre proposes the active presence of others in the learning context helps provide models:

They would have a chance to compare their own knowledge, ideas and comments with other groups. (TED)

Mercan on the other hand succinctly summarizes the contribution of

collaborative learning to real life skills and explains the reason behind supporting learners to work with others by saying:

We can teach them to work cooperatively because if they get this habit of working together they will be more autonomous, doing it by themselves among friends and not always need the teacher to teach them. Projects help them work collaboratively, helping each other because in real life they will practise these skills a lot. When you have a problem what we do is ask help from friends, neighbours, from our environment. We ask for help. We should teach them the habit of getting help from others. By giving them these kinds of projects, we are training them for real life. (TEI1)

The significance of teamwork is emphasised by Imge who underlines ‘learning together’ rather than ‘competing with each other’:

I like to get students in collaborative work rather than being in competition with each other because school-based learning actually for me is based on competition, like who is going to get the highest marks, but in actual life it’s not like this, people have to work in collaboration to support the institution they are working for. I give activities where they need to support each other achieve objectives of the course rather than to see which one is going to get the highest grade. (TEI2)

Meral puts forward another significant point regarding working together. She exemplifies a case where not all learners put the required effort in the project work assigned. She says in this situation responsibility concept was questioned and the learner who failed to contribute was warned, and threatened by other learners to be excluded from the team. This suggests that group work helps learners assume responsibilities, which they may sometimes overlook when working on their own.

9.1.2 How Learners Manage Relations in Learning

Besides acknowledging others as a resource in learning, the majority of participating STs refer to their relations with others in learning and how they handle these relations. Many however admit they can see the benefits of working with others but at every opportunity express their preference for working individually.

The foremost reasons students work in cooperation are to reinforce learning and help each other.

9.2.1.1 Reinforcing Learning

A majority of the students suggest they study with their friends as they consider studying with others reinforces learning. The various benefits involved in such endeavours are explained by different students. Some students propose when they explain to friends who need help, they clarify their own knowledge. Ferzan's words are a representative for this category:

Sometimes my friends ask for help. I do. I think this helps me too. When I explain I get the chance to get a deeper awareness of what I think.
(GM3)

Similarly, Erim confirms:

Learning should be collaborative, closely related to learner-centred learning. Individual work/homework is usually associated with teacher-centred contexts. In cooperative learning students gain an awareness of their capacity as well as feeling content as a result of their contribution. They can see they can achieve. For example, a student usually silent in class can be given roles in group work and it is possible that they gain confidence. (GM3)

9.2.2.2 Helping Each Other

It is not unusual for learners to need help during the learning process and many students agree collaboration is effective in learners' supporting each other. Bircan, who accepts she prefers working individually, suggests teachers or the better performing ones in the context help take learners a step further. When discussing with them, there is the possibility of broadening perspectives. She suggests an idea proposed by friends present in the context has the potential to lead to new understandings, even to those which are more individual and which may not have been initially intended:

I can use my teachers' or friends' ideas to arrive at something completely different. They can shed light on the topic and help me think differently, which eventually helps me gain something even they themselves may not possess. (STI)

The contributions of each member add new dimensions to the others. This is not only related to content but the way learning is approached. With their knowledge and learning strategies, each member acts as a model for the others. Fatma proposes:

Maybe I can look at it from an angle but my friends from another angle, and when we work together I can see how they look at it ... the same applies how we approach learning. For example, it was in my high school years I learnt from a friend to make associations to remember better. (GM3)

Similarly Dilek posits:

Last week our teacher put us into groups. During group work, I tried to see what my friends focused on but also how they explained what they understood. (FGI)

The most common cooperative practice students find effective is coming together for revising what they previously studied. The majority agree this helps them reflect on what they know, see what they lack and get help from friends to fill in the blanks. Gencay argues such practice makes it possible for the ones who are weak to learn from the better ones, which Deniz terms as 'peer support'.

Elvan suggests:

A common goal, limited time, one compensates for the weakness of the other, and together we learn. We learn from what our friends can or can't do and also from the mistakes we all do. (GM3)

Dilek refers to a recent experience:

Before we came together, everybody went over their notes, what we underlined, highlighted. Then everybody explained what they understood and we compared our knowledge. When one didn't understand something, he asked and others all helped. One gave one example, other gave another example. We noticed some of us had misunderstandings. We corrected each other. (GM3)

Aysen is a proponent of group work but as she admits, it is more than a way of studying for her: more like an obsession. She does not study alone because she needs help from others:

We always study together. Last exam week, they said we would study alone and then come together to compare. I couldn't. I can't study alone.

I said ok but I didn't. (GM3)

However, although students express the benefits of cooperation clearly, they also refer to the drawbacks. These students suggest working in groups may lead to a waste of time since in such circumstances usually all group members explain their stance and knowledge regarding what is being discussed, and because of conflicts between group members, they lose time. Ferzan stresses conflicts may be misleading for some who do not have a deep grasp of the information shared as such students may not effectively differentiate potentially wrong from right. Fatma adds to this:

Because of conflicts and because we have limited time, we sometimes don't insist and the product doesn't reflect us at all. (FGI)

Students who prefer to work alone at every possible opportunity list the reasons for their preference as: they get better motivated, they feel more confident as they know it is all their effort and they do not feel restricted as they themselves take all decisions as to when, how and where to study. Deniz:

When I finished the project, I felt proud of myself. It was my work. All the ideas and effort belonged to me. I made the plan and everything, and the product seemed flawless. I chose to work alone when the teacher gave the option because I wanted to see I could do it alone. (FGI)

Attention is directed by five STs to another issue regarding cooperative learning. They say what teachers and some students understand from group projects is different. Some students conceptualise it as allocating each member a part to work on individually and then bring it all together to submit. Then, for presentation, each presents the part they prepared. They conclude in such practice, it does not reach the intended aims. They go on to propose the grading of group projects is not fair since they have very crowded classes and teachers do not know all students individually which as a result they all get the same grade.

The opposite is put forward by other students. Gulcin summaries the counter views as:

In group work I am fussier; the end product will not only reflect my effort and affect my grade but my friends' as well. I am accountable to my friends so I try to do better than I would if I were working alone. (GM3)

Some of the students suggest they do benefit from working with others but they say they sometimes feel *abused*. They say there are students who would avoid their responsibilities, relying on other members, which responsible ones find irritating. Ada:

You can be used. You find yourself doing the majority, or all. I wouldn't work with these. (GM3)

Sezgi on the other hand gives a clarification emphasizing the significance of the number of members in the group:

The more people the worse. When the number increases, the responsibility decreases and people start shirking, saying 'I am not doing, let others struggle'. (FGI)

Students acknowledge the benefits of working with their friends with two main motives but are also aware of the factors that make them reluctant towards collaboration. TEs suggest they encourage their learners to work in cooperation mainly through assigning group work activities or projects.

9.2 Discussion of Teacher Educators' Perceptions of Their Support for Interdependence and Student Teachers' Perceptions of Their Management of Relations

There is evidence to suggest TEs support collaboration among learners mainly through activities/tasks that require learners to work with others in which learners assist each other, with capable ones helping less capable learners (Vygotsky, 1980) and where learners learn from each other (Akhtar, Perveen, Kiran, Rashid, & Satti, 2012). Furthermore, data suggests collaborative approaches have the capacity to encourage learners to aim for mutual goals rather than adopting a competitive attitude. As underlined in the present study as well as in literature, individuals need to collaborate in real life to attain certain goals, be it in family or professional life, thus, it is a life skill learners need to be equipped with which can be promoted in learning contexts (Samah et al., 2009).

When learners work together towards mutual goals, their involvement and ownership of their learning is enhanced, as is their learning in general since group dynamics facilitate and enlighten the learning process (Oxford, 1990). This is closely related to the concepts of interdependence (Benson, 2011) and relatedness (Littlewood, 1999), stressing the presence and assistance of others in learning. Cooperation is commonly practised in pair/group work activities in classroom settings, and as study groups and project teams in outside learning. The data suggests learners working with others develop and practise social skills such as discussing, negotiating, coming to terms with others and working in harmony in social settings. Learners practising these social skills gain social acceptance and develop a sense of self-worth, appreciating their own performance and being appreciated by others with what they do. Oxford (1990, p. 146) suggests that cooperative learning has considerable effects such as ‘... higher self-esteem; increased confidence and enjoyment; greater and more rapid achievement; more respect for the teacher, the school, and the subject; use of higher-level cognitive strategies; decreased prejudice; an increased altruism and mutual concern’, leading to satisfaction for all stakeholders in teaching/learning practice.

There are many STs who suggest they consider studying with friends reinforces learning. In collaborative work when STs explain their understanding to each other, the different understandings or the viewpoints of each group member result in cognitive conflict. In Piaget’s constructivism, cognitive conflict that leads to disequilibrium is the driving force for cognitive development. When there is a disturbance in a person’s internal structures, the person tries to resolve the conflict by reflecting on the experience. That is when meaningful learning occurs (Schunk, 2004), as STs suggest leading to new understandings beyond the context and the people involved (p.200).

In collaborative work, peers act as objects of comparison (Fox & Riconscente, 2008). Learners compare their learning with peers when working in groups. Such comparison with friends may work well for students since successful students serve as models for their friends. Taking them as models, others regulate both their efforts and the way they approach their learning as the findings suggest. However, two issues relating to such comparison need to be considered. One is

in line with what both data and Camilleri (1999) suggest: the classroom atmosphere needs to be transformed from that of competition to one on collaboration. Second: as Zimmerman (2002) argues self-regulation of novices differ from that of experts, where novices tend to adopt control to their learning in a reactive way rather than setting specific goals or systematic monitoring.

Most STs agree with the advantages of collaborative work, yet, a considerable number of students consider they work most effectively when they are alone and they have their reasons for such a conclusion. It is evident they differentiate when to cooperate and when to work individually. Bearing in mind the benefits of collaboration but also the cons put forward by the students, consideration needs to be given to how students can be guided to work more effectively with each other by eliminating the limitations they remark on. In line with what Chan (2001a, p. 294) states, more 'work on the development of group interaction skills' to foster the effectiveness of corporative work needs to be done. The suggestion of a teacher educator who proposes to encourage individual responsibility taking within group work through demanding from students that they demonstrate individual contributions is only one of the solutions that can be offered. Akhtar et al. (2012) argue collaborative work is successful when all members of the group are accountable for their share of the work. The authors further suggest learners should not be expected to successfully work in groups unless they are given instruction and training in developing necessary cooperative working skills. Hamer and O'Keefe (2013) emphasize that focusing only on content without paying attention to the structure of the work to be completed negatively affects the effectiveness of group work. This may influence the attitudes of learners towards such practice; therefore, the nature of group work activities assigned may need to be considered in actual educational settings. Similarly, Monk-Turner and Payne (2005) suggest suitable guidance in the completion of the work, controlling group size and promoting interdependence can help improve the effectiveness of group work, issues also highlighted in the present study.

There is the proposition from STs that they refer to people around them as resource which is also a manifestation of managing relations (discussed in 8.1.3 Friends, Teachers, Experienced People, Families). That is, when they need to

carry out a research, if there are people they know engaged in the target topic, they consult these people to get first-hand information rather than making research.

9.3 Conclusion

This chapter presented and discussed TE and ST views on working with others and detailed the support TE provide to STs in terms of interdependence besides how STs manage relations with others in the regulation of their learning.

Chapter 10: Affect

The present chapter presents and discusses the affective support TEs provide to their students, namely motivation and helping manage stress, and how STs manage their emotions and self-motivate in their attempts to regulate their learning. It is significant to note that in some of the following quotations, there is an assumption that motivation and confidence directly lead to enhanced LA. This will be discussed in detail under 10.2 Discussion of Teacher Educators' Perceptions of Affective Support and Student Teachers' Perceptions of How They Manage Emotions.

10.1 Presentation of Data on Affect

10.1.1 Motivation

Participating TEs consider affect plays a significant role in learning and learners who are supported in this area tend to perform and regulate their learning in an enhanced manner. Cemre confirms:

Cognition works when affective filters are positively open.they feel more confident and this self-confidence I believe leads to autonomy.
(TED)

Motivating through helping build self-confidence is referred to by seven TEs. They consider when learners are provided with positive reinforcements, when teachers demonstrate they trust in learners' capabilities, learner motivation increases, which in turn positively affects their autonomy. TEs believe helping learners realise how much they can attain, rather than focusing on what they cannot do well enhances regulation of learning. Cemre, who affirms self-confidence as an important autonomous characteristic, argues helping learners see they have the capacity to fulfil tasks increases learners' motivation and the way they handle their learning. She explains such support as:

I help students who are not able to follow the process, I give them psychological support. I ask them simple questions and show them they can do. I give a lot of positive reinforcements. When they are reinforced, their self-confidence increases and when they have self-confidence they believe they can do. When they believe they can do, their internal motivation increases and this helps them to be more autonomous. These are all interrelated. (TE11)

Three TEs suggest when learners are made conscious of how what they are learning will serve their aims regarding their future, they take more responsibility and their motivation, hence sincere regulation of learning are enhanced. Merve says:

I gave explanation on how the content of the lesson will serve their future aims, how they will benefit from it in their everyday practice as teachers. They seemed to be very attentive in the lesson, which they were uninterested at the beginning. (TED)

Gul suggests the use of cases which entail learners to relate to through empathy is another motivator. She suggests in such activities she requires learners to provide examples from their own lives. When learners see the link with their lives, they are inspired to engage in learning and are in a better position to direct their learning.

Provision of choice (p.167) and taking learners' ideas (p.171) in the classroom practice are considered to be motivating factors, with learners pursuing their own interests and having the chance to voice their opinions, resulting in enhanced motivation. Such motivation generates the feeling that they have command over what they are doing.

Nesrin proposes explaining the underlying reason of what the teacher is trying to do provokes positive attitudes in learners. She suggests:

You need to explain why you are doing it, when they understand what you are trying to do, they try their best. You can try it. With one class, explain the rationale and then the other class, the same kind of students without explaining the rationale, give them the same homework, results will be different. (TEI1)

It is an interesting finding that four TEs mention the allocation of grades as motivators. While three propose they actually allocate grades because otherwise learners would not be bothered to work on various activities, Ali suggests he uses 'humorous threats' to make learners engaged in tasks.

Showing learners they are respected and appreciated by teachers as individuals and as students is considered as affective support by three TEs. They believe the message should be conveyed to learners that teachers appreciate what learners

produce and attempt to come up with, and that time spent with them and for them is well deserved. In the light of this, expressing high expectations is also considered rewarding. Taking into account her classes, Hulya elaborates:

I try to make them feel they are important and valuable. In the future they will make a difference for the students they will be working with. I do this a lot. I believe their self-image should be improved by teachers.
(TEI1)

Showing empathy towards learner feelings is another finding which TEs trust helps to develop autonomy. Relating to learners' psychological states, showing that teacher is aware of the disturbances in their moods and appreciating these carry significance according to two TEs. Asli refers to a classroom experience to clarify how she manages such support:

I remember one of my students had fear of talking in front of the class. The student wanted to do the presentation to me only, without other students in class. We talked and I tried to empathize with him, trying to understand why he has this problem and I made him believe he can do through talking with him. He did the presentation to me in my office... he was a bit nervous though. I said 'you see you can do. It will be better. It is important to get well prepared'. And the second one he did in class... he was better then. (TEI1)

The majority of TEs consider the psychological support they provide to learners to be critical in managing learning. Helping improve self-confidence, respecting learners themselves and their efforts, showing empathy, providing both emotional and academic support, helping learners see the relationship of immediate goals and future goals, provision of choice and allowing learners to express their preferences are factors that TEs consider enhance motivation and take learners a step further in their autonomy.

On the other hand, participating STs exploit a number of strategies to self-motivate, some of which they find effective, while some fail to assist them to a great deal. It is significant to note there are many students who value extrinsic motivation over intrinsic as elaborated under *Conceptualisations of LA-Motivation* (p.111).

Many students suggest self-confidence is a prerequisite for self-motivation. These students are of the opinion that trusting in themselves and their capabilities, and reminding themselves of these in times of despair are significant in enhancing their motivation. Tarik suggests:

My motivation comes from the confidence I have in myself. I know I can achieve if I really want and if I put the required effort. I just need to remind this to myself from time to time. (STD)

There is a suggestion agreed by most to self-motivate by taking breaks during long hours of study and getting involved in refreshing activities such as sports or hobbies, which STs believe help them to better focus on their studies.

I do give breaks, I need them, short ones and watch a short video, not necessarily related to my studies but something I would be happy to watch then, and when I start studying again, I feel I am doing better. (Tarik, GM1)

Ferzan confirms:

No matter how busy I am, I go to the gym. It is part of my life, as are my lessons. I know I have to devote time to my personal interests so that I have the energy and the motivation to be an effective student. (GM1)

One third of the students suggest they listen to music while studying and consider it as a self-motivator. Music, they propose, stimulates them to study better and take less frequent breaks. Tolga, who at every opportunity expresses his dislike for studying, declares he found the solution to this problem: he always has the music on and also has the laptop on with Facebook or a game available to switch to. That, he says, is the only way to keep him in front of his notes, with frequent switches to these at times he goes crazy with the study notes. Ferzan adds to this by saying she would do the same or watch a TV episode on the background, usually one she watched before that would not require full focus but would keep her entertained.

Some say they follow their interests to motivate themselves. This can be reading about, watching or searching issues they find interesting, which are sometimes directly related to their fields of study but sometimes not, as a stimulator to improve themselves. Bircan posits:

Sometimes I hear a concept, related to the lessons or not, I wonder about it, want to learn more about it, I investigate... so much I learnt this way.
(STI)

Dilek, a Psychological Counselling and Guidance student:

I was watching a film and I saw that bipolar concept. It was not something we covered in class. It interested me. I made such a detailed research, now I feel in a position to teach it. (GM1)

The fact that the concept the student searched is related to her field may have affected her initiation.

Some other students provide a more direct link between their efforts and immediate/future needs in their attempts to self-motivate. Gulce:

I had a presentation to do. I was afraid, panicked but I said to myself 'you will have to do this a lot in the future, time to get used to it'. (FGI)

There is also the proposition that student feelings towards the course and the instructor influence the effort they put into their learning. If they have negative emotions, they find it demanding to put effort. While some say they can handle this through motivating themselves thinking about their future goals and how they will need these in the future, others say there is no way they can overcome this and make do with a pass rather than aiming to benefit from the course to the highest potential. Sinem:

I don't like linguistics, but I know I will need it, it is part of my career, I view it as part of my future. But, as a future English teacher, I can't see how I will use maths. I can't study it.

Emel on the other hand says she is motivated towards all the courses since she is in her chosen department and thus is aware all courses are offered towards the bigger goal, which enables her to maintain her motivation (STD).

Setting step by step goals and the feeling of achievement act as catalysts for some students as well as giving them the feeling of being in command of their learning. Sezgi proposes she sets short term goals, such as covering two units, and when achieves her goals, treats herself with an episode from her favourite TV series. Erim determines to finish a unit and after its completion feels motivated to cover another one.

10.1.2 Stress Management

Six participating TEs suggest they support learners to deal with negative emotions such as stress and anxiety through either talking to them that these are natural components of the learning process or offering help when the need arises, in academic terms as well as being available to talk to in emotional breakdowns. They consider learners need scaffolding: teachers first provide learners with full support and then cut it down until they become autonomous. They consider such scaffolding eases the discomfort learners may experience in learning and facilitates resilience. Meral confirms:

I talk to them so that they do not feel left alone in the water. They know if they are going to drown, I'll throw them lifejackets to hold onto. (TEI1)

TEs believe talking with learners that stress and anxiety are natural components of the learning process, and these decrease when they learn how to take control of their learning push them to gain more autonomy. Filiz referring to her internship class remarks:

I encouraged them to accept stress as a normal part of the learning process. At the very beginning of the semester, they had very high anxiety, especially when they thought about going to a real class and teaching real students. I talked to them, tried to calm them down, telling them about previous experiences. They enjoy hearing about previous experiences of previous students. (TEI2)

Ten STs, who refer to stress management, have differing views regarding negative emotions. Some say negative emotions, particularly stress, serve as a stimulator to achieve better. The common notion is that stress is helpful in motivating oneself when it is at a manageable level, yet too much of it blocks learning and leads students to underperform.

Stress is necessary, it motivates us to study, but too much stress makes us forget the things we know. But having no stress is not good either. If you have zero stress, you do not study; enough stress pokes us to study (Ada).

STs suggest autonomous learners have their own ways of dealing with these emotions. Keeping a diary (Erim), listening to music or exercising in cases of stress (Erim, Ferzan, Ada, Gulce, Gulcin), following areas they are good at instead of insisting on areas they are not really gifted (Deniz, Dilek, Mehtap) are

ways they suggest can be used for the management of such emotions.

Planning and sticking to plans is considered helpful in managing stress by some students. Students suggest when they follow plans, the feeling of proceeding helps them better cope with stress. Aysegul confirms studying well in advance helps her deal with stress:

Studying before the exams makes me feel better: less stressed, more focused. (STD)

Erim, on the other hand, who appears to emphasize the role of plans, says she plans every step she takes. However, at times when unavoidable changes need to be made to her plans, she feels distressed. She finds it difficult to deal with these changes and she starts studying at night, sacrificing from her sleep to be able to catch up, which she agrees is not the best solution. She posits 'sticking to plans increases my motivation'. In circumstances when she cannot help avoid stress and she does not have time to get refreshed with extracurricular activities, she makes use of a strategy that helps her reduce it:

I cannot avoid stress; I am almost always stressed, especially before exams and I feel it disturbs my focus. What I do now is I keep a diary. I write everything in it: my worries, my achievements, my goals. And it keeps me more focused. Especially at times when I am bored of studying and want to give up, I write my future goals, where I want to see myself in two years' time... and sometimes go back and read what I wrote before, how I overcame challenges earlier, and I feel energised and ready to face more. (STD)

Self-defence is another strategy few students provide evidence they utilise to control negative feelings. Making oneself believe they did the right thing or there was no other alternative help ease their negative emotions, though it is arguable whether it is a right strategy to use or not. These students comfort themselves by self-assurance. Mehtap:

I had two exams on the same day. I studied one and the exam was fine. The other, I couldn't do well. Well, how could I study both on the same day? (GM2)

TEs suggest they motivate their learners and help them manage their emotions in learning. STs provide evidence of controlling affect mainly through self-

motivation and the control of negative emotions in the regulation of their learning.

10.2 Discussion of Teacher Educators' Perceptions of Affective Support and Student Teachers' Perceptions of How They Manage Emotions

The findings demonstrate participants regard motivation as a factor influencing autonomy. There are a number of methods TEs utilise to help learners enhance their motivation, while STs have their own ways of controlling their motivation and negative feelings.

Respecting learners as individuals is underlined in the present study. When teachers convey the feeling that they respect their learners, the chances that learners internalise values and regulations in the learning environment increases (Ryan & Deci, 2000a) with increased learner engagement (Ruzek et al., 2016). This is in line with humanistic views of learning (Camilleri, 1999). 'Showing affection', 'expressing interest' and 'devoting time and resources' are significant in conveying the feeling of worthiness to learners (Assor & Kaplan, 2001, p. 102). Data suggests it is significant for teachers to value the work of their learners and that supportive teachers convey the feeling of trust to their learners, demonstrating they believe their learners can achieve, echoing Vansteenkiste et al. (2012). This helps learners build self-confidence, which can lead to the management of learning. Learners with high self-esteem and self-confidence set higher goals and are more committed, so they accomplish higher outcomes (Bandura, 1993; Öz, 2005). They are able to take more responsibility for their learning and are better at regulating the learning process since the mind-set learners possess is a determinant in regulating efforts. Confident learners who trust their capabilities and who perceive their intellectual capacities as assets that can be developed rather than fixed have a tendency to be more resilient in their efforts (Yeager and Dweck, 2012).

Reeve (2006) refers to *attunement* which is referred to as *showing empathy* in the present study. Attuned teachers are in a position to know what students think/feel, which the data in the present study suggests is helpful in the promotion of autonomy. When learners feel their teacher can relate to them and

that their feelings are respected, they are more eagerly involved in the self-governance of learning (Reeve, 2006).

It is important to emphasize that although motivating learners, conveying the feeling of trust in their capabilities, showing empathy and respecting them as individuals as well as valuing the work they produce are significant in supporting the affective side of learning, there appears to be an assumption on TEs' side that motivation and confidence link directly to an increase in LA. It is possible that this may happen but it is not a guaranteed effect as these qualities could develop without LA being affected by them as higher motivation or confidence do not automatically enhance LA.

Provision of explanatory rationales is another autonomy support device that is discussed by both participants and scholars (Reeve, 2009). In the present study, there are a few TEs who suggest that when learners see the logic behind what is aimed at, they are able to direct their efforts more eagerly. As put forward by Reeve (2006, p. 230), 'autonomy-supportive teachers help students to generate self-determined motivation by articulating why the undertaking is useful', particularly when students find tasks/activities unappealing.

It is possible to encourage creativity and success with small achievable steps after which teachers provide feedback to learners about their personal progress. This helps learners believe in their own abilities (Reid, 2007). This confidence building issue is highlighted by TEs in the study who suggest with small steps they aim to boost their learners' confidence. STs also link goal setting to motivation, which in essence is a metacognitive strategy but which STs suggest is helpful in increasing their motivation. They suggest they set goals because the feeling of achievement when a goal is accomplished is a strong motivator for them. They further propose setting goals and planning help learners manage anxiety.

Linking learning to future goals is another area suggested to be facilitating autonomy by both the study data and the literature, which is referred to as *fostering relevance* by Assor et al. (2002). Learners need their teachers 'to make the learning process meaningful and interesting, because they cannot make it relevant and interesting by themselves' (Assor & Kaplan, 2001, p. 116). When

learners are made aware of how they will benefit from what they are learning, they are intrinsically motivated to regulate their efforts (Klem & Connell, 2004; Pintrich, 2000; Wallace, Sung, & Williams, 2014). Vansteenkiste et al. (2005, p. 469) suggest: ‘When people manage to concur with or endorse the personal relevance of the behaviour, they are more likely to engage in the activity with a sense of willingness and volition’. Similarly, learners suggest when they view learning activities as futile, they are inclined to diminish effort. On the contrary, when they view them as serving either their immediate needs or future goals, they regulate their efforts accordingly, demonstrating more persistence and volition. As Ponton et al. (2005, p. 85) suggest ‘humans do not engage in activities that are self-perceived as futile’. Thus, it is significant to assist learners to realise the relevance of the learning content to their goals (Assor et al., 2002).

Helping learners manage emotions, particularly deal with negative feelings such as stress, has been pointed out in the present study by TEs as well as in the literature. When learners are supported in the regulation of their behaviours, they are in a better position to deal with negative feelings and in time get used to self-regulate their emotions (Wallace et al., 2014).

Stress works in two ways for participating STs. While some suggest they get blocked and underperform when stressed, others propose stress is a stimulator for putting more effort, echoing Oxford (1990) who suggests anxiety at manageable levels helps learners perform better.

Positive self-talk is a strategy learners use to maintain their motivation (p. 210). They propose reminding themselves that they can achieve and the value of what they will achieve helps them keep motivated. This echoes the findings of Bown (2009, p. 576) in language learning when he suggests ‘Learners used self-talk for two primary purposes: (a) to remind themselves of their own motivation for learning the language and (b) to encourage themselves when they felt that they were not making enough progress’.

In the present study there is evidence self-defence is utilised by a few learners (p.213) who wish to avoid the stressful disruption and to attribute the results to external causes so as to persuade themselves they are doing their best since people are motivated to protect self-integrity and maintain their perception of

adequacy (Sherman & Cohen, 2006; Silverman, Logel, & Cohen, 2013). Although self-defence is not effective in the long term, it can be considered as an adaptive strategy where learners try to find a way out depending on the circumstances it is utilised (Sherman & Cohen, 2006). This is also linked to locus of control: learners may attribute success/failure to external factors and so are not determined in their efforts (Dickinson, 1995).

Manipulation of behaviour through extrinsic motivators such as grades is considered to be autonomy suppressive by Reeve et al. (1999), which is a strategy utilised by some of the TEs. Similarly, some STs guide their learning to achieve high grades as grades are a manifestation of their accomplishments. Yet, learners need to be made aware that success cannot be related only to grades and it should be the joy and satisfaction of learning that governs the process and not the grades themselves. In a study conducted by Bouchard (2009), the author suggests learners perceive themselves to be more in control when they feel under less pressure in terms of grades. To this end, teachers can support their learners by nurturing their intrinsic motivation (Reeve, 2009) and helping them enjoy learning for the sake of learning (Deci & Ryan, 2011). As Deci and Ryan (1985, p. 251) argue grades may prove to be helpful in urging learners to prepare for tests yet they have unintentional negative costs for students' 'attitudes, intrinsic motivation and self-esteem'. Similarly, the provision of positive reinforcements is considered as affective support which may have adverse effects on learners (Dickinson, 1995) as will be discussed under 11.5.3.5 Control of Affect.

On the control of affect, use of self-motivating strategies and controlling feelings are the main issues put forward by students. Although many students provide ways they utilise for self-motivation, it is evident that extrinsic motivation, mainly in the form of positive reinforcements are expected and greatly valued by students. This will be explored in detail in 11.5.3.5 Control of Affect.

10.3 Conclusion

Chapter 10 focused on the affective aspect of learning, detailing the ways TEs motivate their learners and support them in managing their emotions, and the strategies STs use to deal with the negative feelings they encounter in their learning besides motivating themselves so as not to block the learning process.

Chapter 11: Conclusion

11.1 Introduction

The present study investigated how TEs in a Faculty of Education perceive their support for the development and implementation of LA, how STs perceive their exercise of LA in their actual learning process and the factors influencing both the support and the practice of LA. The present chapter initially outlines briefly the principal headline results of the study with reference to the RQs. As the dataset is large and complex, and there are many interlinkings and comparisons/contrasts to be noted, the chapter subsequently synthesizes the findings and discusses them in combination. It goes on to provide some recommendations to teachers, students and institutions interested in LA, pinpoints the contributions of the present study to existing literature and identifies the limitations to the study, suggesting areas for future research.

The large and complex data set demonstrates that there are different levels at which TEs say they support and STs say they practise LA, and there are both consistencies and differences in conceptualisations between and among the TE and ST groups. There are also some apparent variations between both TEs' and STs' espoused theory and actual practice which have the effect of restricting the realisation of autonomy.

In the synthesis that follows, there are examples of what participants believe but do not manage to do due to certain constraints as well as what they actually do without realising they are behaving in a self-contradictory way to what they suggest they believe. The synthesis begins by exploring the interrelationship between participants' conceptualisations of LA and how they say they support/put it in practice with reference to the factors they view as restricting their practice. It moves on to discuss the impact of TA on LA, suggesting limited TA restricts the support TEs can provide to STs. Later, it makes comparisons between TE and ST views of their practice, highlighting their views on aspects of autonomy commonly supported by teachers and aspects of autonomy commonly practised by learners. These comparisons reveal that while some of the support is reflected in student practice, other aspects of the support TEs

provide do not have evident impact on student practice. The chapter discusses possible explanations for these mismatches.

11.2 How Do Teacher Educators Perceive Their Support for the Development of Learner Autonomy? (RQ1)

The data on perceptions of TEs suggest they support learners in five aspects which are: *Facilitating Metacognitive Awareness* (Voller & Benson, 1997), *Creating a Conducive Learning Atmosphere* (Reeve, 2009; Reeve & Jang, 2006), *Providing Learner Training* (Ellis & Sinclair, 1989; Little, 1995; Reinders, 2010), *Providing Opportunities for Interdependence* (Benson, 2011; Littlewood, 1999; Vygotsky, 1980) and *Providing Affective Support* (Deci & Ryan, 2011; La Ganza, 2008; Reeve, 2009).

TEs report that they support LA by facilitating metacognitive awareness, providing learner training and creating an atmosphere conducive to autonomous learning with all fifteen participants providing evidence for supporting their learners in these areas. Thirteen participants suggest that they encourage working with others and eleven say they provide affective support. These major areas of support indicate TEs' perceptions of what is needed to enhance LA and the previous chapters discussed more individually how such actions might or might not fulfil this objective.

Three TEs suggest they support learners in all the categories while others suggest supporting their learners but not in all categories (Appendix 11: Teacher Support Table). While it might not be necessary to provide support in all categories at all times, as Assor and Kaplan (2001, p. 102) argue 'it is certainly desirable to enact most of them'. On the other hand, Benson (2016) signifies that the introduction of even a single support strategy can make a difference in learners' development and implementation of autonomy. While describing how they support learners, six TEs provide an overtly integrated view, suggesting they practise an integrated set of procedures with the intention of supporting their learners in several aspects of autonomy with one specific teaching approach. For instance, through group work, they suggest they support cooperative work, metacognition through reflection and monitoring with the help of group members, information literacy (where they view group members as a source of knowledge, etc.).

However, the need for an integrated provision is not mentioned by a few who suggest they provide support in a less connected manner, nominating a specific practice in support of a specific aspect of autonomy, i.e. group work to promote cooperation. Moreover, there are instances where a few TEs propose to support LA through the use of specific methods but do not make the link clear with what they do and LA. It is difficult to suggest they directly support LA as there is no automatic cause/effect chain in their statements (p.215). For example, a few TEs suggest they promote LA through facilitating cooperation and exemplify how they organise their teaching to enhance interdependence, yet fail to link how cooperation supports LA. Similarly, there are TEs who give many examples on the rapport they establish with their learners without indicating how it relates to LA.

TE reflections suggest there was a general tendency to increase their support in most of the categories in the two months period. For instance, although acknowledging and encouraging flexibility in learning range was mentioned only by two TEs in the first round of interviews as a way to support learners in LA, the second set of data from TEs demonstrated that three more TEs support their learners by broadening the learning range. It may be the case that this is a side effect of providing the teachers with the Teacher Support Model (p.266) which gave TEs ideas about what other TEs were doing and inspired them to follow similar practices. We must also acknowledge that TEs might not be aware they were supporting their learners in these areas due to not viewing it as support or they failed to mention aspects of their support.

The findings suggest although most TEs are aware of what LA is and how to make learners more autonomous, there are instances where a few TEs propose to promote autonomy through merely cognitive activities by requiring learners to fulfil learning tasks or respond to teacher instructions without requiring the practice of autonomy (p.152). For instance, giving learners a quiz or asking questions at the end/beginning of the lesson is considered as supporting learners to develop metacognitive skills. There are instances where specific TEs suggest they give quizzes as support for reflection and consider the quiz itself automatically helps learners to monitor their learning. We could maintain that such attempts should be categorised as mere cognitive tasks or habitual action

and in fact do not require thinking about thinking. Mezirow (1990) distinguishes between thoughtful action without reflection and thoughtful action with reflection which is significant to differentiate since habitual action or responding to instructions does not necessarily facilitate reflection. Thus, the need for reflective activity needs to be made explicit if it is aimed to promote the skills of reflection, but this does not appear to be exactly what is practised by some TEs in the study. This might suggest that what they consider to be autonomy support does not automatically support LA. Similarly, there are TEs who suggest to provide help more than necessary which they consider as scaffolding but which ends up to be spoon-feeding as proposed by both TEs and STs, echoing Samah et al. (2009).

As part of the support they provide, a few TEs propose to introduce variety to their teaching. This does not necessarily promote autonomy but as Ford and Chen (2001) argue teaching learners in ways that match their cognitive styles can help them better learn conceptual information. Another example can be found when two TEs say they require learners to keep reflective logs with the aim of reflecting on process (Yin, 2015) rather than content but which ends up being reflection mainly on content. Promotion of the development of criticality so as to critique and acknowledge different viewpoints is suggested to be metacognitive support. Critically thinking about thinking/learning can well be considered as utilising metacognitive skills (Magno, 2010) yet, what is mainly suggested by some of the TEs when they refer to the development of criticality is being critical towards information presented. This is a step towards autonomy, yet it does not focus on thinking/learning and so is limited as direct autonomy support. (More details and examples will be provided in 11.5.3 Comparison of Teacher Educator and Student Teacher Views of Their Practice).

Many aspects in Reeve's (2009) LA support model, which has been taken as the starting point for the present study (p.69), have been identified as significant by participants in the current study with two exceptions: *allowing time for self-paced learning* and *using informational language* rather than controlling language, which may imply these are not key issues in TEs' minds. It is significant to avoid interfering and to allow learners to follow their natural rhythm in learning in their efforts to manage the learning process (Assor et al.,

2002; Reeve, 2009). This may be related to limited TA (p.141) and the overall structure of the modules with assessment patterns that dictate the pace (p.137), and cause TEs to underestimate this significant element. The use of informational language is greatly significant since the language used by teachers is powerful in conveying implicit messages to learners. Avoiding controlling language helps the creation of a context where learners are endorsed to be themselves rather than feeling the pressure to comply with expectations (Núñez et al., 2015; Reeve, 2006, 2009; Vansteenkiste et al., 2012). Since the study did not employ observations and because it is not explicitly mentioned by the participants, it is not possible to make a comment on the language used by teachers.

11. 3 How Do Student Teachers Perceive Their Own Learner Autonomy in Practice? (RQ2)

Data from 27 STs suggests they perceive they exercise autonomy in the following areas: *Metacognition* (Flavell, 1979; Wenden, 1991), *Adopting Active Learner Roles* (Benson, 2001; Dafei, 2007; Little, 1995; Littlewood, 1996), *Awareness and informed use of learner strategies* (Benson, 2011; Oxford, 1990), *Managing Resources* (Camilleri, 1999) and *time* (Benson, 2011; Oxford, 1990), *Managing Relations* (Benson, 2011; Littlewood, 1999; Vygotsky, 1980) and *Controlling Affect* (Benson, 2011; Deci & Ryan, 2011; Oxford, 1990). For metacognition and managing the affective side of the learning process, they unanimously provide a list of different strategies they find fit for themselves, with particular emphasis on cognitive strategies. These are followed by managing resources, relations and actively engaging in learning, respectively with 21, 22 and 20 learners. It is significant to note that ST perspectives on LA are more superficial compared to those of TEs. There are some STs who have a deeper grasp of LA and who can link what they do with LA. However, some others are more concerned with less far-reaching and fewer core LA qualities but more about superficial aspects of planning, approaches to learning, collaboration etc. and who lack the ‘grand overview’ of understanding how it all fits together.

STs self-report to be in favour of autonomy in their learning and provide many instances of situations where they perceive they behave autonomously. At a

general level, the participating students could be judged as autonomous, exercising various degrees of control on their learning process with the intention to manage the process. First, they were reasonably able to define autonomy and to articulate many autonomous experiences. Second, they suggested they were willing to work autonomously on their own and at convenient times in cooperation with others. They suggest they are aware of factors that hinder their autonomy, although not always with a solution to overcome pitfalls. The data suggests there are students who stand back to see what they can do to be more autonomous based on their conceptualisations of what LA is but on the other hand there are some who hold theoretical views which they find difficult to apply in practice, proposing their stance at one end of the continuum but offering opposing evidence when referring to their experiences, giving the implication that there are differences between their theory-in-use and espoused theory (Argyris, 2002; Schon, 1983).

11.4 What are the Factors that Influence the Development and Implementation of Learner Autonomy? (RQ3)

The findings lead me to conclude the feasibility of LA and its support are more complex than anticipated as Assor and Kaplan (2001) emphasize, with many constraining factors affecting both its implementation by students and support by teachers. Even if both TEs and STs have a sense of what LA is for themselves, their support and practice are influenced by a number of factors, namely the varying *conceptualisations, attitudes and expectations of teachers and learners regarding autonomy, student/teacher background, class size, teacher education and TA*. The next section analyses these issues in turn and in depth.

11.5 Synthesis of Findings

11.5. Impact of Teacher and Student Conceptualisations on the Actualisation of Autonomy

One important finding of the study is that the way participating TEs and STs conceptualise and define LA influences how they actualise it in their practice. TEs' perceptions regarding each and every issue of the learning process are vital since the beliefs they hold with regards to a pedagogical approach shape their actual practice and the opportunities their learners receive (Borg & Al-Busaidi,

2012; Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2019). To give two illustrative examples, educators who predominantly define LA as an ability to monitor learning through reflecting on weaknesses/strengths suggest to support learners mainly by providing opportunities for reflection where learners obtain the chance to review/explore what they have done. These educators create the atmosphere where learners can identify what they have achieved and what they still need to work on. Likewise, teachers who mainly emphasize that autonomous learners should have the capacity to link new learning to previous learning or what they learn in other courses suggest to provide opportunities where students relate what they are currently learning to their core departmental courses with the intention to use these both in future schoolwork or in their future careers. To this end, a teacher teaching *Educational Theories* to a group of students from different departments say they require their learners to interpret and link how they will use these in their chosen departments, such as Mathematics, Special Education and etc. These examples emphasize that the way teachers conceptualise LA is a determining factor in how they support its development and implementation, echoing scholarship which suggests there is a link between teachers' beliefs and classroom practices (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Stipek, Givvin, Salmon, & MacGyvers, 2001).

Moreover, some of the factors TEs view as restricting their support are compatible with the way they conceptualise LA and the support they provide to their learners. For example, a teacher viewing filtering of information as a crucial element of LA provides evidence of encouraging learners to filter the information they receive before accepting it. The same teacher proposes that one of the most significant factors that influence his support negatively is his learners' readiness to accept whatever information they receive before evaluating its validity and relevance to their aims. Similarly, teachers, who advocate autonomous learners should be aware of/have the ability to link what they are learning to their previous learning or to what they learn in other courses, complain their learners are not aware of such links. They suggest every time learners are presented with something, they treat it as if it is the first time they are encountering it. These teachers suggest they attempt to help learners develop

the ability to view learning in a more holistic approach rather than as something happening in separate boxes.

The perceptions of the STs of LA and how they interpret the support they receive influence their own learning process. Moreover, the beliefs they hold of autonomous learning and how in their future careers they can help their learners develop and implement autonomy, will affect their practice as prospective teachers, when they will be actually teaching their own classes (Camilleri, 1999). It is significant to remind that in group meetings, STs were given the chance to brainstorm and share opinions about the nature of LA so their views are potentially more developing rather than fixed as core beliefs.

STs' conceptualisations of the concept (5.1: Presentation of Contextual Factors Influencing the Support/Practice of Learner A) have an influence on the autonomous behaviours they display (Altunay et al., 2009). As part of the metacognitive knowledge, beliefs which emerge from experience shape expectations, and together with expectations, beliefs guide learner behaviour (Abdolazadeh & Nia, 2014; White, 1999). To give some examples: students who mainly referred to learning strategies in their definitions of LA provided ample evidence of making use of learning strategies they find effective. Likewise, students who mentioned motivation, either proposed ways to self-motivate or expressed their cravings for external motivation. Similar to TE data, some of the factors learners view as restricting their actual autonomous behaviours are in line with their conceptualisations of the concept. To give an illustrative example, learners who view agency in learning as a significant characteristic of autonomy, later complain about the lack of chances provided to them for being active in their learning. Yet, there are occasions when there is a mismatch between learners' 'theory in use' and 'espoused theory' (Argyris, 2002; Schon, 1983). For example, they might value intrinsic motivation but expect extrinsic motivators or suggest working in collaboration is significant but prefer to work individually. These discrepancies will be discussed under 11.5.3 Comparison of Teacher Educator and Student Teacher Views of Their Practice.

Considering the data in its totality, it is possible to suggest there are TEs who have a sophisticated view of LA and support LA in an integrated way while some

have a more partial view that they think certain strands are more important and support LA mainly in these strands, without considering the various elements and how they fit together. Moreover, there are examples where participants refer to a number of elements as significant in LA, but exclude some others that constitute the basis of autonomy. For example, only two TEs mention locus of control (p.110) which is the heart of autonomy although they make considerable references to other elements which may be directly or indirectly linked to autonomy. On STs' side, we can propose that they have a gradually developing view of LA that is built up through the processes of awareness raising and support from their teachers. It is possible to suggest that the more the parties understand the different elements involved in LA and the dynamic relationship between the conceptualisations of each other, the more they will be able to structure their support (TEs) and practice (STs) in favour of LA, with various methods they use for support and practice in relation to how they see the different elements fit together.

11.5.2 Impact of Teacher Autonomy on Learner Autonomy

In the literature, it is suggested that there is an interactive relationship between TA and LA, and when teachers are empowered with autonomy, this is reflected in the development of greater autonomy in students (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Camilleri, 1999; Hui, 2010; Roth et al., 2007). Data from the study is in line with this literature. Almost all participating TEs refer to the presence/absence of TA as a factor influencing the realisation of LA. Only a few consider themselves as fully autonomous and suggest they foster LA in the way they want. However, the majority express their criticism of the limited autonomy they are empowered with, mainly due to accountability standards, which is also emphasized in the literature (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Halstead & Zhu, 2009; Pelletier et al., 2002; Reeve, 2009; Reeve et al., 1999). They suggest they are restricted particularly in autonomy in professional action (Cárdenas, 2006; McGrath et al., 2000; Smith, 2003a). In the literature, TA is mainly associated with the what and the how of the teaching, yet in the present study, besides these, teacher criticism of the constraints on assessment is also underlined. TEs suggest they have to use a centralised test prepared for all students taking the same course, which is usually a multiple choice test as it is more standardised and unbiased. They argue this

limits the way they approach their teaching as well as taking away their voice over assessment.

Due to the standardisation policies, TEs say they find their hands tied and have to comply with the expectations and regulations imposed on them by the institutions they work in as well as from students, which results in teachers behaving in more controlling ways (Roth et al., 2007). Particularly teachers who teach the same course with a number of other teachers have to follow a strict timetable which makes covering certain topics rather than addressing student needs and interests their main concern. The same issue is highlighted by a few STs who suggest they are aware their teachers are not allowed to follow their own routes and are restricted by standardisation and institutional policies which they suggest is the main reason teachers have to disregard student needs and follow scheduled programmes. As a result, there develops a more teacher-directed approach with less student voice in the process. This finding supports literature by suggesting that limited TA results in limited LA due to the fact that teachers do not have the freedom to conduct their lessons and support target behaviours as they wish to (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Reeve, 2009). In such a context, when learners view learning as accumulation of topics to be covered rather than learning as following intrinsic motivations and individual needs, there is the risk they create a mind-set of learning as covering topics and learning things set by others. They develop and display passive learning roles, ignoring the fact that they need to be active agents in their learning process (Benson, 2011). Moreover, as I discussed earlier (p.57), autonomous teachers provide autonomous models for students. In circumstances when teachers are bound with restrictions, they give the implicit message that following expectations rather than needs/interests is the accepted norm.

It may be suggested in the light of the findings that some TEs support reactive autonomy rather than proactive autonomy. Reactive autonomy, which does not entail creating directions but enables learners to organise their resources and reach their goals when a direction is set, is the kind of autonomy that is mainly supported by participating teachers (Littlewood, 1999) (2.2.3 Levels of Autonomy, 7.1.1 Active Involvement, Chapter 8: Learner Training). Participating TEs suggest they require and encourage learners to take

responsibility for their learning, finding and using resources, practising reflection and identifying weaknesses, making decisions on who to work with and the topic they want to work on usually from a list of alternatives. However, giving direction to their learning, taking decisions on significant issues such as considering their learning needs and interests are not encouraged (11.5.3.4 Provision of Choice). This may be linked to TA. Teachers argue they themselves are limited in autonomy as teachers and this limited TA allows them to foster LA in a limited way. It is difficult for teachers who have no/limited voice over course content to empower their learners to follow their own interests. It can be suggested that in their core beliefs teachers reflect supporting proactive autonomy as significant but considering their given context and limitations, they are in a position to support reactive autonomy more in their actual practice, bearing in mind the factors they mention as restricting their support in Chapters 4 and 5. It is also possible to suggest this is linked to TE conceptualisations on LA. There are TEs who have a comparatively less developed conceptualisation of LA which limits them. They structure opportunities to be reactive rather than proactive such as the examples discussed earlier when referring to how what they do in terms of more general learning support does not necessarily support the development of LA (p. 220). Reflecting TE support, the data suggests STs practise LA mainly in a reactive rather than proactive manner although they suggest they can be proactive in some aspects of learning (p.179).

Similarly, regarding the levels of autonomy proposed by Benson (2011), it is possible to suggest TEs facilitate Control over Learning Management and Control over Cognitive Processes but fail to encourage Control over learning Content (p.26), which can be explained with regards to the limited TA they themselves possess (5.1.2 Teacher Autonomy).

11.5.3 Comparison of Teacher Educator and Student Teacher Views of Their Practice

According to Deci and Ryan (2011), on the way to self-determined learning, learners should have their need for autonomy, competence and relatedness to be fulfilled in social contexts and this is highlighted by both TEs and STs in the present study. The results of the present study add to the body of literature that the support provided by teachers leads to increased autonomous behaviours

learners display in their learning. This replicates the findings of earlier studies carried out in the last decades on teacher support for learner autonomy which suggest students' perceptions of their teachers' autonomy support predict greater autonomy in students (Black & Deci, 2000), students in autonomy-supportive contexts begin to exercise more autonomy (Reeve & Jang, 2006; Williams & Deci, 1996), students show more engagement in learning when provided autonomy support (Reeve et al., 2004) and perceived autonomy support leads to greater engagement and higher motivation (Núñez et al., 2015; Núñez & León, 2019).

On the other hand, although teacher support is acknowledged to be influential in learners' autonomous behaviours, there are some issues on which TEs and STs disagree. I propose four possible explanations for the apparent disparities:

(1) Considering the population of the study, there is a much higher proportion of TEs represented in the study than STs: 15 TEs out of 68 compared to 27 STs from 1928. In other words, while TEs refer to the student body as a whole, expressing their experience of general student behaviour, STs refer to their own personalised experiences, providing insights into the behaviours of this particular group of students.

(2) Because STs who participated in the study were volunteers, it is probable that their personalised views about LA are more informed and potentially more positive compared to those of the whole student body in the setting (11.8 Limitations of the Study and Implications for Future Research).

(3) It is possible to suggest that although teacher support is necessary in helping learners build autonomy through paving the path and making learners both aware and familiar with autonomous learning behaviours, whatever learners take from this support is influenced by their previous experiences and conceptualisations. This reflects what Nunan (1995) suggests: there is a gap between what teachers focus on in their instruction and what learners take away from it, since learners selectively attend what to focus on depending on their priorities (Benson, 2011; Wenden, 1991). In the light of the findings, it is therefore possible to suggest that what TEs consider as support may not necessarily match what STs need on the way to be autonomous. TEs use a variety of strategies to support LA, yet as

can be noticed from the data, the extent to which STs comprehend and make use of this support is dependent on how STs conceptualise and accept such support. To give an illustrative example, I argued earlier that spoon-feeding by providing slides (8.1.3 Information Literacy) is detrimental to the development of autonomy. I suggested that supportive teachers should refrain from providing ready-made input and encourage learners to put effort into researching and evaluating themes for themselves (Camillieri, 1999; Samah et al., 2009). However, if students do not view such teacher practice as support for LA which could be beneficial but simply as teachers' withdrawing from what they are supposed to do, then the supportive intention ends as a limitation. In line with the interpretivist and socio-constructivist stance of this study, I as a researcher need to construct a 'truth' from participants' separate versions of that truth as they perceive it. There are cases where TEs provide support in a specific area but student views of their practice do not provide evidence of utilising the support provided. STs make meaning of and utilise the support provided to them in the light of their previous experiences depending on what they understand from this support and how they intend to make use of it since they shape their practice in line with their previous background (Cohen et al., 2007; Schunk, 2004).

(4) There are instances where STs express their stance in a particular perspective such as stating the advantages of specific learner behaviours which later contradicts their reflections of their actual practice. This brings to mind the two theories of action: what they actually do (theory-in-use) being different from their theoretically held views (espoused theory) (Argyris, 2002; Schon, 1983) (11.5.3.7 Interdependence and 11.5.3.5 Control of Affect).

11.5.3.1 Active Learner Roles

Although there is disparity between what TEs perceive students do and what STs propose they do, both TEs and STs agree learners need to be active in their learning, echoing literature which suggests active learners take initiative and assume agency in all stages of the process (Benson, 2011; Dafei, 2007; Holec, 1981). Referring to the whole body of students in the Faculty of Education, most TEs complain that learners are reluctant to be actively involved in the learning process, usually preferring to take on passive roles due to learner backgrounds

(p.133) and large classes (p.138). They complain learners do not read texts and tasks allocated before classes. They also consider learners leave learning only to the classroom and some do the minimum of what is required. The particular ST group in the study argue they are actively engaged in their learning: getting prepared for the following lesson in advance and backing in-class learning with outside efforts. Some students suggest they to do a lot more than what is required as what they care about is learning and not simply passing the course. This is a limitation to an extent as both views could be said to be valid for the particular participants and the reason for the discrepancy in views can be linked to the volunteer sampling the study employed; therefore, the testimony of students may reflect a particular type of student whereas the views of TEs are on a much broader cohort. However, it is also significant to take into account that student and teacher realities, what they understand from the issues mentioned above and their expectations may differ from each other. What students view as being active and what teachers consider as active students may be at different points on a continuum. Therefore, while students may well consider themselves active, what they do may not be sufficient for teachers to call them ‘active learners’ since the term *active* may have slightly different interpretations by the different parties, and if we use an interpretivist paradigm (Cohen et al., 2007), we will need to acknowledge the existence of multiple realities. That is, as Deci and Ryan (1985, p. 231) suggest ‘People with different causality orientations tend to process information differently, to attend differently to the environment, to experience emotions differently, and to be differently motivated. They have different internal structures that can affect all aspects of their behaviour’.

11.5.3.2 Teaching Approach

STs in the Faculty of Education can be likened to apprentices observing their teachers and acquiring knowledge through observing an expert (Claxton, 2002; Smith 2003, 2009; Oxford, 2015; Putnam & Borko, 2000). However, as both TEs and STs agree in some circumstances teacher-led lessons are conducted due to large classes and time constraints. Learners propose in these lessons, they are only expected to listen and take notes with no student participation or agency, and they do not have a say on either the content or the flow of the lesson. In such contexts, participating learners suggest they are inclined to remain passive as

elaborated with student examples on p.139. As Al-Saadi (2011, p. 96) proposes ‘Even when the students are motivated, they still assume a passive role when the teacher is in charge of everything’. What learners are taught in theory contradicts what they observe in practice, which in return adversely affects the realisation of autonomy (Taras, 2002). The data suggests STs are given instruction on learner-centred education but experience teacher-led education, also acknowledged by TEs (p.139). Teaching about learner-centred education but in a teacher-centred approach where learners are lectured about the need to teach in a non-teacher centred way, only leads learners to have a knowledge base but create a mind-set that they do not have to apply what they consider to be optimal depending on circumstances, as is suggested by the participants of the study (p.139). This paradox presents itself as a significant factor hindering learners’ development and implementation of autonomous behaviours since ready-made input as opposed to bottom-up processes has the risk of inhibiting LA (Camilleri, 1999; Samah et al., 2009), an issue proposed by STs. However, as suggested by participants and also discussed in the literature, lecturing can be a preferred style of lesson delivery by teachers since it ‘is short and needs little preparation’ (Samah et al., 2009, p. 84). A similar issue is emphasized when STs suggest there are teachers who assess their students through test type exams, which require a surface learning approach (Scouller, 1998). Teachers propose they support the generation and not the reiteration of knowledge but in test type exams, students receive implicit messages that reiteration of knowledge is accepted, since assessment has a more influential role on learning than teaching (Gibbs & Simpson, 2005). Thus, although TEs propose they prefer test type exams because of the large classes, in such cases, teachers unintentionally support the opposite of what they expect to do.

11.5.3.3 Metacognition

Metacognition surfaces in most TEs’ conceptualisations of LA as greatly significant in the attainment of autonomy. In TEs’ definitions of LA, they make frequent references to metacognitive strategies, and in their description of support, they provide evidence they offer this through a variety of methods. This may be mainly because there is the common view that metacognition can be taught to learners (Bandura, 1993; Öz, 2005). Through effective preparation and

support from teachers, it is possible to train learners to implement metacognition in their learning, giving them the opportunity to exercise learning at deeper levels and become more successful in the learning process (Anderson, 2002; Öz, 2005). Although in the present study TEs do not propose to explicitly teach metacognitive strategies, they provide evidence of giving opportunities to their learners to practise them in their learning and there are many students who suggest they make use of these strategies, mainly reflection and monitoring. However, it is significant to note that some of the activities/support TEs refer to as metacognitive are merely cognitive activities that do not go beyond requiring learners to fulfil learning tasks and exercise metacognition (p.220).

STs in the study refer to learner strategies in their regulation of learning which deserve a significant place in metacognition. On the learners' side, awareness and selection of learning strategies to be used with the learning tasks at hand and the evaluation of their effectiveness are among basic metacognitive strategies learners say they make use of, characterised as successful/autonomous assets by scholars (Oxford, 2013; Wenden, 1998). Regarding learning strategies in general however, it is not only the metacognitive set but a combination of metacognitive with cognitive and social/affective strategies learners utilise in the governance of learning (Benson, 2011; Donker et al., 2014; O'Malley & Chamot, 1990; Oxford, 1990; Pintrich & De Groot, 1990; Wenden, 1998). In the present study, both TEs and STs refer to a considerable number of learning strategies at different points. However, the data suggests while TEs have an inclination to focus more on metacognitive strategies such as reflecting, centring learning, being critical, STs put considerable emphasis on cognitive strategies such as note-taking, underlining, highlighting and etc., suggesting they consider cognitive strategies greatly influential in managing learning which echoes Oxford (1990) who suggests learners use metacognitive strategies less often than cognitive strategies. It is true that these cognitive choices in reality are a representation of learners' exercise of agency in learning (Gao & Zhang, 2011). However, it should not be forgotten that all learning strategies serve learning in general and need to be practised for the better regulation of the process. It is also significant to note that while using strategies is significant in autonomy, more

significant is knowing how and why to use those strategies, how to evaluate them and how to select them according to context.

Most STs suggest they practise reflection through pondering about aspects of their learning to examine and explore, and thus to monitor their learning as suggested in the literature (Brown, 2001; Loo & Thorpe, 2002; Sharifi & Hassaskhah, 2011). This is compatible with what TEs suggested they strive to attain. Seven TEs provided a variety of situations in which they perceive they support learners for reflection and monitoring, most of which are evident in student experiences. Reflecting on learning during and after lessons, using the criteria as a checklist to evaluate learning are some practices some students suggest they employ. Parallel to teacher support, students suggested they make use of criteria provided by the teacher and the results of exams/quizzes to reflect on and monitor their learning. They provide examples from their learning as reviewing exam results, identifying their weak and strong areas and thinking about the efficiency of the strategies they use in their learning. However, it is significant to note that the data suggests there are STs who practise some of the metacognitive strategies as a response to teacher demand instead of self-initiated activity, such as reflecting on exams/quiz performance as part of class activity demanded by teacher. Moreover, STs have not provided examples of exercising reflection on a higher level to reflect on the process, stepping back to evaluate their approach to learning rather than merely the content of learning. Scholars agree that reflecting at higher levels is challenging for students (Kember et al., 2000). Teacher findings are in line with the student findings in this area. Teachers suggested facilitating reflection on process was not a focused area of support, with only four teachers mentioning such support, two of them stating they cannot consider they satisfactorily achieved it (p.151). These TEs suggested they asked learners to keep reflective logs where they were required to reflect both on the content and the process but teachers suggest most learners focused on content only. This suggests that TEs have a scope for conceptual development in this area since it is a significant component of LA.

11.5.3.4 Provision of Choice

The majority of TEs advocate they provide choices to their learners so that they have the chance to make informed decisions in their learning (Reeve, 2006),

particularly in terms of deciding on what to work on and who to work with. This is welcomed by STs. They propose they feel in better control when they are allowed to take decisions since being able to choose learning tasks result in increased motivation on learners' side (Camillieri, 1999). Allowing learners to choose topics to work on is the most common choice referred to by the participants, echoing a study conducted by Borg and Alshumaimeri (2019). However, STs argue not many opportunities are given to them for decision-making and some even suggest they have no say in course selection. In each department in the university, learners have elective courses, some of which are university elective and some are area elective. However, as mentioned by STs and also accepted by some TEs, in some departments, students are offered packaged programmes where they do not have the chance to choose the elective courses. It has also been raised by both TEs and STs that due to large classes, teachers put students in bigger groups and they are not allowed to choose their group friends.

It needs to be considered that teachers themselves complain they are not fully autonomous in their own decisions. In coordinated courses where more than one teacher teaches the same course, they are not allowed to decide on the flow of the lesson or the assessment. The course coordinator is responsible for these. In such contexts, it is clear that students cannot take significant decisions on issues even teachers do not have a voice. As Camillieri (1999) argues the context has the potential to limit both TA and LA, causing teachers not to perceive the possibility of involving their learners in decisions. It is also possible to suggest that there are cases where teachers self-contradict: despite their views on the significance of provision of choice, they appear to provide limited opportunities to their students for decision-making (p.169).

The results demonstrate there are TEs who suggest they take learners' perspectives and STs acknowledge and welcome such teacher endeavours, positing these are valuable in attaining autonomy. However, it is felt that there are occasions teachers introduce their own perspectives and encourage learners to adopt their viewpoints (pp: 157 and 170). Reeve (2009) suggests such teacher practices should not be considered as controlling since it is in the nature of the profession to recommend to learners constructive ways of thinking, feeling or

behaving. However, although giving suggestions is welcome, I consider caution needs to be taken not to be coercive (Niemic & Ryan, 2009; Reeve et al., 1999)

Regarding decision-making, Stefanou et al. (2004) suggest there are three different ways teachers provide decision-making opportunities to their learners. The authors suggest teachers provide their learners organisational (decision-making of learners in terms of classroom management), procedural (choices about various media for the presentation of ideas) and cognitive (opportunities to learners to self-evaluate their work) autonomy support. Taking into consideration data under 7.1.2 Choice and Decision-making in the present study, there are teachers who suggest to make attempts to support each of these areas. Some teachers provide evidence of letting learners decide on who to work with, what to work on, the deadlines, given they are not restricted by time and the number of students in each class. However, some also suggest owing to large classes they cannot always follow their preferred styles and they themselves form groups and allocate topics (5.1.2 Teacher A and 5.1.1.3 Class Size). Some say they give learners freedom on the style/organisation of their ideas and work (7.1.6 Avoiding Interference). There are teachers who share their grading criteria with learners to raise learner awareness on expectations so that learners can adapt their efforts accordingly (p.153). Teachers suggest they support their learners in one or in combination of organisational, procedural and cognitive decision-making opportunities. However, provision of choice for each area can be considered minimal which needs consideration since decisions guiding the learning process should be more than merely deciding on who to work with or choosing a topic among alternatives provided. ST data reinforces this when they complain about the shortness of opportunities they are given for making choices (p.169). Regarding this, Bouchard (2009) suggests having 'unalterable objectives' in the programme puts limits on the realisation of autonomy. This can be linked to limited TA in the context.

11.5.3.5 Control of Affect

Motivation is regarded as highly significant by the two parties. While STs perceive they employ a variety of strategies to motivate themselves, TEs suggest they have their own ways of motivating their students, mainly through helping build self-confidence. However, besides their attempts to motivate themselves,

it has been pointed out by most STs that they greatly value extrinsic motivation from their surroundings, particularly from their teachers. STs explicitly express that they greatly appreciate teacher feedback and expect to hear/see their teachers' opinions on their work. Some say they have a tendency to regulate their efforts mainly in the light of the feedback they receive. Both parties emphasize the role of positive reinforcement. The data suggests the culture of providing reinforcements has built a culture in need of positive reinforcement, echoing scholarship which argues that provision of extrinsic motivation risks killing genuine curiosity (Dickinson, 1995), making it possible to argue that reward strategies increase less autonomous behaviours. Moreover, as Briesch and Chafouleas (2009) advocate when teachers provide reinforcements they become the main stimulus for the target behaviour and the chances that students exhibit similar behaviours without the provision of stimulus decreases. The findings of the present study are in line with this proposition. Alternatively, Bown (2009) advocates learners themselves should be the determinants of their own beliefs and motivations, and should not rely on outside motivators. It is also noteworthy to emphasize grades prove to serve as a motivator for some students and teachers, which impacts the realisation of LA in an adverse manner. The data suggests there are teachers who use grades to motivate students to put more effort in (p.208) and there are many students who put in effort to obtain the grades allocated (p.113).

Managing stress is crucial for the management of learning since without the ability to manage emotions, learners are at a disadvantage to regulate their learning efforts (Benson, 2011; Bown, 2009; Oxford, 1990). This is another issue brought up by the two parties. While TEs suggest they talk to their students about the fact that it is a natural part of learning to help ease their learners' stress, STs say they exercise some strategies to overcome such negative emotions, such as planning and getting ready in advance. Engaging in relaxing activities such as doing sports or listening to music/watching TV are other ways students say they find efficient in managing their emotions. These strategies are proposed to be effective in managing emotions by scholars in related fields (Craig, Graesser, Sullins, & Gholson, 2004; Oxbrow, 1999; Oxford, 1990), considering when learners manage their emotions, they are in a better position to manage their

efforts (Benson, 2011; Oxford, 1990). Some STs suggest they listen to music/watch TV on the background or use social media while studying which particularly one participating teacher educator finds inimical to effective learning (p.170). However, as Foehr (2006) suggests it is useful to keep in mind young people are good at multitasking and use of media is popular while doing homework.

The role of rapport and learners' need to be respected have been signified by the two parties. Both STs and TEs consider the good relationship between the teacher and students motivates learners to regulate their efforts and take more responsibility over their learning, echoing La Ganza (2008) and Bown (2009) who advocate learners tend be more autonomous in their learning efforts when they have a strong relationship with their teachers. On the same issue, Reeve and Jang (2006) advocate, teachers cannot give autonomy to their students but promote its development and implementation through supportive relationships. In the present study, STs emphasize they value their relationships with their teachers and when they feel they are respected, they have a tendency to put more effort in their learning. TEs also consider respecting learners as individuals, valuing their efforts and establishing a good rapport with their students facilitate learners' autonomy, echoing Benson (2016).

Although creating a comfortable and positive environment is significant in the support for the development of autonomy, it needs to be remembered that establishing such an ethos does not necessarily in itself make learners autonomous since it is possible for learners to study happily in surroundings which are positive and comfortable but teacher-directed. It is also possible that teachers create a friendly and appealing atmosphere where they have very good relationships with their learners and they respect their learners, but do not allow learners the freedom to follow their own routes. Therefore, although such issues are important in LA, how they actually link to autonomy should be considered if the aim is to promote the actualisation of autonomy and not only to create a pleasant atmosphere since the affective dimension works when learners are conscious of how it helps them to manage their learning.

Linking new learning to previous learning and the contents of one course to the contents of another course in the management of the learning process has been highlighted as a motivator by both STs and TEs. There are a few teachers who suggest they endeavour to make learners aware of the links and a few students express how such awareness is effective in managing their learning, referred to as centring learning (2.3.1.2.1 Centring Learning) in the literature (Oxford, 1990). This is important given the fact that many STs express as a criticism that they do not understand the significance of some of their courses. Although some students may not endeavour to see the link, it can also be the case that some courses, such as the Maths course for English Teaching Department students, are not directly linked to their future careers and this can demotivate them.

11.5.3.6 Resources

According to data, the Internet, books, slides and people are the main resources STs perceive they utilise in their learning, the Internet being the main resource. Participating STs suggest they make considerable use of the internet for various reasons. This is followed by referring to people learners can readily access in their environment such as friends and others. The data gathered suggests STs prefer using resources which are more practical and provide easy solutions rather than intense reading.

STs' use of the Internet is welcomed by participating TEs. In a general sense, the tendency of the students to make use of the Internet is an indication that they are prepared to be more autonomous in their learning since it evidences they rely on resources other than the teacher and attempt to address their own needs in their own ways in their own time (Islam, 2011; Yumuk, 2002). There is the proposition from TEs that they encourage learners to get used to the habit of questioning the validity of information and the trustworthiness of the websites (Yumuk, 2002), which requires reflection and autonomy at a higher level. Questioning the validity of the websites and the trustworthiness of information accessed requires being aware of their own knowledge base and their belief systems. Since this issue is mentioned by a considerable number of participating TEs but brought up only one ST, it seems to warrant attention. Although it could be the case that learners are already doing it without feeling the need to mention it, it is more likely that teachers are not really successful in conveying the

message, since it was suggested by STs that they read and use the first hits they find on search engines.

The data suggests because of teacher practice of not regularly using the books in class teaching, students are reluctant to buy the books, except a few who are enthusiastic about exploring deeper and furthering their understanding. Instead they prefer to use slides teachers make use of in their teaching and distribute to their learners since these are succinct summaries of important points covered in the lesson and since most of the time studying these would guarantee passing the course. Assessment demands have the power to direct student learning (Bain, 2010). It can therefore be concluded based on the data that such teacher practice, which is usually considered as practical help for students, can lead learners to get used to the act of 'spoon-feeding' (Samah et al., 2009). Moreover, TEs suggest this common practice of distributing slides to students puts pressure on teachers who would not be willing to distribute slides and force them to follow the same practice (Pelletier et al., 2002). Some learners are aware using the slides leads to rote learning but they suggest they continue to use them as they find it practical and as they believe studying from them would be enough for passing the course, which some suggest is their main aim.

Kirschner et al. (2006) propose direct and strong instructional guidance leads to greater benefits in terms of learning as opposed to minimal guidance, suggesting that minimal guidance may lead to failure and frustration whereas greater guidance has the potential to eliminate such negative emotions. On the contrary, Wise and O'Neill (2009) suggest not only the amount but the context and the timing of assistance are to be considered. Giving learners the opportunity 'to persist, struggle, and even fail at tasks beyond their current abilities may in fact be an exercise that yields longer term productive learning gains' (Jacobson, Kim, Pathak, & Zhang, 2015, p. 716). Rather than providing learners with ready resources or answering learner questions with ready-made answers or providing academic guidance more than required, teachers need to give learners the opportunity to put every possible effort to solve their own problems. They should assist learners only when they cannot find a way themselves since the aim is not to teach the content only but help equip learners with transferrable skills, in particular LA (Hmelo-Silver, Duncan, & Chinn, 2007; Samah et al., 2009).

Reeve and Jang (2006) suggest giving learners answers without giving them the chance to discover these negatively correlates with learners' autonomous experiences. These all signify the role of the teacher as the guide, facilitator rather than the spoon-feeder (Tanyeli & Kuter, 2013).

11.5.3.7 Interdependence

Regarding cooperation, the majority of STs express their enthusiasm for working with friends, yet many also suggest they do not benefit from this as either they flourish better individually or because they feel abused when working with lazy others. This finding contradicts the findings of an earlier study conducted by Bronet (2008) who reported students felt cooperation is effective in learning. Yet, as Borg and Alshumaimeri (2019) suggest, making use of opportunities to work with others are significant but independent study also contributes to the development of autonomy.

It is interesting to note that some STs who provided persuasive reasons in support of cooperative work expressed their preference for individual work in practice. It may be the case that this is because these are learners in the Faculty of Education with background knowledge on the pros of cooperation in learning but when it comes to practice, they do not experience these benefits and have found their own way of studying, which is not effective with others in the context. I consider it significant to note here that I have observed throughout the meetings and the interviews with STs that some STs have a tendency to provide book information as if quoting from the book, indicating they are speaking theoretically rather than from practice. There have been occasions where learners provided their stance at one end of a continuum but when talking about their experiences they offered evidence of behaviours at the other end, such as in this specific example: a learner explaining in detail what cooperation is and what advantages it offers later expressed their position as preferring to work individually (p.202). I propose this may be because they are teacher candidates and are educated towards different stances. Yet, this also implies there is difference between their espoused theory and theory-in-use (Argyris, 2002; Schon, 1983). They learn what is offered but may not have internalised or experienced its benefits; therefore, they do not exercise it in their learning.

The necessity of creating the conditions where each member in the group assumes equal responsibility, giving explicit training in cooperative skills (Akhtar et al., 2012), and focus on the structure of the work to be completed instead of focusing only on content need to be considered for the efficiency of group work (Hamer & O’Keefe, 2013). It is also important to realise that working together supports autonomy only if the aim behind is internalised well. There are STs/TEs who suggest they value cooperation since it aids learning and provides the forum where learners help each other, but also there are instances where they say they support/practise working together without indicating how they link it to LA.

Another significant issue that deserves consideration referred to by both TEs and STs as a factor influencing the effectiveness of group work is the class size (Reeve et al., 1999; Roth et al., 2007). Because of large classes, teachers say they require learners to form big groups, which as a result leads to learner reluctance towards cooperative learning due to reasons stated earlier such as not all group members putting the required effort and some students feeling abused (5.1.1.3 Class Size). Monk-Turner and Payne (2005) suggest in large classes it is appealing for teachers to form groups rather than assign individual projects to reduce the amount of time spent on marking and giving feedback, which brings to mind the question whether requiring working together to deal with overload serves autonomy or not.

11.6 Recommendations

- Different factors have been identified as influencing both learners in assuming responsibility over their learning and teachers in their support for their learners. The conceptualisations of both parties which appear to provide the basis for their attitudes have a considerable effect on the development and implementation as well as the support provided to learners in terms of autonomy. Teacher beliefs around the construct of LA determine the extent it is supported by them while learner beliefs together with the messages teachers convey to learners influence its adoption and implementation in practice (Borg & Al-Busaidi, 2012; Dickinson, 1995). Therefore, it is important to help both learners and teachers to develop a mind-set viewing learning as an active process in

which the assumption of responsibility and the management of the process are significant (Chitashvili, 2007; Dickinson, 1995; Reinders, 2010; Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011). Vieira (2009) suggests ‘the pedagogy for autonomy dream will only come true when it becomes the teachers’ dream’. Similarly Altunay et al. (2009) argue there is a significant relationship between autonomy perception and classroom behaviours of students. It is vital that teachers address the underlying beliefs of learners which constitute the basis of their actions as suggested by Öz (2005). This is possible through training and first-hand experience (Little, 1995; Öz, 2005). Considering LA as a gradual process, regular and on-going training opportunities need to be created in the context the study was carried out as well as in contexts that aim to promote LA so that the parties involved have the opportunity to practise the elements of autonomy besides receiving a theoretical understanding of the concept. Such ongoing training in the form of workshops and seminars, and actual classroom practices focusing on skills and application has the potential to help stakeholders to internalise and personally experience the target behaviours (Stroupe et al., 2016; Wang & Wang, 2016). Moreover, it is significant to create a forum for both parties where they are encouraged to reflect and scrutinise their views on teacher and learner roles, and learning process in general, in order to be able to become aware of their core beliefs so as to manage to make adaptations to the way they approach learning/teaching. Such reflection sessions together with training may be useful in bridging the gap between theory-in-use and espoused theory (Argyris, 2002; Schon, 1983). It can also be a good idea for institutions to encourage action research through which teachers discover their own teaching, how they can support LA as well as experiencing how learners benefit from it (Moreira, 2009).

I realised that the focus group meetings and discussions I had with STs raised their awareness on many issues related to LA and contributed to STs’ development of understanding of autonomy as a process. In subsequent meetings they were able to reflect more on their autonomous experiences. This gave me the suggestion that this research unearthed

quite a good way of working on LA. Therefore, I consider the focus group work I did with the STs could be a template that can be offered to students as foundational sessions in my context and in similar ones, particularly when they first come to university, to help them develop autonomous skills with follow-up reflection sessions which will help them internalise and implement such skills.

- Supporting learners has been highlighted in the study, yet the amount and nature of support provided needs to be considered. Rather than providing learners with ready-made solutions, it is significant to encourage them to persist on their own and come up with solutions, and intervene only when they encounter real barriers (Jacobson et al., 2015). To this end, TEs need a conscious strategy about how to develop LA through the use of support strategies that create the circumstances where STs will exercise autonomous behaviours.
- The interrelationship between the constructs of LA, teacher support for LA and TA has been highlighted by the present study. The results suggest that they need to be considered together and not in isolation in order to arrive at a complete picture of how LA can be supported, how the support influences learners' practice of LA and how LA is actually practised by learners with the reasons behind. Acknowledging TA as a significant factor influencing the actualisation of LA, it is important that institutions create the atmosphere teachers are endorsed to exercise autonomy in their practice to pose as models to their students as well as having the chances to promote autonomy in their students. Therefore, there is a pressing need that institutions develop and insist on following their policies on LA and TA. In the development and compliance of the policies however, it is significant to include the views of teachers. When teachers' views are taken, they feel more ownership and the chances that they succeed increases (Camillieri, 1999).
- Another significant issue that deserves consideration is that besides the impact the two constructs of LA and TA have on each other, the context also influences their practice. As put forward by participants, other

teachers/students in the context have an influence on what teachers/students do in relation to their aims, such as teachers distributing slides putting pressure on other teachers to follow the same practice. This echoes what Pelletier et al. (2002) argue when they maintain pressures from above and from below are influential in the support teachers provide to their learners, an issue that needs consideration by researchers as well as institutions wishing to promote LA.

- All the factors influencing the practice of autonomy and teacher support for autonomy (Chapters 4 and 5) pose themselves as limitations to its actualisation, yet most of the problems can be overcome through approaching teaching in a different perspective. Although acknowledging there are factors that negatively affect both its practice and support, if instead of viewing LA as something else to be taught or supported, it is embedded into teaching with teachers modifying the teaching methods they use, there is no reason it cannot be promoted (Benson, 2011).

11. 7 Contributions

LA and teacher support for LA have been popular topics of discussion and research in the past decades. Numerous articles can be found on the nature of LA, autonomy in language learning, how it can be promoted in educational contexts and the benefits of fostering LA. This study is original in a number of aspects. First, there are limited studies investigating perceptions on both teacher support of LA and LA in practice at the same time in the same context with in-depth qualitative data demonstrating the dynamic relationship between the two constructs while at the same time revealing the factors that influence the actualisation of both.

The present study provided information on TEs' beliefs on LA, how they say they support the development and implementation of LA in their learners and the synergic relationship between their conceptualisations and the support they say they provide. It also shed light on STs' conceptualisations of LA, their expectations and autonomous behaviours. The research findings have certainly added to our understanding of the principles and practice of autonomy support

provided by teachers, learner perceptions on how autonomously they behave in their own learning as well as the synergic relationship between the support provided and its actual realisation by learners. The results of this study indicate that TA, LA and teacher support for LA are interrelated and that they need to be treated together rather than in isolation.

Second, this study is conducted in a Faculty of Education with TEs and STs as participants. This gave me the opportunity to explore the constructs in a context where the participants are familiar with the topics being investigated. Therefore, the results of this study can provide suggestions to those who are willing to develop as autonomy-supportive teachers or autonomous students as well as giving implications to institutions that set LA as their objective in their contexts.

I consider the findings of the present study give insights in the local context about what students perceive LA is and the factors that influence their autonomous attempts. This is a useful starting point to raise teachers' awareness of the implications for how they can adapt their teaching and the ways they support students' learning for a more pro-autonomy pedagogy. For example, teachers need to consider in which areas they can share responsibilities with learners, giving more chances for meaningful decision-making, or how they can step back from their authoritative figure in the presentation of the lessons to adopt a more student inclusive approach. That is, consideration on how to place learners at the centre of the process so that they take more active roles regarding the what and the how of their learning needs to be taken. This is especially relevant in a context where education tends to be more teacher-centred in schools i.e. before students reach higher education stage.

This study makes two propositions regarding teacher support. (a) The findings of the research verify the findings of earlier studies to suggest that the context and the opportunities provided in the context predict the extent of LA exerted by students, and the role of teachers in creating the optimal context and supporting learners towards LA is significant (Black & Deci, 2000; Borg & Alshumaimeri, 2019; Little, 1995; Reeve & Jang, 2006; Reeve et al., 2004; Williams & Deci, 1996). It adds to the growing body of literature in autonomy support teachers provide to their learners. It replicates the findings of several previous studies on

the ways teachers support autonomy. Besides suggesting teacher support is significant in helping learners build autonomy, it suggests there are other factors that are influential in determining how autonomous learners are. Previous learner experiences and learner beliefs occupy a substantial part in learning behaviours and how learners exert autonomy in the process.

(b) Learners have a tendency to flourish in autonomy when conditions are designed for the promotion of autonomy. Yet, it is a significant finding that supporting learners more than necessary does not always generate more independence and can have the reverse effect: it can be detrimental to the development and implementation of LA, echoing Samah et al. (2009). The present study emphasizes that there is a need for teacher support on one hand and the significance of avoiding spoon-feeding on the other, calling for a delicate balance in the support provided.

Third, The Teacher Support Model (Appendix 1) created as a result of the first round of interviews with TEs was later developed after a thorough synthesis of TE and ST data taking into consideration the effectiveness of the methods proposed by TEs and can be considered as a contribution towards Teacher Education pedagogy. It can be used by teachers interested in pro-autonomy pedagogy as a model to follow or as a reflective tool they can compare their present practice with regarding autonomy support (Appendix 21). It is possible to use it as part of an intervention study with teachers leading to an action research programme in the Faculty of Education in the context the study was carried out or in contexts aiming at learner autonomy.

Fourth, in the related literature there are a number of metacognitive strategies referred to for the governance of learning put forward by authorities (Anderson, 2002; Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1991). However, filtering is a metacognitive strategy the present study adds to the body of literature. The findings suggest filtering, the ability to refine information to what one needs and exclude unimportant, irrelevant or inaccurate information, can be significantly useful in the management of learning.

Fifth, planning, monitoring and evaluating learning are key metacognitive strategies highlighted in the literature in metacognition (Anderson, 2002;

Wenden, 1998) and are integral to the practice of LA. Although planning is already underscored as an important metacognitive strategy in the literature (Donker et al., 2014; Ertürk, 2016; Oxford, 1990; Wenden, 1991), in the present study, STs provide a more detailed perspective to the act of planning and direct attention to setting manageable plans. They signify that setting step by step plans is effective in better handling of the learning process besides providing motivation.

11.8 Limitations of the Study and Implications for Future Research

- Overall, the majority of STs have a general tendency to regard themselves as autonomous and they provide evidence of autonomous behaviours they display regarding their learning. On the other hand, TEs advocate most learners have limited autonomy or are not autonomous at all. It is significant to note that the study employed volunteer sampling and as mentioned earlier, this may be due to the fact that mostly autonomous students who assume active roles in their learning volunteered to participate in the study while TEs made references to their whole classes in which the number of students with non-autonomous tendencies outweigh the number of autonomous ones. Therefore, students who assume passive roles in their learning expecting the process to be led mainly by the teacher may be higher in the broader student population. Conducting a similar study utilising random sampling may prove helpful results and increase the chances of capturing a more general picture.
- The study was carried out in a Faculty of Education in higher education. Therefore, the sample included teachers and students who were already familiar with most, if not all, aspects of autonomy, resulting in more support from teachers and more autonomous motives from students than would normally be in other educational contexts. This may make transfer to other non-education faculties more challenging. However, this was a deliberate decision. One of the aims of the study is to explore how autonomy can be supported by teachers and how it can be applied to practice by students in actual everyday settings to be able to inform teachers and students in other contexts to follow similar procedures by

providing real life models.

- The current study employed qualitative interviews and diaries which were retrospective self-reports. Therefore, the data mainly relies on reflections and descriptions of teachers' instructional behaviours as well as students' perceptions of experiences related to the learning process. Observations, where the researcher would have the opportunity to witness actual behaviours of both parties, were not carried out. It was felt that such observations would need to be carried out for a long period of time to be able to catch the inconspicuous features and that this was not practical or possible given the need for extended consent of so many participants. It was also considered that the experiences of STs would be highly difficult to capture where it is not possible to catch their mind frameworks with the logics behind their actions (Burton & Bartlett, 2005). Nevertheless, a number of observations would be helpful in triangulating the data collected. In future research, observations can be integrated into the study design.
- Teachers were provided with the *Teacher Support Model* (p.266) and the meetings were held in big groups with students. The Teacher Support Model (Appendix 1) was created on the basis of the first round of interviews conducted with TEs and was shared back with TEs as guidelines for the diary keeping process with the intention to scaffold them in making informed entries in their diaries. The reflective questions used in the group meetings with STs were formulated after a critical analysis of the literature on learner autonomy. During these meetings there was no presentation on any issue being discussed but learners were encouraged to brainstorm, discuss and create their own meanings. The intention was not to provide an intervention phase for either party but rather feed the common autonomy support practices back to TEs and help learners to formulate their thinking around concepts related to LA. It is important to acknowledge, however, that for some, this may have served as an intervention. As a result of these, it is possible that both parties made adaptations to their practice which can be considered as a side effect of the study. Had they not been exposed to these, the results would

have been slightly different, since these provided both parties with examples from others' practices which they may have integrated into their practice.

- It is also significant to note that when taking part in such a study where participants are asked to take note of their experiences on a regular basis, participant reactivity is a possible outcome (Mertkan, 2015). I received feedback in the course of diary keeping process that a few of the participating teachers were inclined to make adaptations to their usual way of lesson delivery since they were making entries in their diaries every week. Two participating TEs I met in the second week of the data collection process separately in an everyday situation offered feedback that because they knew they would make entries in the diaries, they started thinking of their lesson delivery in a different light, adding variety and trying out different techniques in their teaching. Another feedback was that while keeping the diary, after a few weeks, some TEs realised that they started making similar entries to the previous ones which made them realise they have a teaching style they adopt in their delivery of lessons, and lead to self-awareness. Some expressed their enthusiasm in keeping the diary and maintained they feel the process helps them to reflect on their profession and so they considered it as a tool for professional development. I consider this needs to be considered as an inevitable side effect of the study.
- It is also possible that the data gathering procedure of being asked to articulate their views and experiences at regular intervals guided STs to become more aware of themselves, the context and their learning process and thus had an influence on their perceptions and autonomous experiences.
- Future research needs to further investigate how specific autonomy-supportive behaviours contribute to the development and implementation of autonomous learner behaviours (Reeve et al., 1999).

11.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the specific findings of the study in relation to RQs. With reference to perceptions of participating TEs and also the related literature, the study suggests that with some of the methods they use TEs can effectively support the development and implementation of LA, which is frequently reported to be reflected in student practice. It also suggests, depending on participating STs' perceptions, that students can and do practise LA in a number of aspects at differing levels. The synthesis of the findings on how TEs say they support LA, how STs say they put LA into practice and the factors limiting both its support and practice explores how participants' conceptualisations of the concept and TA present in the context influence both the support and implementation of LA, and also demonstrates the matches/disparities between TEs' and STs' perceived practice. Most of the examples comparing TE and ST views bring us to the concepts mentioned at the beginning of the section that there is no one fixed reality and that there can be mismatches between STs' their theory-in-use and espoused theory.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Teacher Support Model

<p>Learner Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Provide guidance in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • analysing/defining needs • managing time • choosing appropriate materials • taking responsibility for one's own learning inside and outside the classroom • working on one's own ➤ Encourage individual responsibility taking ➤ Ask reflective questions that lead to self-discovery ➤ Help develop awareness: to see the link between learning and future aims 	<p>Metacognitive awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Raise awareness on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • selecting appropriate learning strategies • setting achievable objectives • monitoring one's own learning progress over time • evaluating learning • describing plans for future learning ➤ Share criteria with learners, ➤ Encourage learners to link what they have been learning in one course to other courses 	<p>Motivation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ intrinsic motivation ➤ Provide explanatory rationales ➤ Talk to learners about the significance of learner autonomy ➤ Empathise with learners and try to understand their feelings/fears ➤ Encourage learners to accept stress as a normal component in the learning process ➤ Convey the feeling of trust to learners ➤ Help learners believe that they can achieve ➤ Help develop self-confidence
<p>Interdependence</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage collaboration with other students and teachers 	<p>Information literacy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Guidance on sourcing and navigating learning resources 	<p>Reflection</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage discussion on critical understanding of the roles of teacher and learner

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage learners to seek support from other students and teachers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Direct learners to resources rather than giving answers/solutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage expression of learner expectations from teacher/course ➤ Encourage questioning ➤ Encourage reflection on learning process as well as content
<p>Learning atmosphere</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create an atmosphere where learners feel free to try out new learning approaches/risk taking ➤ Avoid coercion ➤ Avoid interference ➤ Create opportunities for learners to put into practice what they have been learning ➤ Try to make learners active in class ➤ Create chances where learners can practice learner autonomy ➤ Distribution of power 	<p>Provision of choice</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Providing choice for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working on topics learners are intrinsically motivated • Approaching the learning task in the way learners prefer • Working in pair/groups or individually ➤ Taking learners' perspective on how to conduct lessons 	<p>Learning range</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Acknowledge flexibility in ways of learning ➤ Encourage flexibility in ways of learning

Appendix 2: Group Meetings

1st meeting

What do you think makes a student an effective one?

What comes to your mind when you hear 'learner autonomy'?

What are the characteristics of autonomous learners?

When you think of your learning background, can you name any experiences that you would characterise as autonomous? If yes, give examples.

Can you name the feelings one experiences in the learning process?

What is the role of controlling feelings in the learning process?

What is the role of motivation in the learning process?

What is the relationship between learner strategies and learning?

2nd meeting

What role does 'making/having plans' play in the learning process?

What is the role of reflection in the learning process?

What is the role of monitoring in the learning process?

What is the role of self-assessment in the learning process?

What resources do you refer to/use in your learning?

What is the relationship between resources and learning?

3rd Meeting

What is the role of cooperation in the learning process?

What is role of context on autonomous learning?

How does learner autonomy contribute to the learning process?

Appendix 3: Diary Keeping (STs)

Please think of your lesson you had today and keep a reflective diary.

In your diaries please keep notes of the ways in which you tried to make your learning more independent and autonomous today in your learning with examples/explanations/details. Please describe in detail the actual classroom episodes where you displayed these behaviours including your reflections on these experiences. You can consider the following areas while taking notes but please bear in mind that these are only suggestions and the ways learners depict autonomous behaviours are not confined to the areas suggested here. Therefore, feel free to take notes of and reflect on any actions that you believe you behaved autonomously.

- *feelings* →
- *Motivation* → *first meeting*
- *learning strategies* →
- *plans* →
- Reflection → second meeting
- Monitoring →
- Self-assessment →
- resources →
- cooperation →
- context → third meeting
- significance of learner autonomy

To help you consider how to respond to the diary writing task, here are some reflection points – you do not have to refer to these unless you wish to.

In today's lesson:

- What actions/behaviours did you display in your learning that you think are autonomous? Please give details/examples/reasons.
- What is the role of this/these specific behaviour/s in your learning process?
- Have you experienced any barriers which stop you from being independent/autonomous in your learning?

THANK YOU

Appendix 4: Diary Keeping (TEs)

Please think of your lesson you had today with Group _____ and keep a reflective diary. In your diary, please keep notes of the ways you help your learners to develop and implement autonomy in their learning with examples/explanations/details. Please describe in detail actual classroom episodes where you supported your learners in terms of Learner Autonomy and reflect on these experiences. You can consider the *Teacher Support for Learner Autonomy Model* that has been created as a result of the interviews we had and the following questions when making entries, but please bear in mind that these are only suggestions and the ways learners can be supported in LA are not confined to the ways suggested here. Therefore, feel free to take notes of and reflect on any actions/behaviours that you believe you support learner autonomy in your actual class.

To help you consider how to respond to the diary writing task, here are some reflection points – you do not have to refer to these unless you wish to.

In today's lesson:

- How did you support your learners in terms of learner autonomy? Please give details and examples.
- Why did you use this/these specific strategy/strategies?
- Do you think they worked? What makes you think that they worked/did not work?
- Have you experienced any problems in supporting your learners in terms of learner autonomy?

THANK YOU

Appendix 5: Code Scheme

Theme 1	Categories	Codes	Sub-codes	
What support teacher educators provide for LA (HOW THEY SUPPORT)	Learning Range (data associated with acknowledging and encouraging flexibility in learning)			
	Facilitating Metacognitive Awareness (data associated with raising awareness on the learning process, including questioning, planning, monitoring, evaluating learning, linking new learning to previous learning)	Reflection		
		Sharing criteria and course expectations		
		Linking learning		
		Developing criticality		
	Providing Affective Support (data associated with increasing learner motivation and self-confidence)	Motivation		
		Respecting learners		
		Showing empathy		
		Help manage stress		
	Providing Opportunities for Interdependence (data associated with facilitating interdependence: providing opportunities for group/pair/individual work)			

Providing learner training (data associated with helping learners manage the learning process, individual responsibility taking, strategy use)	Encouraging responsibility taking	
	Learner Strategies	Raising Awareness and Introducing Learning Strategies
		Giving Opportunities to Practice Learner Strategies
	Time management	
Provision of choice (data associated with providing choices)		
Supporting Information literacy (data associated with guidance on sourcing)		
Creating a conducive learning atmosphere (data associated with the learning atmosphere)	Encouraging active involvement	
	Encouraging risk taking	
	Encouraging decision-making	
	Taking learner perspective	
	Avoiding interference	

		Being careful with messages given to learners	
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Theme 2	Categories	Codes
LA in Practice (AUTONOMOUS BEHAVIOURS OF LEARNERS)	Adopting an Active Learner Role (data associated with how learners take an active approach in their learning to manage the process)	Assuming responsibility over learning Incentive to undertake learning outside class Showing a willingness to make choices in learning Putting theory into practice
	Controlling Affect (data associated with motivation and self-confidence, following interests, how they self-motivate, how they control their feelings, how make use of extrinsic motivation)	Self-motivation Controlling negative emotions
	Managing Resources (data associated with resource management)	Books Internet Friends, teachers, experienced people, families
	Managing Relations (data associated with interdependence: preference for group/pair/individual work)	Reinforcing Learning Helping Each Other
	Metacognition (data associated with setting targets, , planning, being aware of	Planning

	<p>what the course offers and what they need to do to reach their targets, questioning, planning, reflecting, monitoring, evaluating learning, linking new learning to previous learning, Taking responsibility, Learner strategies/range, following criteria)</p>	<p>Reflection and Monitoring</p>
		<p>Showing an Awareness of Different Learning Ways and Selecting the Useful Ones</p>
		<p>Linking Learning</p>

Theme 3	Category		Code
Factors influencing the support and practice of education system, LA	Conceptualisations of learner autonomy (from both teacher educators' and student teachers' views)		Learner Autonomy Definition
			Learner Autonomy Importance
			Possibility to Build Autonomy in Higher Education and the Importance of Teacher Support
	Learners	TE views	Educational background
			Cultural background
			Family background
			Learner goals
			Learner expectations
		Learner dispositions	
	ST views	Learner Expectations and Dispositions	
Class size (TE and ST views)			
Education System	TE views	Present Education System	
		Learner preparedness	
		<i>Assessment</i>	
		<i>Other teachers</i>	
		<i>The nature of the course</i>	
	ST views	Previous education	
		Student overload	
		The nature of the course	
Assessment			
Teachers	TE views	<i>Teacher background (teacher education)</i>	
		<i>Teacher dispositions</i>	
		<i>Teaching approach</i>	

			<i>Teacher overload</i>
		ST views	Teaching Techniques
			Messages conveyed by teachers
			Rapport
	Teacher Autonomy (TE and ST views)		
	Context (ST views)		

Appendix 6: A priori Codes

For TE Data:

Metacognition

Learner training

Motivation

Interdependence

Choice

Learning environment

Active engagement in learning

Teacher Autonomy

For ST Data:

Motivation

Learner Strategies

Metacognition (Planning, Reflection, Monitoring, Self-assessment)

Information Literacy

Interdependence

Appendix 7: Emergent Codes

For TE Data

Learning Range

Information Literacy

Conceptualisations on LA

Learner background as a factor influencing LA

Teacher background as a factor influencing LA

Class size as a factor influencing LA

For ST Data:

Incentive to undertake learning outside class

Internet, books/slides, friends, teachers, experienced people, families --resources

Reinforcing Learning, Helping each other under interdependence

Appendix 8: Sample Coding for Categories and Themes – Transcriptions

Example 1:

1 S: To me, autonomous learners use metacognitive strategies. Autonomous students can evaluate /self-evaluate themselves in terms of their learning, weaknesses. 'I am bad at this, I should do this' in order to do something, reach the target. They have to self-reflect self-monitor their learning process. They have to adjust whatever needed to reach his aim. For example if he needs materials he can research, reach the materials. They know how to learn, how to reach materials, how to create materials for their learning. Reaching knowledge, information, data and use for their own purposes. In order to be able to reach data they need to think and be aware of their need. So cognitively, autonomous learners are autonomous cognitively and metacognitively, particularly metacognitively. For example 'I need to do a research, I need to write a project'. In order to write a project first I need to manage my time - time management. I need to prepare a schedule- planning. After planning I need to create the means that I will need for that process. I need to make my own decision to reach data available and if it's not available where can I read the data.

2 I need to be able to do a plan first. Monitor the whole process, supposing that while doing or preparing the project if I face problems I will need to take decisions and eliminate them to be able to reach my aims. So planning, monitoring the process, evaluating the process and then I reached data, I found resources. I sat down and wrote the project. Even in the project if I am autonomous I don't know everything, I am not perfect. Go and ask information from different sources. There should be an aim that a person should reach. Autonomous learner means a person who can reach certain aim. But in reaching that aim a person needs certain characteristics. Autonomous person is the one who can survive on its own. But during this survival process just producing the end product is not everything. Okay product shows to a certain extent how autonomous the person is but the end product is the result of the process taking place. In the process the person should be involved to be able to produce the product. Autonomous learner also should be able to judge whatever she is producing. 'Okay I have written this'. I should be able to sit down, read and find the problems. Judgement. Self-evaluation.

ability: metacognitive skills

awareness: self

ability: metacognitive skills

ability: metacognitive skills

Example 2:

S: For me it is a process. They are trying to learn something. So there is a goal, doesn't matter what you are trying to learn, it might be a new skill, might be new knowledge. It is a process, not a one day thing. And you need to get support during this process. There are ups and downs. You need to apply different techniques, different tools depending on what you are trying to learn. You need to monitor how you are learning and if not learning well or if you are learning some aspects well and not the others, you need to revisit those. So for me, it is a process. And when I say independently I don't take it as one person living. I don't imagine a lone learner. Independent Learner for me is someone who knows where to get support, from who to get support, who can manage the resources well, who can reach resources, process information well and can manage the affective part of it.

Ben: How can you manage the affective part of this process?

S: I think it depends on the support as well. For example, to overcome anxiety. Anxiety can be a part of learning process. They may have assessment at the end of the day. This itself causes anxiety for most of the learners. To manage your anxiety like when you say autonomous learner, I think of Learners who can manage that side as well. Stress is another example.

Ben: and you think they have to have techniques to deal with them?

S: definitely and also they need to, not only maybe techniques but I myself most of the time, if you apply correct cognitive strategies if you can manage, if you monitor what you are learning, how you are learning, so if you can use metacognitive strategies, then this helps you to deal with anxiety and stress that is part of the learning process. So I don't see them as separate from each other, I see all of them as interrelated.

ability: metacognitive skills

learner autonomy: definition

ability: socio-affective skills

ability: socio-affective skills

Example 3:

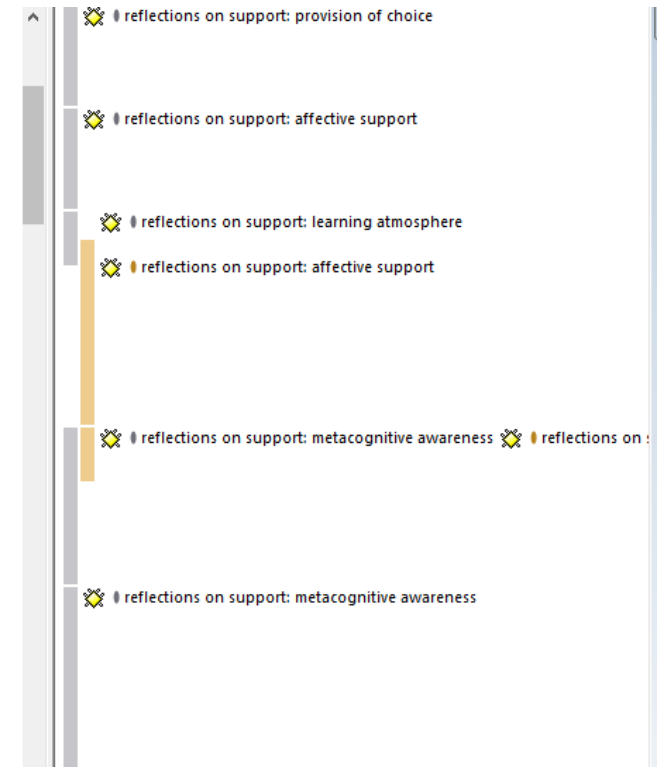
This was a group work activity and sts were given the freedom and opportunity to compare the 2 systems depending on the dimensions or criteria they were to come up with. The flexibility and the freedom were given so as to support their autonomy in learning. I provided them with 2 examples so as to encourage them to think over other dimensions.

In order to adjust and minimize their anxiety level, they were given the comfort to come up with any dimensions that they think might work. I think this has supported them in becoming autonomous because cognition works when affective filters are positively open. They were not limited so they felt more confident and this self-confidence I believe leads to autonomy.

I have also challenged them a bit by telling them the more original and different dimensions they came up with the more successful their products would be accepted. I also put down my own dimensions and as I walked around and checked their performance, I compared their list with my own and reinforced the group by telling them the dimensions we had in common. I believe this has intrinsically motivated them because they seemed to be proud of themselves when they witnessed the fact that they were able to come up with the same dimensions their instructors had on their own list. Making ss believe in themselves and their potential by intrinsically motivating them help develop their autonomy. They became convinced that they could succeed without the help of the instructor or the book.

Working in groups has also supported LA because they cognitively and affectively supported each other and came up with original dimensions with the help of the multiple perspectives – different voices combined in one group voice. The interdependence on the group members help ss follow each other's way of thinking and this causes metacognitive awareness. They automatically compare their way of thinking with their peer's way of thinking and this process helps them develop their autonomy by developing different thinking strategies and learning styles.

Another strategy I applied which I believe might have contributed to the development of their autonomy was my expectation of them to make use of the knowledge, concepts, theories they have learnt from other education courses. I encouraged them to link their previous knowledge from other courses to what they were doing at the moment. I helped them to activate the knowledge in their long-term memory and build up links to come up with wider and original dimensions. When sts see that they can integrate different knowledge in one task, they become more confident and more autonomous because knowledge activation makes them see their potential and believe in themselves.



Appendix 9: Sample Coding: Ability: Metacognitive Skills

**P 2: 1st interview.docx - 2:3 [They are creative. They should..] (13:13)
(Super)**

Codes: [ability: metacognitive skills]

No memos

They are creative. They should **question**. They should research from different ways. They should have an **inquisitive personality**. They should be initiative

**P 3: 1st interview.docx - 3:34 [Autonomous students immediate..] (41:41)
(Super)**

Codes: [ability: metacognitive skills]

No memos

Autonomous students immediately shape their thinking. 'Okay this is what I want to look at and learn' and they start. They ask questions after starting because they are not dependent on the teacher. **They do not believe that whatever comes out of the teacher's mouth is correct**. They are self-initiative. They have ideas and their own learning strategies. They make use of these.

**P 8:1st interview transcription.docx - 8:21 [if they can arrive at the reso..]
(69:69) (Super)**

Codes: [ability: metacognitive skills]

No memos

Evaluate the quality of info he found differentiating right from wrong, useful from useless because on the internet there are tons of information and s should take what he needs, eliminate info that is not correct...if they can arrive at the resource they need and also have the metacognitive skills we talked about and evaluate the source...

P12: 1st interview.docx - 12:10 [Autonomous ss question.] (20:20) (Super)

Codes: [ability: metacognitive skills]

No memos

Autonomous students **question**.

**P13: 1st interview.docx - 13:23 [Our students need to be able t.] (35:35)
(Super)**

Codes: [ability: metacognitive skills]

No memos

...students need to be able to **judge** its value, validity, reliability. ... you need to consult valid sources.

P15: 1st interview transcription.docx - 15:5 [Autonomous learner also should..] (12:12) (Super)

Codes: [ability: metacognitive skills]

No memos

Autonomous learner also should be able to **judge** whatever she is producing. 'Okay I have written this'. I should be able to sit down, read and find the problems. Judgement. Self-evaluation.

P 1: 1st interview.docx - 1:2 [Obviously we are not in the id..] (9:9) (Super)

Codes: [ability: metacognitive skills]

No memos

Obviously we are not in the ideal world but even in the most conservative Society, learners, young people should have to a certain extent freedom and also the **filter**, I mean the skills and the knowledge and some practical academic skills **so they can filter the things, any knowledge, any information given to them** by teachers should be subject to filtering and students should decide what is good for them and what is not.

P 1 1st interview.docx - 1:5 [Rejection. Our system is saying..] (13:13)

(Super)

Codes: [ability: metacognitive skills]

No memos

Rejection. Our system is saying we are teachers and we know everything so anything the teacher says is ok. But it might be out of date, wrong, not sufficient. **So students have got to reject what is given, that's filtering and do their own way.** So try to investigate what is given, to what is true. Because nothing is a hundred percent true. From my perspective as a teacher it may be true but from students perspective it might not be so applicable or suitable.

Appendix 10: Teacher Data General Notes

Ali

Freedom

No force: democratic

Filtering

Encourages ls to see different perspectives and not stuck to what is given by the t but judge/filter/reject, no prescriptions/critical approach

LA in our system not v practical/ educational and societal systems /student background but teachers should try to inseminate

give credit to originality

threatening ss-presentations

ss encouraged to give reasons and as long as the reasons are satisfying t accepts/values them.

Talk about his own experiences

Encourage cooperation

Asli

the first time I have heard autonomy but from the interview seems to support— basically refers to learning styles

different individuals learn in different ways. a variety of activities to reach different students.

When you do something new they think you will they will have difficulties.—

Remzi

Share criteria

Provision of choice

Cemre:

The interrelation among different components: provision of choice having an influence on affect, interdependence on metacognitive awareness and etc.

Link new learning to previous learning and to departmental courses

nurture intrinsic motivation: ss choose what interests them

provision of choice

too structured but views this as support

help them believe they can achieve

active ss: scenarios and ss come up with content

take on the right role to show what is teaching in practice

no coercion

less structure more creativity

link learning to other courses/areas

scenarios, cases

Filiz:

Cultural

Metacognitive: reflection

Wrote the diary as a reflection of the teacher support model

Gamze

Mainly talk about factors affecting

Reflection, monitor - to see where they are in the big picture

Comparison to link subjects and ss themselves with other ss

Gul

Learning styles, learning range

Individual responsibility taking even if in groups

Everyday examples, link to everyday lives

Grades very important

Teaches in her learning style

Affective support extrinsic- grades, competitive

Hulya

Locus of control/attribution of success

Learned helplessness

Cultural

give individual work to make sure that they take responsibility for their own learning

Threaten with grades

It is ls responsibility to learn and to motivate themselves

Affective support—extrinsic

Answers s qs

Ss coming up with content because they already know

Change in teaching style now –used to present, now ss active

A forum of discussion in class

Talk about the real problems in classes, not always the ideal

Autonomy in t's limits: as if ss birds in teachers hands Asked for presentation on LA

Imge

Help Self-discovery through reflective qs

Encourage getting help from different sources

T doing summary

Against knowledge reproduction but asks book knowledge in the exam

To be able to promote autonomy, teachers need to have background training

Meral

Autonomy can be built depending on the ability of the t

T overload influences teacher support

Ls used to T centred edu—system does not require LA

Projects, research, movies to be able to discuss the relationship of theoretical background to real life situations-link learning to everyday life and future careers
– outside learning the things not have the time to cover in class

Provision of choice

Mercan

LA should be taught earlier when they don't have time concerns and not have imp exams ahead

GW not competition but collaboration

Merve

Learner styles

Reflection at the end of each lesson/unit for motivation

link to personal aims/lives

Ss encouraged to find their own resources according to their own needs

grades imp

Nesrin

Reflection: diary writing

Give rationale

Rapport with ss

Share expectations

Note taking part of assessment to motivate to take notes—force them?

Allocate special time for planning, notetaking

Remzi

Is it possible to study in front of TV? Ss take photos of bb—cannot acknowledge ss way of study

Stops the lesson and talk to ss

Nesrin and Remzi tried a new style, not give notes until the exam and asked to read beforehand to encourage ownership but seems it didn't work-ss refused

Selvi

Questions: t/ss

Managing all sides-interrelated: metacognitive leading to stress management: no clear cut lines-all are interrelated

Facilitate monitoring by ss themselves writing qs

there are different sources of knowledge: Show other ss as resource

Selma

Mindmaps

Reflective qs

General notes

- Starts in the family—asli, ali
- Feedback-Selma, Cemre, Asli (a part of the criteria)
- nurture intrinsic motivation: Cemre, Asli

- active Is: Ali, Cemre, Asli (she presents first), Filiz ,Gamze, Gul, Merve, Hulya, Mercan
- bad experience teaches: cemre, Hulya
- talk about own experiences: Ali, Remzi, Nesrin, Filiz (other ss experiences), Hulya, Selvi
- help them believe they can achieve: cemre, Hulya, Ali, Nesrin
- value ss: Hulya, Cemre, Nesrin
- high expectations from ss- Cemre, Hulya
- appreciate originality: Ali, Cemre
- link learning to other courses: Cemre (and their own areas), Gamze,
- link to future careers/aims : Cemre, Gamze, Filiz, Hulya, Meral, Merve
- encourage multiperspective: Cemre, Ali, Gamze, Hulya, Imge
- cognitive support: cemre and Ali (analyse, synthesize), Nesrin and Remzi (notetaking)
- ss do to please the t: Hulya, Nesrin
- ss panic when they come to my course as no slides and it is I centred: Cemre, Gamze, Selvi, Meral—may be because volunteering teachers
- scenarios, cases to think about and also to empathize with: Cemre, Hulya, Gul, Gamze, Meral (films)
- open ended qs open to interpretation: Ali, Cemre, Hulya, Imge
mc qs: Asli, Gamze, Gul, Imge, Meral depending on class size, Merve
- English level of ss limitation: Filiz, Imge, Gul (Cypriot ones), Hulya (eastern)
- Nature of the course: Cemre, Filiz, Nesrin and Remzi: application classes are very different from kpss

not the aim of the course: Gul, Mercan, Remzi: no school policy

- Happy with teaching the same course with another person: Ali, Filiz, Merve, Selvi

Not prefers to teach with others: Meral

- Teacher education; Filiz, Cemre, Gamze, Imge
- Peer assessment- Gamze, Filiz
- Realised she has a teaching style: Gamze
- Similar content in different course in more detail: Gamze, Ali, Cemre, Hulya, Merve
- Ts need to be in collaboration to build autonomy: Gamze, Remzi, Ali, Meral, Mercan
- Attendance: Gamze, Hulya, Gul
- Mature ss more autonomous: Imge, Gul, Meral
- Teaching is a 2 way activity: Hulya, Imge
- Panic with new things: Remzi, Asli
- Cultural: Filiz, Hulya, Imge, Meral,
- Difficult to build autonomy now: Hulya, Mercan
- Answers s qs: Hulya, Selvi, Cemre, Imge, Merve
- T open to new learning: Ali, Imge, Cemre
- Would be good to have a meeting like community of practice: Imge, Gul, Selvi
- LA develops in time; Filiz, Nesrin, Remzi
- Learner training but not effective: Mercan
- Revision before exams

- Study side effect: Hulya, Merve, Selvi
- system does not require LA: Meral, Nesrin
- mc education system ss come from: Nesrin, Mercan
- may be nobody showed them before: Nesrin, Remzi
- aut ss ask qs before starting stg or after starting stg
- there needs to be a course: Remzi, Selvi
- Share expectations, course outline: Nesrin, Remzi, Selvi
- Source finding support: Remzi, Selvi, Mercan, Nesrin, Hulya,
- T overload limits what you can do: Meral, Selvi
- Preparedness of ss: Filiz, Selvi
- GW not competition but collaboration: Mercan, Selvi

Appendix 11: Teacher Support

Table

Ali (7)	Learning atmosphere Affective Metacognitive Information literacy Provision of choice Interdependence Learner training	Affective Provision of choice Interdependence Learner training Metacognitive Information literacy
Asli (6)	Learning atmosphere Provision of choice Interdependence Metacognitive Learner training Affective	Gamze (5) Metacognitive Interdependence Learning atmosphere Learner training Learning range
Cemre (8)	Learning atmosphere Affective Provision of choice Interdependence Learner training Metacognitive Information literacy Learning range	Gul (8) Metacognitive Affective Learning atmosphere Interdependence Learner training Information literacy Provision of choice Learning range
Filiz (7)	Learning atmosphere	Hulya (5) Provision of choice Interdependence Learning atmosphere Information literacy Metacognitive

Imge (8)	Provision of choice Metacognitive Affective Interdependence Information literacy Learning atmosphere Learning range Learner training
Meral (6)	Provision of choice Learner training Affective Metacognitive Learning atmosphere Interdependence
Mercan (6)	Learner training Interdependence Information literacy Learning atmosphere Metacognitive Provision of choice
Merve (7)	Metacognitive Provision of choice Interdependence

	Information literacy Learning atmosphere Learner training Learning range
Nesrin (5)	Metacognitive Learning atmosphere Learner training Affective Interdependence
Remzi (5)	Metacognitive Learning atmosphere Learner training Provision of choice Interdependence
Selvi (7)	Metacognitive Learning atmosphere Learner training Provision of choice Interdependence Information literacy Affective
Selma (6)	Learning atmosphere Affective

	Interdependence Metacognitive Learner training Provision of choice
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Appendix 12: Interview Schedule 1 TEs

1. What do you think of when you hear 'learner autonomy'?
2. What do you think the characteristics of autonomous learners are?
3. How important do you think it is for learners to be autonomous in the learning process?
4. What role, if any, do you think teachers have in promoting learner autonomy?
5. Do you think you support your learners in the development and implementation of learner autonomy? If yes, how? Why?

Appendix 13: Interview Schedule 2 TEs

1. How have you found the experience of supporting your learners in learner autonomy during the past two months?
2. What helped you do this? What barriers did you find?
3. How autonomous do you think your learners are? What makes you think like that?
4. How important do you think it is for learners to be autonomous in the learning process?
5. What is Teacher Autonomy for you? Give examples of what this means for you.

Appendix 14: Interview Schedule with STs May-June 2016

1. Do you have any interesting experiences you would like to share with me in terms of autonomous behaviours you displayed in your learning during the past two months?
2. Do you think you are autonomous as a learner?
3. What supports/limits you in developing and implementing autonomy in your learning?

Appendix 15: Teacher Data Code List

Code-Filter: All

HU: LEARNER AUTONOMY TEACHER DATA

File: [C:\Users\Fatma Basri\Desktop\analysis documents...\LEARNER AUTONOMY TEACHER DATA.hpr7]

Edited by: Super

Date/Time: 2018-01-26 15:14:33

ability: cognitive skills

ability: metacognitive skills

ability: socio-affective skills

awareness: self

awareness: teacher and learner roles

diary keeping

factors influencing teacher support: class size

factors influencing teacher support: education system

factors influencing teacher support: families

factors influencing teacher support: student

factors influencing teacher support: teacher autonomy

factors influencing teacher support: teachers themselves

importance of teacher support

learner autonomy: definition

learner autonomy: importance

learner dispositions: curiosity

learner dispositions: determination

learner dispositions: motivation

learner dispositions: self-esteem

possible to build autonomy

reflections on support: affective support
reflections on support: information literacy
reflections on support: interdependence
reflections on support: learner training
reflections on support: learning atmosphere
reflections on support: learning range
reflections on support: metacognitive awareness
reflections on support: provision of choice
results of teacher support
teacher awareness of teacher support
teacher support ???
views about Types of Support Provided: creating a conducive learning atmosphere
Views about Types of Support Provided: Facilitating Metacognitive Awareness
Views about Types of Support Provided: learning range
Views about Types of Support Provided: Providing Affective Support
Views about Types of Support Provided: Providing learner training
views about Types of Support Provided: Provision of choice
Views about Types of Support Provided: Supporting Information literacy
Views about Types of Support Provided: Providing Opportunities for Interdependence

Appendix 16: Student Data Code List

Code-Filter: All

HU: Learner Autonomy Student Data test

File: [C:\Users\Fatma Basri\Desktop\analysis documents\LE...\Learner
Autonomy Student Data test.hpr7]

Edited by: Super

Date/Time: 2018-01-26 15:21:49

ability: cognitive

ability: metacognitive

ability: socio-affective

awareness: aims

awareness: self

awareness: teacher learner roles

diary keeping

factors: class size

factors: context

factors: edu system

factors: student

factors: TA

factors: teacher

factors: teacher student relationships

L disposition: curiosity

L disposition: determination

L disposition: motivation

L disposition: self confidence

LA importance

LA practice: active learner

LA practice: affect

LA practice: managing resources

LA practice: managing social relationships

LA practice: metacognitive

LA practice: putting theory into practice

LA: definition: final

LA: definition: initial

meetings

result

TS: affect

TS: atmosphere

TS: choice

TS: info lit

TS: interdependence

TS: learner training

TS: learning range

Ts: metacognition

Appendix 17: Prospective Research Participants

Teacher Educators: There were 65 full time and 39 part time teacher educators in the Faculty of Education I conducted my research. I sent out a general call to all teacher educators. I informed them about the aims of my study and its requirements, and asked if they volunteered to take part in the study.

The call to teacher educators included the following information:

I have been working on a research study that aims to examine the support/practice of LA. At the beginning, volunteering participating TEs will be interviewed individually. Then they will be asked to keep diaries for a period of 2 months with one group of students they are teaching. Finally, they will be interviewed with their diaries as reference. Interviews will be held at mutually convenient times and each interview is expected to take about one hour.

Student Teachers: I asked participating TEs to allow me to spend 5 minutes in their classrooms to inform their learners about the aims and the requirements of the study, and to ask if they volunteered to take part.

The call to student teachers included the following information:

I have been working on a research study that aims to examine the support/practice of LA.

There will be group meetings with volunteering student teachers where discussions around the concept of learner autonomy will be held. Later, they will be asked to keep diaries for a period of two months. After the diary keeping process, they will be interviewed individually/in small focus groups. Interviews will be held at mutually convenient times and each interview is expected to take about one hour.

Appendix 18: Participant Information Sheet for Teacher Educators

School of Education

Project Title

Teacher Support for Learner Autonomy

Name of Researcher

Fatma Basri

Postgraduate Research Student, University of Nottingham

You have been invited to take part in a research study for which ethical approval has been received from School of Education. Before you agree to take part it is important to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to carefully read the following information. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Please think about it carefully and then decide whether you would like to take part or not.

Aims of the project

The study aims to examine teacher educators' and student teachers' perceptions of support/practice of learner autonomy.

What does this study involve?

First we will have an interview that will take maximum of one hour about your perceptions of LA support. Then you will be asked to keep a diary for a period of 2 months with one group of students you are teaching on how you support your learners in the development and implementation of learner autonomy. Finally, there will be another interview about how you supported your learners with diaries as reference. Interviews will be held at mutually convenient times and each interview is expected to take maximum of one hour.

Why have you been chosen?

You have volunteered to take part in this project.

Do you have to take part?

Participation in the research is completely voluntary, and participants have the right to withdraw at any time without prejudice or negative consequences. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a form giving your permission to take part.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

Loss of time may be the only possible disadvantage of taking part in this research.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Your taking part in this study will be kept strictly confidential and personal data will be stored until the date of publication. Research data will be stored for a minimum of seven years from the date of publication. In accordance with the British Educational Research Association's *Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (2011), all information collected while carrying out the study will be stored on a database which is password protected and strictly confidential. The digital and textual data resulting from the interviews will be kept in a secure and confidential location. Your name will **not** appear on any database or any information which is then published. Instead, a number will be used as an identifier on all data associated with you. The master copy of the names associated with each number will be kept in a secure and confidential location. The management of the research data will be in accordance with the University of Nottingham's Research Data Management Policy: <https://nottingham.ac.uk/research/research-data-management/creating-data/policies.aspx>

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research study will be written about in my PhD thesis. I will also talk about the findings from this research project at conferences, and publish papers including the results. Participants will also be given access to the research results and their confirmation will be sought.

What if something goes wrong? To whom can I complain?

In case you have a complaint on your treatment or anything to do with the study, you can contact the School of Education's Research Ethics Coordinator:

Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education

University of Nottingham

educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to contact me (Fatma Basri) or my supervisors (Philip Hood and Lucy Cooker) at any time, either before, during or after the research study, we can be reached at:

Fatma Basri English Preparatory School Xxxx University Famagusta Cyprus T: 0392 630 3288 ttxfb8@nottingham.ac.uk

Dr Philip Hood Room B81 Dearing Building Jubilee Campus Wollaton Road Nottingham NG8 1BB UK T: +44 115 951 4426 philip.hood@nottingham.ac.uk	Dr Lucy Cooker Room C80 Dearing Building Jubilee Campus Wollaton Road Nottingham NG8 1BB UK T: +44 115 951 4437 lucy.cooker@nottingham.ac.uk
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Thank you for your time and for taking part in this study.

Appendix 19: Participant Information Sheet for Student Teachers
School of Education

Project Title

Teacher Support for Learner Autonomy

Name of Researcher

Fatma Basri

Postgraduate Research Student, University of Nottingham

You have been invited to take part in a research study for which ethical approval has been received from School of Education. Before you agree to take part it is important to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to carefully read the following information. Please ask me if there is anything that is not clear, or if you would like more information. Please think about it carefully and then decide whether you would like to take part or not.

Aims of the project

The study aims to examine teacher educators' and student teachers' perceptions of support/practice of learner autonomy.

What does this study involve?

There will be three fortnightly workshop meetings with student teachers where you will be able to discuss and construct your own frameworks around the concept of learner autonomy. You will be asked to keep diaries for a period of two months on the autonomous behaviours you display in your own learning. In the fortnightly meetings, you will reflect on your experiences. Finally, you will be interviewed individually/in focus groups. Interviews will be held at mutually convenient times and each interview is expected to take a maximum of one hour.

Why have you been chosen?

You have volunteered to take part in this project.

Do you have to take part?

Participation in the research is completely voluntary, and participants have the right to withdraw at any time without prejudice or negative consequences. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and asked to sign a form giving your permission to take part.

What are the possible disadvantages of taking part?

Loss of time may be the only possible disadvantage of taking part in this research.

Your course grades will not be affected by your involvement in the study.

Will my taking part in this study be kept confidential?

Your taking part in this study will be kept strictly confidential and personal data will be stored until the date of publication. Research data will be stored for a minimum of seven years from the date of publication. In accordance with the British Educational Research Association's *Revised Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research* (2011), all information collected while carrying out the study will be stored on a database which is password protected and strictly confidential. The digital and textual data resulting from the interviews will be kept in a secure and confidential location. Your name will **not** appear on any database or any information which is then published. Instead, a number will be used as an identifier on all data associated with you. The master copy of the names associated with each number will be kept in a secure and confidential location. The management of the research data will be in accordance with the University of Nottingham's Research Data Management Policy: <https://nottingham.ac.uk/research/research-data-management/creating-data/policies.aspx>

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results of the research study will be written about in my PhD thesis. I will also talk about the findings from this research project at conferences, and publish papers including the results. Participants will also be given access to the research results and their confirmation will be sought.

What if something goes wrong? To whom can I complain?

In case you have a complaint on your treatment or anything to do with the study, you can contact the School of Education's Research Ethics Coordinator:

Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education

University of Nottingham

educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

Contact for Further Information

If you would like to contact me (Fatma Basri) or my supervisors (Lucy Cooker and Philip Hood) at any time, either before, during or after the research study, we can be reached at:

<p>Fatma Basri English Preparatory School Xxxx University Famagusta Cyprus T: 0392 630 3288 ttxfb8@nottingham.ac.uk</p>	
<p>Dr Philip Hood Room B81 Dearing Building Jubilee Campus Wollaton Road Nottingham NG8 1BB UK T: +44 115 951 4426 philip.hood@nottingham.ac.uk</p>	<p>Dr Lucy Cooker Room C80 Dearing Building Jubilee Campus Wollaton Road Nottingham NG8 1BB UK T: +44 115 951 4437 lucy.cooker@nottingham.ac.uk</p>

Thank you for your time and for taking part in this study.

Appendix 20: Participant Consent Form

Project title: Teacher Support for Learner Autonomy

Researcher's name: Fatma Basri

Supervisor's name: Dr Philip Hood

Dr Lucy Cooker

- I have read the Participant Information Sheet and the nature and purpose of the research project has been explained to me. I understand and agree to take part.
- I understand the purpose of the research project and my involvement in it.
- I understand that I may withdraw from the research project at any stage and that this will not affect my status now or in the future.
- I understand that while information gained during the study may be published, I will not be identified and my personal results will remain confidential.
- I understand that I will be recorded during the interview.
- I understand that information will be stored on a database which is password protected and strictly confidential. The digital and textual data resulting from the interviews will be kept in a secure and confidential location. My name will **not** appear on any database or any information which is then published. The master copy of the names associated with each number will be kept in a secure and confidential location, and will only be accessible by the researcher.
- I understand that I may contact the researcher or supervisors if I require further information about the research, and that I may contact the Research Ethics Coordinator of the School of Education, University of Nottingham, if I wish to make a complaint relating to my involvement in the research.

Signed

Print name:

Date:

Contact details

Researcher: ttxfb8@nottingham.ac.uk

Supervisors: Dr. Philip Hood: Philip.hood@nottingham.ac.uk

Dr. Lucy Cooker: lucy.cooker@nottingham.ac.uk

School of Education Research Ethics Coordinator:
educationresearchethics@nottingham.ac.uk

Appendix 21: Full Model of Teacher Support for Learner Autonomy

<p>Metacognition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Promote planning/learning plans ➤ Encourage reflection and monitoring: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage discussion on critical understanding of teacher and learner roles • Encourage expression of learner expectations from teacher/course • Share Criteria • Encourage questioning and filtering of information received • Encourage reflection on learning process as well as content ➤ Facilitate centring learning ➤ Facilitate development of criticality 	<p>Learner Training:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage responsibility taking ➤ Learner Strategies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce learner strategies • Give opportunities to practise learner strategies ➤ Information literacy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Guidance on sourcing and navigating learning resources ➤ Direct learners to resources rather than giving answers/solutions ➤ Time management 	<p>Learning atmosphere:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage active learning involvement in the process through the design of lessons (use of elicitation techniques rather than presentations, project-work, research based lessons, create opportunities for learners to put into practice what they have been learning ➤ Acknowledge and encourage flexibility in ways of learning ➤ Provide choice and encourage decision-making ➤ Encourage risk-taking ➤ Take learners' perspective ➤ Avoid coercion/ interference ➤ Be careful with implicit/direct messages conveyed to learners
<p>Interdependence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Encourage collaboration with other students and teachers ➤ Encourage learners to seek support from other students and teachers ➤ Encourage learners to compare their knowledge and learning methods with other students 	<p>Affect:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Nurture intrinsic motivation ➤ Help learners develop self-confidence ➤ Convey the feeling of trust to learners ➤ Respect learners as individuals and the work they produce ➤ Provide explanatory rationales ➤ Empathise with learners and try to understand their feelings/fears ➤ Encourage learners to accept stress as a normal component in the learning process 	