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**An exploration of the development of student-teacher autonomy and the role of professional identity and mentoring: A case study of ESOL trainees in a northern university in Mexico.**

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics/ ELT

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# University of Southampton

## <u>Abstract</u>

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Research on teacher autonomy, professional identity and mentoring of student-teachers and
novice teachers has influenced the field of teacher education as evidenced by their inclusion in
the research agendas of the two most important associations of English teachers around the
world: TESOL and IATEFL. Because of this, higher education institutions offering teacher training
programmes seem to be concerned with fostering both learner and teacher autonomy and with
aiding in the construction of a positive and strong professional identity. To achieve this,
universities have added to the curricula of their teaching training programmes the element of
mentoring, as it has been demonstrated through the literature that it affects the development of
both autonomy and identity in teachers (Galbraith, 2003; McKimm et al, 2003; Harrison et al,
2005; Larose et al, 2005; Walkington, 2005; Mullen, 2012; Izadinia, 2015).

However, the focus of research on these areas has been on learners and teachers but there seems
to be little empirical evidence regarding student-teachers. Student-teachers hold a strong learner
identity at the same time that their identity as teachers starts to develop. The way both identities
are shaped and re-shaped could have an impact on their teaching practice and therefore on the
development of their autonomy as student-teachers, as teachers and as students.

Hence, given the importance of these areas and the apparent gap in researching student-
teachers, this study attempts to explore the ways in which student-teacher autonomy may be
impacted by the development of their professional identity through the different types of
mentoring that might occur during their teaching practicum. Data was gathered from four cohorts

of student-teachers during the practicum stage of a B.A. in English programme in the north of Mexico between January 2015 and December 2016.

Findings suggest that autonomy may develop in student-teachers during practicum and that it seems to run in parallel with the shaping and re-shaping of their identity. In addition, findings show that mentoring and context seem to play a secondary role in the development of student-teacher autonomy compared to the influence that identity has.

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# Academic Thesis: Declaration Of Authorship

**An exploration of the development of student-teacher autonomy and the role of professional identity and mentoring: A case study of ESOL trainees in a northern university in Mexico.**

I, Lizette Drusila Flores Delgado declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and have been generated by me as the result of my own original research.

I confirm that:

1. This work was done wholly or mainly while in candidature for a research degree at this University;
2. Where any part of this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree or any other qualification at this University or any other institution, this has been clearly stated;
3. Where I have consulted the published work of others, this is always clearly attributed;
4. Where I have quoted from the work of others, the source is always given. With the exception of such quotations, this thesis is entirely my own work;
5. I have acknowledged all main sources of help;
6. Where the thesis is based on work done by myself jointly with others, I have made clear exactly what was done by others and what I have contributed myself;
7. None of this work has been published before submission.


Signed:   Lizette Drusila Flores Delgado

Date:      October 12, 2019

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# Chapter 1:    Introduction of the study

This research, in a university in northern Mexico, seeks to explore the ways in which autonomy develops among four cohorts of student-teachers who are training to teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) in local schools. It focuses in particular, on the role of professional identity in the development of learner and teacher autonomy as well as on the influence of their school-based English teacher mentors who are meant to guide and support them. For the purposes of this study, learner autonomy is used not in the more common sense of management of language learning (e.g. Cotterall, 1995; Little, 1995; Lamb, 2008; Benson, 2013;) but rather in the sense of student-teachers *learning* to develop their teaching skills through practice. Teacher autonomy is used in the sense of *controlling* and *making decisions* on their teaching, both in the planning of their classes and in the classroom (e.g. Thavenius, 1990; Smith; 2003, Carter, 2005).

This study analyses the ways in which the participants' identities, both as learners and teachers, are shaped and re-shaped during their practicum. It also examines whether this shaping and re-shaping has an impact on their teaching practice and on the development of their autonomy as learners, as teachers, and as student-teachers. In this way, this thesis sets out to explore the potential relationships between student-teacher autonomy, identity and mentoring.

This chapter presents the context of the study, rationale and the research questions and chapter overview.

## 1.1    Research rationale

I have realized through my experience as both an English teacher and a teacher trainer that autonomy seems to play a role in the decisions that student-teachers, learners and teachers make in the classroom. I have also noticed that the way they perceive themselves can affect the decisions that they make in their teaching practice.

The B.A. in English Language (*Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa*), which is the focus of this study, introduced a teaching practicum course in 2010 for students in their last term of this nine-semester programme. The participants were amongst the first four cohorts to take the course. By exploring the ways in which student-teachers develop their autonomy at the same time that their professional identity is shaped and re-shaped during their practicum, the institution where the research took place could later use the findings of this study to improve their TESOL courses. This could potentially aid in the development of a positive teacher identity that would help student-

teachers to become autonomous teachers and, thus, better prepared professionals when they enter the labour market.

 However, after reading the research literature on teacher autonomy and professional identity, it seems that the trend in current studies is focusing on either learners or teachers but there seems to be less empirical evidence regarding the development of autonomy in student-teachers (pre-service teachers) and the factors that might influence it during their first experiences in the classroom.

Student-teachers, by definition, hold a strong learner identity but at the same time are shaping their identity as teachers. Researchers, in light of their dual identity, have also called them teacher learners (Cliff, 1998; Thomas et al, 1998; Richards, 2008), teacher trainees (Croft, 1980; Yong, 1995; Bastick, 2000), pupil-teachers (Turney, 1982; Coppock, 1997; Azeem, 2011), prac-teachers (Marchant, 1992; Boger, 2000; Jetnikoff, 2011) and pre-service teachers (Harmer, 2001; Peacock, 2001; Zheng, 2009). Nevertheless, the term student-teachers is used in this thesis as it refers to those students who are not yet certified to teach English and emphasizes their role as being registered in a B.A. teacher training programme.

Student-teacher autonomy is, thus, the main area of study in this thesis. There has been considerable research on teacher and learner autonomy, teacher and learner identity, and mentoring in teacher education (see 2.1 for autonomy, 2.2 for identity and 2.3 for mentoring). For instance, Benson (2011), Lamb (2008) and Gardner (2000) among others, have researched autonomy in language learners, while Thavenius (1990), Aoki (2001), and Carter (2005) regarding autonomy in language teachers. Other researchers have looked at the development and shaping of the professional identity of both native and non-native language teachers (E.g., Flores & Day, 2006; Beauchamp &Thomas, 2009; Varghese et al, 2005; Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010), while others explore the effects of mentoring in language teachers and learners (E.g., Galbraith, 2003: Harrison, 2005; McKimm, 2007; McCall, 2011). Carter (2005) and Everhard (2012) argue that learner autonomy aims at the development and improvement of learning skills and encourages lifelong learning and continuing education (see 2.1). In this thesis, due to the fact that the participants were student-teachers, the main focus was on the development of teacher autonomy through the awareness and experience of learner autonomy.

For the purposes of this study, and in line with Carter (2005), Little (2007), Benson & Voller (2013) and Esch (2013), among others, teacher autonomy was, therefore, analysed as the ability teachers have to self-direct their professional practice. This includes (but is not limited to) freedom of decision in the classroom in terms of the strategies, methods and approaches selected for the better development of the students' skills and learning. It was also analysed as the responsibility

and control the student-teachers exercise over their own professional improvement, development and learning, and the willingness and efforts teachers make to encourage and develop autonomy in their learners.

It has been suggested that the perception student-teachers have of themselves affects the development of their professional identity. Thus, another major area of this research is identity. Walkington (2005) defines professional identity as the beliefs one has about teaching and being a teacher which tend to change through life and professional experiences. During practicum, the student-teacher is exposed to real life practice with the support of a mentor, and it is because of this that researchers have found that through mentoring, professional identity can be shaped and re-shaped (Elliot & Calderhead, 1995; Walkington, 2005; Harrison et al, 2005; Delaney, 2012) (See chapter 2.2). According to McKimm et al (2003), professional identity is related to collaboration as it is shaped during the interaction and cooperation occurring in the practicum environment between the mentor, student teacher, students, and institutional authorities. For the purposes of this research, professional identity was analysed as the perceptions (how they see themselves) and beliefs (how they feel) student-teachers have about their professional practice, which is dynamic as it is shaped and re-shaped by their environment, experiences, and the professional relationships they forge with their mentors, students, co-workers and educational authorities.

Flores and Day, (2006) argue that identity has an impact on teacher attrition, which tends to occur during the first five years of the teaching career. The stronger the sense of identity of the teachers, the more likely they are to stay in the profession and to be motivated and committed to their work. Therefore, if the shaping of a strong identity in teachers impacts their performance and permanence in the profession, it is of relevance to attempt to strengthen their teaching identity while they are still students.

Mentoring, which the research literature suggests may influence the development of both autonomy and identity, is the third main area of this thesis. A way to achieve autonomy in student-teachers is through mentoring during the practicum element of their educational programme. McKimm, Jollie, & Hatter (2003) argue that mentoring novice teachers provides them with experience and confidence while developing their teaching skills before actually entering the labour market, thus giving them a professional advantage over those novice teachers who were not mentored. At the same time, they claim that mentoring affects the shaping of their professional identity due to the interaction student-teachers have not only with their mentors but also with the students, other teachers, institutional authorities and even parents (see 2.3).

In this study, mentoring occurred when student-teachers taking the TESOL: Practicum class were assigned English teachers from schools in the community as mentors. They observed, worked with

and learned from them during a 16-week period. For the purposes of this study and in line with Galbraith (2003), Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010), McCall (2011) and Ehrich (2013) mentoring was defined as a reciprocal interaction where a mentor emotionally, personally, professionally and academically supports a mentee allowing both to fully develop their skills in a collaborative relationship to achieve professional growth.

The research literature also shows an apparent connection between autonomy, identity and mentoring in teacher training programmes. However, although the possible relationships between these concepts have been studied between two out of the three, that is, the possible connections between autonomy and identity, identity and mentoring, and autonomy and mentoring, there seems to be no research in which all three have been studied together, which is why this possible relationship has not been clearly identified yet. For example, studies carried out by Dincer et al (2010), Liu & Fu (2011), Adamson & Sert (2012) and Wang & Zhang (2013) talk about the impact of mentoring on autonomy. Sachs (2001), Everhard (2012), and Kiely & Askham (2012) discuss the relationship between autonomy and identity while Walkington (2005) and Devos (2010) researched how mentors shape the identity formation of new teachers.

In addition, the research agendas of the biggest language teaching associations in the world, TESOL and IATEFL, have emphasised the relevance of autonomy, identity and mentoring by including them as research priorities. The TESOL International Association research agenda (founded in the USA) presents the current trends around the world in the area of English teaching for students of other languages, and in the 2014 version questions regarding the role of teacher training and teaching practice (including the shaping and development of their autonomy and identity and the role of mentoring) were added to their *directions for research inquiry* section (Coombe et al 2014: 10). Likewise, the International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language (IATEFL, founded in the U.K.) includes among its special interest groups one on learner and teacher autonomy, another on teacher development and one more on teacher training and education.

 Because of this, at the current time higher education institutions that offer teacher training programmes are fostering both learner and teacher autonomy and aiding in the construction of a positive and strong professional identity. To achieve this, universities have added the element of mentoring to the curricula of their teacher training programmes, as it has been demonstrated through the literature that it may have an impact on the development of both autonomy and identity in student-teachers. Some research literature also suggests that if mentoring is carried out appropriately, mentors can even have a positive effect in the lifelong learning and

development of teachers (Galbraith, 2003; McKimm et al, 2003; Harrison et al, 2005; Larose et al, 2005; Walkington, 2005; Mullen, 2012; Izadinia, 2015. See 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3).

This study seeks to explore the potential relationship among these three areas in the field of language teacher training that could have an impact on the professional development of student-teachers. In addition, this study explores how student-teachers experience autonomy and how they develop and express their teacher autonomy during their practicum.

This exploratory mixed methods case study with an emphasis on an interpretative qualitative approach (Creswell, 2003) was carried out between January 2015 and December 2016. The perceptions of 65 student-teachers from four different cohorts were analysed through the collection of data gathered from reflective journals, focus groups, questionnaires and interviews. Information was gathered as they taught English in different schools in a northern city in Mexico as part of the teaching practicum course (see Appendix B for a description of the schools). Findings suggest that student-teachers may have a simplistic understanding of autonomy but that they exhibit autonomous behaviour at a deeper level, that the identity of student-teachers plays a bigger role in the development of their autonomy than the process of being mentored per se, and that a positive and strong learner and teacher identity and the influence of a good mentor can impact the development of autonomy in student-teachers and, as a consequence, lead to improvement in their teaching skills.

## 1.2    Context of the study

The teaching of English as a foreign language has been promoted and encouraged by the Mexican government for approximately 20 years, due to the proximity between Mexico and the USA and as a consequence of globalization and the need for speaking English for work, education and social purposes. The last two presidential terms (President Felipe Calderón and President Enrique Peña Nieto) encouraged the inclusion of English in public education through the PRONI (National English Programme, SEP, 2015)[1], formerly known as PNIEB (National English Programme in Basic Education).[2] This governmental programme made English mandatory in the public elementary and secondary schools' curricula.

In Mexico, the government funds public schools and extra courses that are not mandatory are paid by the parents as part of agreements between them and the school authorities. Before this, English was taught only in public schools that wanted or could afford to pay for the extra courses

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[1] See PRONI Operational Rules:
http://www.dof.gob.mx/DOFmobile/nota_detalle_popup.php?codigo=5421425
[2] See PNIEB official website: http://www.pnieb.net/inicio.html

and, as a consequence, not all children had the opportunity to learn English at school. Since the inclusion of this programme at a national level, the importance and demand of having well-prepared, professional English teachers have increased.

The B.A. of English that is the focus of this study began in 1983. The major specialises in teaching English and in translation and is supported by linguistics and literature courses. According to its founding professors, the major emerged from the need to provide professional English teachers and translators to the society of this northern state. Due to the changing society and the sudden need for hiring professional English teachers, this programme has undergone several curriculum re-designs, being the current one implemented in 2010. This B.A. programme consists of nine semesters (four and a half years) and in the curriculum re-design of 2010 the course TESOL: Practicum was added to 9[3] semester (Licenciatura en Lengua Inglesa, 2009).

Research carried out for the re-design of the programme showed that graduates and employers considered the need of adding real practice to the programme. Although students take English as a Foreign Language (EFL) methodology and linguistic courses since the first years of the major, graduates claimed that they would have liked to practice in a real classroom context before finishing university. This, to learn "first hand" what is like to be in front of a real class with real students and practice their teaching skills with them, instead of only being exposed to teaching in simulated situations (microteaching) with their classmates during their TESOL (Teaching English for Students of Other Languages) courses (Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, 2008).

This B.A. programme provides students with theory on TESOL methodology and it allows student-teachers to practice in classroom simulated microteaching sessions. However, by their last year at university, not all of them have acquired experience as actual teachers and as a consequence, their TESOL: Practicum course is their first practical experience with real classroom teaching. However, as this major prepares students to become teachers and translators, a few of them have a negative or neutral teacher identity as they are not interested in teaching and are sometimes reluctant to take this mandatory course.

Nevertheless, most student-teachers that participated in this study seemed to have a positive teacher identity and some had teaching experience before their practicum. Those participants who had previous teaching experience, however, worked in private language schools with small groups of motivated language learners. They did not have experience working in schools contexts like the ones where they carried out their practicum, that is, with more than thirty students where English was an extra class and therefore, students were not always driven or interested in

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[3] See http://www.ffyl.uach.mx/lengua.html

learning. Therefore, all the participants were in a new, unfamiliar context, which could have affected their perceptions of teaching and learning.

As mentioned before, the participants of this study were among the first four cohorts of students taking the practicum course. This is one of the reasons why I decided to conduct this study: as this class was new and I was going to be one of the professors supervising it, I wanted to see in what ways, if any, the development of student-teacher autonomy was influenced by the parallel construction and re-construction of their professional identity while being mentored, in an attempt to gather information that could improve the TESOL courses taught at the university.

According to the TESOL: Practicum class syllabus, the main goal of the course is the development of a reflective, well-informed and practice-based philosophy of teaching and learning of English to speakers of other languages. The course attempts to provide student-teachers with an opportunity to interact, observe and perform with English teachers and students in a real classroom environment to provide them with real practice, as, before this course, they mainly had only simulated practice (see Appendix A).

For the development of this course, at the beginning of the semester student-teachers choose a university professor to supervise their practicum. There are usually between two and four practicum supervisors, depending on the number of students who take the course each semester. The researcher of this study is one of the supervisors of this course. Then, they are randomly assigned to a school in the city and to an English teacher mentor from that institution to carry out their practicum.

The random pairing of student-teachers with their mentors, unfortunately, does not guarantee an adequate pairing between them (pairing mentor-mentee is discussed more in-depth in section 2.3.4). Schools that receive the student-teachers are chosen because the university approached them based on convenience, that is, schools near the university or schools that tend to hire graduates of the programme (which is the most common situation). In other cases, the schools approached the university because they needed student-teachers to take over their English courses or to assist their English teachers. Then, each school chooses the teachers that will be mentors and how many mentors each student-teacher will have according to its needs.

As the B.A. programme does not have any saying in who the mentors are, mentors do not receive any training. Even though at the beginning of the term they are notified in writing of the activities that the student-teachers are required to do during their practicum to pass the course (see Appendix A), each school and mentor have their views on what they should do in the classroom.

Therefore, the experiences of student-teachers regarding mentoring vary depending on the school where they carry out their practicum or on the mentor they get assigned to (see 3.2).

Nevertheless, the university that offers this B.A. programme trains students to be able to work in the different types of institutions. Hence, the analysis of the different experiences of the student-teachers in the variety of contexts where they carry out their practicum could provide information that might help the university improve their TESOL courses.

## 1.3 Aim of the study and research questions

This study seeks to analyse the experiences of four cohorts of ESOL student-teachers and explores how their autonomy develops during their teaching practicum. It examines the impact of their practicum mentors and how their professional identity influences their emerging autonomy.

It sets out to answer the following questions from the perspectives of the student-teachers themselves through analysis of their weekly reflective training diaries and use of other research instruments such as focus groups, questionnaires and one to one interviews (see 3.3):

RQ1: In what ways do student-teachers perceive autonomy and how does this perception change over time?

RQ2: In what ways does the development of autonomy change in student-teachers during practicum?

RQ3: in what ways does the shaping of identity of student-teachers during practicum influence the development of autonomy?

RQ4: in what ways does the process of mentoring of student-teachers during practicum influence the development of autonomy?

RQ5: In what ways do the experiences student-teachers acquire during practicum affect their professional practice as novice teachers?

The first question leads us to explore the ways participants understand and express autonomy as they are playing the roles of both teachers and students. It also seeks to determine if there is congruency between the understanding of autonomy student-teachers hold and the autonomous behaviour they exhibit during their practicum. Since this research is based on the perspectives of the student-teachers, this behaviour was analysed based on the self-reported activities that they described in the instruments used to collect data.

The second question attempts to describe the possible changes in the way student-teachers experience autonomy from the beginning to the end of their practicum. The third and fourth questions consider how professional identity and mentoring may impact the development of autonomy in student-teachers in an attempt to see if there are any links among the development of the three areas and if they are correlated or not. Finally, the fifth question attempts to see the ways the development of autonomy, identity and the process of mentoring student-teachers may have an impact in their professional practice once they become novice teachers.

The following chapters explore the concepts of autonomy, identity and mentoring and present a detailed description of this study. Chapter two, Theoretical Framework, presents an overview of the literature and research that has been conducted regarding the three main areas of focus: autonomy (see 2.1), identity (see 2.2) and mentoring (see 2.3). It also includes a subsection dealing with the sociocultural approach in these three areas (see 2.4). Chapter three, Methodology presents an overall description of the design of this study. Chapter four, student teacher autonomy, and the development of professional identity and the mentoring process, reports on findings from the categories that resulted from the analysis described in the methodology section. Chapter five, discussion, analyses the findings of the previous section while attempting to answer the research questions. Finally, the last chapter, conclusions, summarises the main findings and contributions of this thesis while presenting recommendations for further research and describing the limitations of the study.

# Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework

This second chapter provides a discussion of current thinking on student and teacher autonomy, the development of professional identity, and the mentoring of language teachers. It is divided into four main sections discussing the theories and research findings that underpin the study.

The first section provides the central elements of autonomy and the process by which it emerges in the teaching practice of student-teachers. It is divided into three subsections. It discusses current thinking in the area of autonomy to establish the possible importance of its development in student- teachers (see 2.1.1). Then, it examines autonomy, collaboration, and motivation in an attempt to establish the first links between mentoring (collaboration) and autonomy (see 2.1.2). The last sub-section describes the factors (social and contextual) that affect autonomy and considers what autonomy is from a social-cognitive perspective, thus linking autonomy with identity (see 2.1.3).

The second section elaborates on identity as being dynamic and its relationship to autonomy and mentoring. It also discusses how professional identity is perceived in the research literature, describes different types of identity  (see 2.2.1), and examines how it is shaped and re-shaped through experience (see 2.2.2). The last part of this section explores the different types of tensions that novice teachers may experience and how these can affect their professional identity (see 2.2.3). Identity in this section is conceived as dynamic, developing through collaboration and time, and therefore linked to mentoring and autonomy.

The third section addresses mentoring. It begins by exploring how mentoring has evolved since the 1980s to identify the current thinking in this area. It also distinguishes the concept of mentoring from similar notions to make clear why mentoring was chosen over the other concepts and distinguishes among the types of mentoring as conceptualized by Galbraith (2003) and Ehrich (2013), by Ensher & Murphy (2011), and by Mullen (2012) (see 2.3.1). A second subsection describes the benefits of implementing mentoring in education and its influence on student-teachers (see 2.3.2) while a third sub-section describes the three approaches of mentoring student-teachers described by Maynard & Furlong (1995) to familiarise with important concepts that were used for the development of this thesis (see 2.3.3). The fourth sub-section discusses the conditions necessary for successful mentoring and the effects personality might have upon it (see 2.3.4). The final sub-section explores the relationships between mentors and student-teachers in terms of collaboration, reflective practice, commitment and the possible development of autonomy (see 2.3.5).

The last section explores the sociocultural approach in the development of mentoring. It describes the different roles context and environment play in studies related to autonomy, identity and mentoring (see 2.4) as the different school contexts where student-teachers did their practicum might affect the way these three areas of study developed. It thus describes the role of context to establish the theoretical framework on which this research has been grounded.

## 2.1     Autonomy in language teaching and learning

The main focus of this study is student-teacher autonomy and its potential relationship with professional identity and with mentoring.

The concept of autonomy in teaching and learning has become a key focus of the educational agenda in the past two decades. As new technologies integrate new modes of education, learners are more able to take control of and make decisions regarding their own learning (Combee et al, 2014). Research on autonomy to date has primarily focused on language learners. Theory-based discussion to describe the relationship between learner autonomy and learning outcomes has been conducted rather than practical research (Little, 2007; Benson, 2013; Bajrami, 2015; Ceylan, 2015). To a lesser degree, research has looked at autonomy in student and/or novice teachers (Smith, 2003; Benson, 2008; Trebbi, 2008), and there seems to be a literature gap in the research regarding the autonomy of student-teachers.

Because of this, this study considers both learner autonomy and teacher autonomy to attempt to understand how student-teacher autonomy develops. Through the development of this study, it is intended to clarify these concepts and to investigate the nature of teacher autonomy to identify elements of learner autonomy that can be also found in student-teacher autonomy and the way it might develop and change during the practicum stage of a B.A. programme. Filling this gap is a key step in understanding the possible development of autonomy in student-teachers. The literature seems to suggest that outside their professional training, autonomous teachers who were autonomous learners (or student-teachers) tend to stay in the profession and to see teaching as an on-going process that might turn them into lifelong learners and, therefore, up-to-date teachers (Carter, 2005; Ponton & Rhea, 2006; Bajrami, 2015). A discussion of how autonomy develops in education will be presented in the following sub-sections to clarify why it is an important element of this study.

### 2.1.1     Defining autonomy in the educational context: learner and teacher autonomy

Learner autonomy has been more widely researched than teacher autonomy. The concept of learner autonomy in the educational context is difficult to define in the broad sense as it entails

elements that often confuse it with the concepts of independent and self-directed learning. Benson and Voller (2013) use the distinction made by Dickinson (1992) regarding autonomy and independence, independence being the action of taking active responsibility for one's own learning while autonomy refers to learning alone. Breen and Mann (2013) also distinguish between autonomy and independence considering autonomous learning when the learner is in charge of controlling what he learns, while independent learning refers to a switch of responsibility from the teacher to the learner. Self-directed learning, as Trebbi (2008) mentions, refers to that in which the learner is able to make decisions related to learning objectives, activities, and assessment.

However, these definitions are not definitive, as still many other authors relate autonomy to responsibility. For example, learner autonomy refers to the learner accepting and/or taking responsibility for their own learning ( Holec, 1981; Dickinson, 1987; Boud, 1988; Little, 1995; Gardner, 2000; Lamb, 2008; Benson, 2011; Voller, 2013) and for monitoring or assessing their progress  (Cotterall, 1995; Gardner, 2000).

 Cotterall claims that learner autonomy follows a philosophical, practical, and pedagogical rationale. The philosophical rationale refers to the learners having "the right to make choices with regard to their learning" (1995: 219) that will help them to become more independent. The practical rationale to promote autonomy derives from the fact that the teacher will not always be available to help or guide the learners, so they must be capable of learning on their own and taking responsibility for their own learning. Finally, the pedagogical rationale behind the encouragement of learner autonomy refers to the fact that "learners become more efficient in their language learning if they do not have to spend time waiting for the teacher to provide them with resources to solve their problems" (Cotterall, 1995: 220) as they have the tools to find them themselves.

Teacher autonomy, on the other hand, is an emerging concept and thus, its relationship with learner autonomy is not yet clear. Nevertheless, some authors argue that it can refer to the teachers accepting responsibility concerning their own teaching (Aoki, 2000, cited by Smith, 2003) and their willingness to help students become autonomous learners (Thavenius, 1990). At the same time, Benson and Voller (2013) claim that autonomy allows learners to study on their own while Sheerin (2013) uses Knowles (1975) definition that autonomy also refers to the ability of learners being proactive in their own learning. Other authors also argue that learner autonomy refers to the quality of being able to take control of their own learning (Benson, 2008; Benson, 2011; Breen & Mann, 2013).

It seems, therefore, that both learner and teacher autonomy are broader concepts that involve independence and self-directedness as well as responsibility and control (Dickinson, 1995; Smith, 2003; Ponton & Rhea, 2006; Little, 2007; Smith & Erdogan, 2008; Benson & Voller, 2013). Benson (2013A) argues that although definitions of autonomy vary, there seems to be a consensus on two points: "that it is an attribute or capacity of the learner that must be developed and sustained over time through the conscious efforts of the learner" and that "as a capacity, [it] is concerned with the exercise of 'control' over learning, or as others have put it, taking 'charge of' or 'responsibility for'" (p. 3).  Taking all these concepts into consideration, it can be said that teacher autonomy refers to the ability teachers have to self-direct their professional practice. This includes (but it is not limited to) the freedom to make decisions in the classroom in terms of the strategies, methods and approaches selected for the better development of their skills and learning as learner-teachers and that of their own students, as well as the responsibility and control they exercise over their own professional improvement and development. It also refers to the willingness and efforts of teachers to encourage and develop autonomy in their own learners. Hence, it seems that learner autonomy cannot be developed and/or encouraged if the teacher is not autonomous him/herself.

### 2.1.2      Encouraging autonomy in learners and teachers.

An understanding of the benefits of fostering autonomy in both learners and teachers is needed as student-teachers have both these roles. Autonomy seems to encourage learners and teachers to take responsibility for their learning at the same time that it is said to allow them to develop their learning skills (Carter, 2005; Benson & Voller, 2013; Esch, 2013). Autonomous learners take control of their learning when they look for strategies to learn more, that is, instead of being passive learners they become active builders of their own knowledge. In the case of autonomous teachers, they develop their skills because as they are self-directed they organize their learning and their teaching and take control of them by being able to reflect on their professional practice and thus to identify their weaknesses and strengths as teachers.

Autonomous teachers are critical on their teaching and can self-regulate to improve their professional practice with the help of a mentor at the beginning, to little by little do it on their own (Harrison et al, 2005; Little, 2007; Smith & Erdogan, 2008; Bajrami, 2015). Therefore, even though the current literature does not seem to provide a deep analysis of the relationship between learner and teacher autonomy, it suggests that the relationship might be seen as a cycle: teachers are first of all learners, and if they are reflective learners and experience autonomy, once they become teachers it is likely that they will be reflective and autonomous teachers and will thus encourage autonomy in their learners as well (see Figure 1 Learner and teacher autonomy

cycle below). Figure 1 shows that autonomous learners are therefore likely to become successful student-teachers and that autonomous teachers are likely to encourage autonomy in other student-teachers
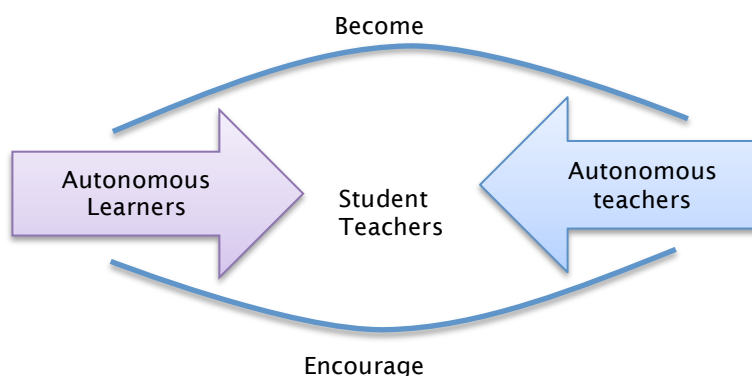


Figure 1 Learner and teacher autonomy cycle

It is hoped that the findings of this study help to understand and define the learner autonomy – teacher autonomy relationship to identify the characteristics of autonomous learners and/or autonomous teachers in individual student-teachers or if they develop others particular of their dual role. This subsection, hence, covers what research has found to be the advantages of encouraging the development of autonomy in learners and teachers.

According to Little, as autonomous learners take responsibility for their own learning, they can achieve their goals thus allowing them to maintain a positive attitude towards learning in the future (1995: 176). Carter agrees, arguing that it is highly important to develop autonomy in undergraduate learners because undergraduate programmes are "a first but important rung in their future learning, an enabling device in the perspective of lifelong learning" (2005: 463). Carter's study focuses on students who are specializing in language, Trinidad and Tobago's future language teachers, translators, interpreters and communication specialists. These are the same roles that the subjects of this study, student-teachers and graduates, play in Mexican society. In line with Little (1995), Dickinson (1995), Smith (2003), Harrison et al (2005), Ponton & Rhea (2006), Smith & Erdogan (2008) and Benson & Voller (2013) I would argue that encouraging autonomy in student-teachers could prove beneficial not only as they will be more likely to control what and how they learn and to acquire skills to learn on their own even when they finish their formal studies (lifelong learning), but also for the future learners of English as hopefully these teachers will encourage autonomous learning in their students too.

Little focused not simply on autonomy in education, but specifically on second language learning. He argues that the point of developing autonomy in language learning is the "development of a

capacity for independent and flexible use of the target language" (ibid: 179), giving autonomy a pedagogical and communicative dimension. Thus, autonomy should be encouraged in the early stages of language acquisition as learners begin using the language to a certain degree from the first moment they learn it. Usually when English learners are beginners, they can use the limited knowledge of the language they are acquiring by doing something as simple as introducing themselves. Therefore, "the successful practice of autonomy logically entails the interaction of these two dimensions from the very earliest stages of learning" (Little, ibid). Lamb similarly claims that the aim of learning a language is for the students to "become not only autonomous language learners but also autonomous language users" (2008: 281). Wright argues that as teachers, we need "to prepare students to take charge of their own learning and to establish suitable learning opportunities" (2005: 135); this is congruent with the pedagogical and communicative dimensions presented by Little (1995) because the teacher must help students learn and communicate autonomously by providing them with appropriate strategies and activities for the development of their skills. These findings are significant for this study because promoting autonomy in student-teachers may help them to recognize the need for autonomy in their own students and to actively promote it in their classrooms.

By encouraging and developing autonomy we can help to improve the learning skills of our students not only for while they are studying but for a lifetime. Autonomy, however, is a characteristic that is difficult to acquire. Sanprasert (2013) claims that "autonomy has to be learned, it is not innate" (p. 215), a view that Little (1995), Smith (2003), Benson (2008), Benson (2011), and Adamson & Sert (2012) share. They believe that it can be developed in the classroom or in formal educational contexts.

Therefore, as autonomy can be taught or encouraged in the classroom, it can be said that learner autonomy and teacher autonomy are interrelated. To promote and develop learner autonomy, the teachers must acknowledge themselves as autonomous. Little (1995), Smith (2003), Benson (2008), Adamson and Sert (2012), and Breen and Mann (2013) agree that if teachers have not developed their own autonomy they will not be capable of expressing concerns about the development of the autonomy of their learners. However, Dam (2007) argues that teachers cannot simply develop autonomy. They need to be taught first to be autonomous because if they have been taught in a traditional way when they are students, they cannot promote autonomy once they teach because they do not know what it is. This further supports Carter's (2005) idea of promoting autonomy in undergraduate programmes, especially in teacher training programmes, thereby returning us to the significance of autonomy for the development of this study.

Though there is a clear link between autonomous learners and autonomous teachers, Cardenas (2006) suggests, "the greater emphasis is placed on students because teacher autonomy is achieved through their change" (p. 188). This means that as learners develop their autonomy, teachers do so as well. It may seem ironic that autonomy can be achieved through collaboration, but it is a paradox that will be further discussed. She also uses the concept of the autonomous teacher as an autonomous learner. By this she means that teachers are capable of professional self-development by taking responsibility for acquiring new pedagogical skills and updating their knowledge to improve their practice.

Nevertheless, teachers cannot simply teach autonomy. There are several factors that affect its development in both teachers and learners.

### 2.1.3 Factors that affect the development of autonomy

Even though the previous sections present evidence regarding the benefits autonomy might provide to learners and teachers, Lamb and Simpson (2003) claim that for it to develop successfully we must identify, consider, and understand different contextual and social factors. They argue that "if we are to empower teachers to be autonomous learners and creators of their own development, we must create the conditions in which this can take place" (2003: 62). These factors will be further explained.

### 2.1.3.1 Contextual factors and the development of autonomy

The development of autonomy seems to be context related. According to the findings of Smith (2003) in Japan, Adamson and Sert (2012) in Turkey and Wang and Zhang (2013) in China, each context is different and we need to find ways of fostering autonomy in ways that are respectful of the traditions and constraints of each society.

The literature suggests that the fostering of autonomy has been a difficult task in Asian countries. The context of education in Asia is not autonomy supportive due to their culture of respect for the authority and hierarchy of the teachers. This could show that the development of autonomy might be contextual and, in line with what Palfreyman (2003) claims, autonomy might be less effective or less possible in particular contexts such as in the Asian culture. Dincer et al define an autonomy supportive context based on the work of Black and Deci (2000) and Chua (2009) as: "An environment that decreases the salience of external incentives and threats, avoids controlling language, and recognizes the learners' frame of reference" (Dincer et al, 2010: 5). This type of context encourages the students' involvement in their own learning. In addition, it enhances creativity and motivation, significant factors in the development of autonomy, in both learners

and teachers as it recognizes them as being co-responsible of the process of learning. Adamson and Sert (2012) and Wang and Zhang (2013) conducted studies in Asia and argue that they observed problems in developing autonomy in learners as they refuse to question the authority of their teachers. By not questioning authority, students seem to become receivers of information instead of co-builders of knowledge and this passive state of learning might hinder the development of autonomy as students seem to be less likely to take responsibility for their learning, demonstrating that, as Palfrayman claimed "cultural background of learners has often been viewed by teachers as a hindrance in promoting autonomy" (2003:7).

However, the literature also shows that the teacher may play a major role in the development of autonomy, even in countries where context might hinder it. After using different strategies, students were more able and willing to work autonomously but always following the guidance of their teachers. Adamson and Sert (2013) mention that Benson (2003) calls this autonomous interdependence because of the collaboration that exists when learning. This concept is of relevance to this study because it attempts to see how mentoring in its different types affects the development of teacher autonomy. Autonomous learning is independent from being in a teacher-centred or student-centred environment. In other words, regardless of where you live or work, autonomy exists in all contexts but in different ways. We therefore need to apply the global concept of autonomy in a local way, that is, instead of globalization, the focus might be on *glocalization*. Munk uses this term coined by SONY and defines it as "a reflection of the general tension between the universal and the particular" (2010, p. 34). Munk (2010) suggests universities might be described as *glocal* institutions as they base their needs on their community, but at the same time are included in the global context of education.

Benson (2013A) also talks about constraints in the development of autonomy in the classroom. He mentions that the context students and teachers are involved in, not the geographical area as in the studies of Palfreyman (2003) and Dincer (2003) but the specific school, may play a role in the development of autonomy. Benson (2013A) claims that both classroom and school rules, the curricula itself and the work schemes, public examinations, educational policies and the conceptions of language teaching and learning may limit the ways in which teachers can be autonomous in their classrooms and, therefore, how they may encourage it in their students (p. 9).

### 2.1.3.2    Social factors that affect the development of learner and teacher autonomy

The previous section suggests that context might affect the ways autonomy is realized. Research has found that social factors may also play a role in the successful development of both learner and teacher autonomy. Ponton and Rhea (2006), for instance, consider autonomy from a socio-

cognitive point of view based on Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (SCT). Bandura argues that environment (context) and the cognitive processes of the individual influence social behaviour. Noting that people learn from observing others and their environment, he draws upon Vygotsky's sociocultural theory (1978) where a more knowledgeable other helps learners acquire knowledge by scaffolding so that in later stages of their learning they are able to work on their own and, therefore, be autonomous.

Ponton and Rhea (2006) describe four factors that define autonomous learning: motivation, resourcefulness, initiative, and persistence in self-directed learning. Persistence in learning is apparently influenced by initiative mediated by resourcefulness, that is, what the teacher, mentor or even peers do to help learners learn. Therefore, "to foster autonomous learning tendencies, a learning facilitator should focus initial efforts on creating learner resourcefulness" (2006: 46). Teachers or facilitators (mentors) foster initiative by helping learners create realistic goals that they can achieve in their learning process. This encourages the development of personal responsibility in the student, and makes them persevere to personal levels of success (idem: 46).

Ponton and Rhea also argue that "consistent with SCT, autonomous learning results from interplay among the environment, the person, and behaviours and is the mechanism through which self-motivated personal development is realized" (2006: 38). This supports what has been argued of interdependence in autonomy, as Ponton and Rhea observe that people learn from their environment and their experiences, which can be experiences that they themselves undergo or vicarious learning, i.e. experiences that happen to others (idem: 39). Also, the authors argue that people would be more likely to learn and to engage in autonomous learning if throughout their learning process they set and achieve goals. This would help them realize that they are capable of doing what they set themselves to doing, resulting in a higher self-esteem, and higher motivation to continue with their self-actualization.

Autonomy often tends to be confused with isolation, and people tend to believe that being autonomous means working alone, on your own. However, as previously stated, autonomy requires collaboration to fully function (Little, 1995; Benson, 2003; Smith, 2003; Carter, 2005; La Garza, 2008; Smith & Erdogan, 2008; Adamson & Sert, 2012; Breen & Mann, 2013). Benson argues that "autonomy is a social construct that implies interdependence rather than independence" (2011: 16) and that autonomy is something that you develop not individually but collaboratively. Kershaw, Mynard, Promnnitz-Hayashi, et al suggest that even though learner autonomy refers to taking charge of one's learning according to one's needs and purposes, to achieve that the learner must have "a capacity and willingness to act independently and in cooperation with others, as a socially responsible person" (2010: 152). Allwright (1990) is cited in Little (1995: 178), as he

defines autonomy as "a constantly changing but at any time optimal state of equilibrium between maximal self-development and human interdependence". Liu and Fu (2011) also stress the importance of developing autonomy through autonomy-supportive teams as motivation plays a role in the development of autonomy. Through these teams, peers help and motivate each other to continue learning and to become autonomous.

According to Smith (2003), Carter (2005) and Esch (2013), there is a common misconception that learner autonomy implies learning without a teacher. It has been found that there are teachers who do not seem to understand that their role has changed to facilitator and guide of the students and they assume that as students need to be autonomous they, as teachers, must do nothing. They detach themselves from all responsibility for students' learning instead of adopting the role of helping students. Actually, Sheerin (2013) found that learners felt frustrated when teachers would not guide them. They expected teachers to provide scaffolding and help them understand their new roles as autonomous learners (Carter, 2005). Ceylan's findings show that learners in Turkey also expected the teachers to provide the role of an authority figure who should "take most of the responsibilities and make most of the decisions about their learning in the classroom context" (2015: 90). Ceylan (2015) argues that this is due to the fact that teachers should progressively guide learners into becoming autonomous. The process takes time and cannot be achieved alone. This is relevant to the present study as the participants of this research were assigned to English teacher mentors to see if their guidance and collaboration had any impact on the development of their student-teacher autonomy.

Little (2007) and Bajrami (2015) also discuss the significance of the teacher's role in promoting autonomy in their students. Little claims that they are actually indispensable in the construction of learner autonomy because learners are unable to construct knowledge out of nothing. He argues that, while developing their autonomy, learners are in what Vygotsky (1978) calls the zone of proximal development (ZPD). This refers to those tasks that students can do with the help of a more knowledgeable other (MKO), in this case, the teacher. Therefore, for him learner autonomy is "the product of an interactive process in which the teacher gradually enlarges the scope of her learners' autonomy by gradually allowing them more control of the process and content of their learning." (Little, 2007: 26). Bajrami argues that even though autonomous learners are responsible for taking charge of their learning, without the teacher's "guidance and supervision, the whole process will result in low efficiency or even fall into disorder." (2015: 424). Feryok (2013) claims, therefore, that autonomy appears "first socially, when learners understand the language choices available for imitation through their interactions; then individually, when learners develop the psychological tools for controlling their language use through imitation" (2013: 215).

As seen in the previous paragraphs and in line with Benson (2011), Adamson & Sert (2012), Breen & Mann (2013) and Bajrami (2015), autonomy apparently has an interdependent social element. This may seem paradoxical: the development of learner autonomy may depend on the ability of autonomous teachers to encourage autonomy in their classrooms. Rather than autonomy being self-constructed, it seems to occur when the student-teacher is taught and supported by a teacher or a mentor in its development. Hence, autonomy occurs not in isolation but through constructive interaction between the teacher and the learner.

For mentoring to work, therefore, teachers might need to motivate student-teachers to create a bond that could allow collaboration. Motivation and support, thus, might be key aspects of learner autonomy (Blanchard & Frasson, 2004; Dinçer, Yesiltyirt and Goksu, 2010; Gardner, 2000; Kamberi, 2013; Lamb, 2008; Sanprasert, 2010; Yagcioglu, 2015). This is consistent with what was previously mentioned regarding scaffolding and the importance of teachers, who in this study will play the role of mentors, in the development of learner autonomy.

Dickinson (1995) distinguishes between two types of motivation: extrinsic and intrinsic. Extrinsic motivation refers to that which occurs because the learner is hoping for something different to learning itself, like a reward, while intrinsic motivation occurs when they learn for their own sake or for learning itself. She argues that intrinsic motivation is a characteristic of autonomous learners and leads to learning effectiveness as it "is promoted and enhanced in circumstances in which learners have the opportunity to take responsibility for their own learning" (Dickinson, 1995: 171). She also mentions the attribution theory as an integral part of autonomy as it "relates to learning autonomy in that it provides evidence to show that learners who believe that they have control over their learning tend to be more successful than others" (idem, 172). In other words, Dickinson argues that autonomous learners feel more motivated because they believe they control their own learning and that their success depends on them rather than on other factors, thus taking responsibility for their own learning.

Dincer et al (2010) discuss the importance of autonomy-supportive environments, motivation and the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) in effective learning. They use this theory, dealing with human motivation and personality, to stress how critical teachers and society are to motivating students and helping them learn. Everhard (2012) also claims self-determination as one of the four essential elements of autonomy (together with identity, reflection and ownership). She argues that it is crucial for learner integration of feedback. All these arguments show an apparent connection between identity and mentoring as they suggest the value if having a supportive teacher or mentor to promote autonomy in the classroom. If the teacher is over-controlling and does not let students develop their own skills, students could fall into a comfort zone and

accustom themselves to passive learning instead of becoming active learners. This might discourage them from becoming autonomous learners and from fully developing their potential.

Autonomy, therefore, has an inherent social factor. Benson proposes three versions of autonomy: technical, which refers to learning a language outside an educational institution and without a teacher, taking charge of one's own learning; psychological, related to the capacity of learners to take more responsibility for their own learning; and political, referring to the control over the processes and contents of learning (2013: 19). He paired these versions with common philosophies of learning as respectively positivism, constructivism and critical theory.

The positivist approaches pair with the technical versions of learner autonomy, as the teachers equip learners in the classroom with the technical skills necessary to manage their own learning beyond the classroom (Benson, 2013: 23). The constructivist approaches pair with the psychological versions as teachers focus here on the learners' behaviour, attitudes and personality. Also, constructivism defines autonomy as an innate capacity of students to take responsibility for what and how they learn (ibid, 23-4). Finally, the critical theory approaches pair with the social and political versions of autonomy. Here, learners become more aware of the social context of their learning and the constraints it implies, the contingency of what is presented to them as the target language, and the potential for social change implicit in language learning (ibid, 24).

This section has shown how autonomy may impact not only teaching but also learning and why autonomy is an important factor in this research. In addition, because most of the literature related to autonomy seems to focus on learner autonomy, there is little practical research available on teacher autonomy and even less on student-teacher autonomy. The development of this study might, therefore contribute to filling the research gap related to teachers and student-teachers in autonomy studies.

## 2.2    Teacher professional identity

The second major area of focus of this research is teacher identity. The following section discusses how identity is seen and it presents the links between autonomy and identity that have been discussed in the relevant research literature.

Identity has been studied in the educational field to understand how it is shaped in learners of English as a second or foreign language, and in pre-service (student) and in-service (novice) teachers. This study seeks to explore the possible links between the shaping and re-shaping of

professional identity and the development of autonomy in student-teachers. It also looks at the possible influence mentoring may have on them.

In spite of the growing interest in identity, just as with autonomy, there is not a definite concept that fully describes what it encompasses. Beijaard, Verloop and Vermunt (2000) argue that identity refers to "who or what someone is, the various meanings people can attach to themselves or meanings attributed by others" (p. 750). They also argue that identity formation is a process where individuals interpret and reinterpret their experiences as they live through them, that is, identity changes as people have new experiences. This study, therefore, seeks to analyse the possible changes that may occur in both autonomy and identity as student-teachers are mentored during their teaching practicum stage at university to see if there is any influence among each other.

Following this idea, Flores and Day (2006) define identity as an "on-going and dynamic process which entails the making sense and reinterpretation of one's own values and experiences" (p. 220). Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) similarly state that identity "is dynamic and shifts over time under influence of factors both internal to the individual (emotion) and external (job and life experiences in particular contexts)" (p.177).  In line with this idea, Hong (2010) claims that identity is "dynamic, continually changing and an active process which develops over time through the interaction with others" (p. 1531). As can be inferred from these definitions and those of many other researchers (Norton, 1995; Johnson, 2003; Varghese, Morgan, Johnston & Johnson, 2005; Walkington, 2005; Day, Kington, Stobart & Sammons, 2006; Warin, Maddock, Pell & Hargreaves, 2006; Akkerman & Meijer, 2011; Oruc, 2013) identity is a shifting, dynamic and changing process which develops over time and is affected, influenced, shaped and re-shaped by our context, life experiences, and interactions with others.

Regarding teacher professional identity, Walkington (2005) claims that it refers to how a person identifies with being a teacher and how he feels as a teacher (p. 67). Pennington (2015) defines it as the "construct, mental image, model, of what being a teacher means that guides teachers' practices" (p. 17). Zaree-ee & Ghasedi (2014) make a distinction between teacher professional identity and self-image. They argue that teacher professional self-image refers to how they define their professional roles, how they see themselves as teachers, and how they integrate their professional and personal roles, while teacher professional identity includes different factors and conditions inside and outside the classroom that affect how successful the teacher and the students think he is (Zaree-ee & Ghasedi, 2014). These are the historical, sociological, psychological and cultural factors. The historical factor refers to personal experiences and previous teacher role models while the sociological involves the expectations that parents,

students, colleagues and authorities have of the teachers. The psychological factor, on the other hand, refers to how teachers perceive themselves as professionals and the cultural factor includes the perceptions teachers have on their professional community, government policies, language education policies, etc. Understanding these factors and the way they might influence identity may be of interest to promote a positive teacher identity in student-teachers.

Research has also found that in the teaching profession, identity plays a significant role in the teachers' motivation to improve their professional practice. Identity can be used to examine different aspects of teaching and learning, as Beauchamp & Thomas (2009) suggest, such as how students and teachers integrate influences, tensions and contradictions and to explain, justify and make sense of the decisions made in class. Similarly, Flores and Day (2009) argue that if teachers have a strong sense of identity, their self-efficacy, motivation and commitment will improve and therefore they will become effective teachers. Therefore, it seems that the encouragement of a positive teacher identity could help student-teachers to reflect upon and understand the context where they teach to solve the problems they could face and to improve their practice and as a consequence, the learning of their students.

### 2.2.1 Types of identity in the teaching profession

In the previous paragraphs, general definitions of identity were given. This sub-section describes the different types of identity found in the research literature to understand its dynamic nature and the various identities that teachers might have.

Recently, researchers have proposed that as human beings, people do not have only one identity but that they have multiple identities. Akkerman & Meijer (2006) propose what they call the multiplicity of identity, claiming that people possess different sub-identities that are related to different social contexts and relations where they develop. Gee (2000) argues that people have a core identity but also multiple identities that are connected to the different roles we play in and are assigned by society. He differentiates between four types of identity. The first one is the N-Identity (nature) that refers to a state identity that we are born with. For instance, in our N-identity refers to the state of being male or female teachers or even to being native or non-native English speaking teachers. The second type is D-identity (discourse), which refers to individual traits that people and ourselves recognize we have. In the teaching profession, the D-identity could refer to the characteristics we see in ourselves, such as being responsible, caring, good teachers, etc. The third type is A-identity (affinity), which is related to our experiences, likes, and sense of belonging to a particular group of people. For instance, teachers identify themselves as high school teachers, as teachers from a particular institution, or in the general case of the

participants of this study, as English teachers. The last one is the I-identity (imposition) that is given to us by others and is related to how actively or passively we fulfil that role or duty assigned to us. For example, a teacher can identify as a female (N-identity), responsible (D-identity), secondary school English teacher (A-identity), but her students might see her as a good or bad teacher (I-identity). This is relevant to this study as student-teachers have a dual A-identity (as learners and as teachers) and each of them has a different D-identity depending on their self-perceptions as both learners and teachers

To understand teacher professional identity, Sachs (2001) claims that it is necessary to first divide professionalism into two categories: managerial and democratic (p. 151). Managerial professionalism deals with organizational change and how teachers build their identity and their practice upon institutional policies and funds. This type of professionalism believes that efficient management can solve any problem a teacher may have and that practices that work in the private sector can be applied to the public sector. Democratic professionalism, on the other hand, deals with the profession itself.  It emphasizes collaborative and cooperative action between the teacher and other stakeholders and seeks to build alliances for an effective teaching practice (Sachs, 2001).  According to the specific context in which teachers work and the type of professionalism they follow, Sachs (2001) also presents two types of identity: entrepreneurial and activist. Entrepreneurial identity is associated with managerial professionalism as it refers to an "efficient, responsible and accountable version of current service" (2001: 150) and it is individualistic, competitive, controlling, regulative and externally defined. Activist identity, on the other hand, is associated with democratic professionalism as it has more emancipatory aims, it is open to the flow of ideas, looks for a common good, and emphasizes the individual and collective capacity to solve problems through critical reflection and analysis (Sachs, 2001: 157). In this study, the entrepreneurial identity of student-teachers could be shaped by the rules of the institutions where they are doing their practicum, as their behaviour and teaching practice would be controlled by the regulations of the particular schools. Activist identity, on the other hand, could be shaped while collaborating with their mentors to look for different ways or strategies to contribute to the learning of their students.

Varghese et al (2009) also distinguish between 2 types of identity: assigned identity and claimed identity. Assigned identity depends on the perception that others have of an individual, that is, the identity that people have as imposed by others. This is similar to the I-identity described above by Gee (2000). Claimed identity, on the other hand, is the one that you acknowledge or claim for yourself. Therefore, professional and teacher identity is formed based on both assigned and claimed identity as a teacher is defined not only based on his own perception, but also on the perceptions others have of him.

It is important to recognize the different types of identity for the development of this study to be aware of their existence and be able to recognize them if they appear in the analysis of the data provided by both student-teachers and novice teachers. The next sub-section is related to the shifting capacity of identity.

### 2.2.2      Shaping and re-shaping identity

Identity is a dynamic, shifting and on-going process. The identity of teachers is shaped and re-shaped as learning to teach is a process of becoming affected by the constant changes in the educational context (Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010; Varghese et al, 2009). This process of becoming begins during the teaching practicum, where student-teachers develop and put into practice their skills and their autonomy and construct their identity with the collaboration of a mentor (Walkington, 2005; Devos, 2010).

Flores and Day (2006) argue that the transition from student-teachers to novice teachers is difficult as new teachers face a dramatic change between their idealistic and sometimes unrealistic expectations and what actually occurs in a real classroom. They usually face a reality shock because they need to take full responsibility for their actions and often they do not have any support from colleagues or employers, which leads to feelings of isolation (Flores & Day, 2006: 219). If new teachers are unable to overcome these new challenges, they can become frustrated and leave the profession, which often occurs within the first five years of entering the teaching profession. Support and collaboration, therefore, seem to be important factors in the beginning stages of the process of becoming a teacher.

Timoštšuk and Ugaste (2010) define teacher professional identity as the "person's self-knowledge in teacher-related situations and relationships that manifest themselves in practical professional activities, feelings of belonging and learning experiences" (p. 1564). Therefore, besides context, the formation of positive relationships and interaction with others also seem to contribute to the shaping of professional identity.

Flores and Day (2006) claim that new teachers tend to suffer a dramatic change and a reality shock when they start teaching. This is because usually during training, teachers tend to be presented with general and often idealistic techniques, methods and principles of a utopic learning setting. For example, during microteaching sessions in their training courses, student-teachers often use their own classmates who pretend to be language learners in a simulated classroom. Usually, during this simulation these *learners* behave properly and, as they are fluent English speakers, student-teachers teach their *classes* without any problem. However, when they become real teachers they tend to face classroom management and discipline problems that can

lead to frustration. This is relevant to this research because although student-teachers are taught methods, techniques and strategies to deal with learners once they finish their B.A. programme, when they start their practicum they often feel frustrated because they are unable to put into practice what they learned due to the lack of real teaching experience they have.

Flores and Day describe Vonk's (1989) two phases that novice teachers experience (2006: 220). They explain that the first phase is known as threshold, and occurs during the first year of teaching. During threshold, the new teacher suffers a transition shock because he is confronted with the full responsibilities that being a teacher conveys. During this phase, teachers tend to feel frustrated and they could use the help and guidance of a mentor and/or of the collaboration with colleagues (the different tensions that novice teachers face will be further explained in section 2.2.3). The second phase is called growing into the profession. Here, the teacher begins to feel accepted by his pupils and colleagues, and as he feels more motivated and less stressed, he begins improving his skills, methods and competencies. Thus, in this phase student-teachers need less the help of a mentor.

It is during the threshold phase of the novice teacher experience when cooperation and interaction with colleagues seem to play an important role. Working together with a mentor or with peers seem to affect the self-esteem and development of teaching skills of student-teachers as they tend to feel confident that whenever they have a problem or a difficulty in the classroom, they can rely on somebody else for help and guidance. Therefore, as new teachers learn from other peers, their identity is shaped and reshaped in interaction with others in a professional context (Beauchamp & Thomas, 2009). This collaboration and cooperation with peers, gives the new teacher a sense of belonging that improves teachers' motivation and teacher performance and, as a consequence, reduces the possibility of profession abandonment or teacher attrition (Varghese et al, 2009). It can be inferred, therefore, that due to the importance of the collaboration with peers in the development of professional identity, mentoring seems to be intertwined with identity.

The educational context in which a teacher works and the new policies that are set in that context are factors which shape and promote the acquisition of entrepreneurial identity (Sachs, 2001). This is because when teachers begin working in a particular context they have to adapt to the particular requirements and policies of that institution. In addition, new policies sometimes include the standardization of curricula and the application of standardized tests and it is common that people use the publicized results of these tests as evidence of the teachers' skills and performance. These situations produce tension and changes in the teachers' work, as they become more interested in preparing the students to obtain good results in tests, rather than in

using techniques and strategies for the effective learning of the students (Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010). Teaching and learning therefore become a matter of passing a test rather than learning, modifying the teachers' perception of their teaching practice and re-shaping their identity to comply with the regulations set by either the government or the institution, whether they agree with them or not.

The following subsection will explain in more detail how different types of tension (not only that created by the pressure of the institution related to the score students gets in their tests) can affect the development of professional identity in teachers.

### 2.2.3    Identity tensions in teachers

As was described in the previous subsections, tension is not an uncommon feeling in the teaching profession. In relation to these tensions, Warin, Maddock, Pell & Hargreave (2006) introduce the concept of identity dissonance referring to the "psychological discomfort that can be felt when a person is aware of disharmonious experiences of self" (p. 237). Regarding teacher identity, this dissonance occurs every time that teachers experience situations that in a way, force them to behave in ways that go against their beliefs and/or against the way they see themselves as teachers or the way they believe teachers should be. This often occurs because teachers are constrained to follow the regulations of the institutions where they work which sometimes force them to teach or to behave in a particular way, restricting their teacher autonomy.

Pillen, Brok and Beijaard (2013) conducted a study where they identified six different teaching profiles in relation to the tensions felt by novice teachers. They labelled the first profile as *teachers struggling with significant others* which occurs when the teacher experiences conflicting orientations regarding learning to teach; that is, when the teacher's ideas of teaching differ from those they have to follow according to the policies of the school where they work. The second profile is *teachers with care-related tensions*, which occurs when the teacher is troubled by the desired and actual support they give to students. The third profile, *teachers with responsibility-related tensions*, occurs during the transition mentioned in previous paragraphs from being a learner teacher to being a beginning teacher. On the other hand, the *moderately tense teachers* profile refers to those who experienced tensions across the three first profiles. The fifth profile was *tension free teachers* while the sixth was *troubled teachers*, who are those teachers who experienced many tensions of the first three profiles. It is important to be aware of the existence of teacher dissonance and of these conflicting profiles to identify them in student-teachers and novice teachers and to attempt to prevent their development or, in the cases that they are

already being experienced by teachers, to find ways as teacher trainers to reduce the tensions and allow them to fully develop as teachers.

In addition, in the same year, the same authors (Pillen, Beijaard and den Brok, 2013) conducted a different study, Professional identity tensions of novice teachers, where they identified three recurrent themes when studying the tensions regarding the professional identity of 24 novice teachers: tension related to the change in role from student to teacher, conflicts between desired and actual support given to students, and conflicting conceptions of learning to teach (2013: 674). The first theme, the change in the role from student to teachers, is related to the struggle that new teachers face when trying to see themselves as professional teachers during their early career. Due to their lack of experience, sometimes teachers get into conflict when attempting to put into practice what they learned at school. In the beginning, teachers sometimes feel they do not master the topics they teach and that they are not able to manage a class, which makes them feel that they need to prepare themselves more, therefore adopting the identity of a student more than that of a teacher. This is a theme that can emerge in the experiences of student-teachers during their practicum.

Student-teachers can experience the second theme, conflicts between the desired and actual support given to students, during their practicum or when they start teaching for the first time. At university, trainees usually have a very idealistic view of how their classes and their relationships with their students, mentors and colleagues will be, but once that they get into the classroom, this view is challenged. When being new teachers, trainees realize that it is impossible to plan and deliver classes that cover the needs of all the students due to time constraints, the number of students they have and/or the interest that students, school authorities and sometimes even parents have in the class. During practicum, student-teachers might experience this tension related to support because they may have high expectations of their mentors in terms of guidance and collaboration while mentor teachers might be reluctant to scaffold them. Also, they could experience tension as they may hold idealistic characteristics of what a good teacher is and when not seeing this characteristic in their mentors, they may be less receptive to what they have to say.

 The participants of this study could also experience the last type of tension, conflicting conceptions of learning to teach, as sometimes their beliefs of teaching may be different from those of their mentors. In addition, student-teachers could find themselves limited in terms of the freedom they have to give their classes and could even be forced to teach in a way that goes against their principles of how an English class should be. There are many institutions that are very strict in terms of how classes must be taught, and thus prevent their teachers to come up

with their own strategies and activities for the development of their classes. These constraints, therefore, could limit the autonomy of the teachers provoking frustration and having a negative impact on the shaping of their professional identity. This is why it is sensible to pay attention to the types of tension that the student-teachers who participated in this study might experience.

Another kind of tension that affects the identity of foreign language teachers (at any stage of their professional career) is related to their state of being non-native English speaking teachers (NNEST) (Johnson, 2003; Reis, 2015). Reis (2015) argues that NNEST struggle to feel confident in teaching because they tend to consider themselves less competent than native English speaker teachers due to the fact that English is not their first language. He claims that this sense of inferiority deeply affects the development of identity of teachers because it has an impact on their confidence, and therefore, in the way they conduct themselves in their classes.

Reis (2015) states that to avoid or to learn to control these negative feelings of anxiety, inferiority, fear and lack of confidence, "individuals require assistance from others in learning to regulate their emotions by appropriating emotional support" (p. 34). This is where the mentor could play a very important role. The participants of this study are NNEST, therefore they might experience this lack of confidence because of possible language problems they may have. For example, as English is not their native language, it is common to have certain grammar or syntax mistakes, or to not know the meaning of certain words, and this is why it is important that, as Reis (2015) claims, they have someone who provides them not only emotional support, but also guidance on what to do whenever they face a language problem while giving a class. Thus, mentoring could affect the shaping of their identity, as it may allow them to feel more confident and more professional while giving a class (Harrison et al, 2005; Walkington, 2005; Mullen, 2012). It is, therefore, relevant to identify the types of tension student-teachers may experience and the types of relationships they form with their mentors to see if there is any link between the development of autonomy through the shaping of identity and the influence of their mentors.

## 2.3    Mentoring student-teachers

So far, the concepts of autonomy and identity have been discussed, as well as their major characteristics and the ways they could possibly intertwine. However, it is still not clear if there is any link between the three major areas of this study: autonomy, identity and mentoring. There seems to be a relationship between them in the development of teacher autonomy, but more research needs to be done to specify the kind of relationships and if these apparent links also exist in the development of autonomy of student-teachers. By reviewing the literature on

autonomy and identity, it was found that both concepts also entail certain elements of mentoring, which is why this is the last major focus of this research.

The concept of mentoring in the educational context and the roles of mentors and mentees, have evolved since the 1980s when they began to be used in the teaching and learning environments. According to Delaney (2012), these concepts used to follow the traditional Behaviourist approach in second language learning, where a hierarchical relationship developed and the role of the mentor-expert was to transmit teaching skills to the novice teacher. Later, the approach to teaching and psychology changed to constructivism, meaning that the roles of the mentor and mentee were modified to a horizontal relationship, as learners were considered responsible for constructing their own knowledge by working in collaboration with the teachers. It can be affirmed, therefore, that nowadays the relationship mentor-mentee is both personal and professional and both parties "co-construct their professional identities within specific contexts" (Delaney, 2012: S186); in other words, the relationship evolved from being hierarchical to being reciprocal. Nevertheless, in spite of having occurred a noticeable change in the mentoring roles, the concept of mentoring is still not clearly defined.

### 2.3.1 Mentoring and similar concepts

The notion of mentoring does not have a widely accepted definition but each researcher or author seems to use it according to the needs or purpose of their studies. Galbraith (2003) quotes Jacobi (1991: 506) by saying that "although many researchers have attempted to provide concise definitions of mentoring or mentors, definitional diversity continues to characterize the literature" (Galbraith, 2003: 9). He argues that definitions by different researchers such as Heller & Sindelar (1991), Daloz (1999), Blackwell (1989), Lester & Johnson (1981) and Moore & Amey (1988) share advising, guiding, modelling, and developing as key elements when defining mentoring. However, Galbraith (2003) also argues that all these definitions lack the emotional or psychological element that differentiates mentoring from similar concepts such as coaching, supervising or tutoring. Therefore, he presents his own concept in a joint study with Zelenak (1991: 126), where they define mentoring as "a powerful emotional and passionate interaction whereby the mentor and protégé experience personal, professional, and intellectual growth and development" (Galbraith, 2003: 9).

As noted above, mentoring tends to be confused and sometimes even used interchangeably with other concepts such as supervising, tutoring, training, coaching, and counselling due to the similarity of their definitions. However, as Galbraith (2003) pointed out, mentoring is a much wider notion that actually encompasses elements of the other concepts. In the following

paragraphs, the differences between mentoring and these other concepts will be explained to clarify the reason why mentoring was chosen as a key element of this thesis instead of the other similar concepts.

Galbraith (2003) argues that although both mentoring and coaching have the ultimate goal of promoting self-directedness, independence, reflection and autonomy, coaching is a more controlling and directive activity than mentoring. Sorensen (2012) shares this idea as he claims that coaching "refers to approaches that are more directive" and involves a "more skilled practitioner advising others or showing them how to do things" (p. 201). D'Abate, Eddy and Tannenbaum (2003) argue that while mentoring seeks to promote long-term professional development, coaching is associated with specific goals to improve the ways a task is carried out in a short-term period. Mangan (2012) also differentiates between coaching and mentoring as the mentoring relationship involves colleagues who get together voluntarily and informally to interact while in coaching, managers guide the practitioners to get specific results. In Mangan's view, mentors are more focused on the person, on the individual, while coaches focus more on the institution. Other authors share similar thoughts; for example, Harrison, Dymoke and Pell (2006) consider coaching a form of mentoring which is focused upon skills to perform a task, and Ehrich (2013) argues that coaching is merely used to maximise performance.

Another concept similar to mentoring is tutoring. McCall quotes O'Neill and Harris (2000) when stating that in tutoring "the tutor assigns a task which the tutee carries out under supervision", while in mentoring "the student brings the problems to the table [and] the mentor offers advice, guidance and support, but it is up to the student to take it and carry it out" (McCall, 2011: 14). While in tutoring the tutor is in charge of the tasks that need to be done, in mentoring the mentee is the one that takes the initiative and both mentor and mentee work together to solve the problems. Colvin and Ashman (2010) claim that tutoring is a more academic activity because, just as McCall (20119 mentioned, the tutor tells the tutee what to do instead of getting into reflective thinking to solve problems, while mentoring involves a deeper reflexive involvement of both parties to improve overall academic performance.

Maynard and Furlong (1995), on the other hand, draw upon the differences between supervision and mentoring. They discuss the need of moving from the notion of supervision to the one of mentoring because in the first one "teachers are supervising trainees in the application of training acquired elsewhere" while mentoring is "an active process where teachers themselves as practitioners have an active role in the training process" (1995: 11-12). It can be seen that Maynard and Furlong perceive mentors as more involved in the training process than supervisors. According to them, mentors take part in the training of the student-teachers by guiding them and

teaching them, while supervisors only check what the student-teacher already knows but do not get involved in their training. Ambrosetti and Dekkers (2010) also distinguish between mentoring and supervising by stating that both are involved in student-teaching practicum, but while supervising involves an expert in a position of power, someone acting like a boss, mentoring entangles assisting, befriending, guiding, advising and counselling the mentor. This idea is consistent to that of Maynard and Furlong as Ambrosetti and Dekkers also see mentoring as being a deeper, more involved and reciprocal relationship than supervising. Walkington (2005) argues that as the mentoring teacher concept has substituted that of a supervising teacher because of the expanded roles that teachers are taking, not only in the academic aspect of the students but also in the psychological one, there is a closer role happening with the professors in universities rather than with those educators of children. This could be because, as Maynard and Furlong (1995) and Harrison et al (2005) suggested, mentors are supposed to encourage critical thinking and reflective practice in their students, which are skills that seem to be more frequently developed and encouraged at university levels rather than in basic education.

Ehrich (2013), on the other hand, points out the differences between mentoring and two other similar concepts in educational contexts: counselling and training. She claims that training is a structured process of teaching whose aim is to develop skills, knowledge and attitudes to complete a task or perform a particular job, while counselling deals with psychological issues that affect performance and needs to be carried out by an expert. Mentoring, on the other hand, refers to a more reciprocal relationship of help and support, involving therefore both counselling and training.

Mentoring is, thus, a complex concept which entails a deeper, reciprocal and more involved relationship where a mentor supports emotionally, personally, psychologically, professionally and academically a mentee so that both can fully develop their skills in a collaborative relationship. This is of relevance to the current study, as mentoring was chosen as a main concept rather than any of the similar ones precisely because it involves this deeper relationship with a protégé that could have a greater influence on his professional development.

### 2.3.1.1 Types of mentoring

Now that the difference between mentoring and similar concepts has been clarified and that it has been established how it will be used and defined for the purposes of this study, it is worth mentioning that many types of mentoring have been identified. This study attempts to investigate how the different types of mentoring could affect the professional development of student-teachers. In this sub-section the different types of mentoring as defined by Galbraith (2003), Ehrich (2013), Ensher and Murphy (2011), McCall (2011) and Mullen (2012) will be described.

Galbraith (2003) distinguishes between two types of mentoring occurring in formal education settings and contexts: Formal and informal. Formal mentoring, on the one hand, is the type of mentoring that is planned, sponsored and occurs within an operating mentoring programme to reach certain goals defined by a specific setting. Ehrich (2013) adds that in formal mentoring an organization's involvement ensures that both mentor and mentee know the purpose of their relationship and that they have the necessary support to have a successful relationship. Galbraith (2003) says that informal mentoring, on the other hand, is unplanned and due to its unexpected nature, it is not really clear how it began, developed and sustained itself. Ehrich (2013) explains that informal mentoring occurs when people who work in a particular field are interested in deciding to collaborate without the intervention or guidance of any organization.

Ensher and Murphy (2011), on the other hand, distinguish between four types of mentoring according to the number and the characteristics of the people involved: traditional, peer, group and e-mentoring. Traditional mentoring occurs between an expert and a less experienced protégé, it is usually one-to-one and it develops with the purpose of learning (McKimm et al, 2003; Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Ensher & Murphy, 2011; Mullen, 2012; Terrion, 2012; Ehrich, 2013).

The second type of mentoring of the four mentioned by Ensher and Murphy (2011) is peer mentoring. Terrion (2012) defines peer-mentoring based on Kram's (1983) definition as a formal relationship between students in which the more qualified one provides guidance and support to the other in an attempt to help him navigate his education in an easier way. Ehrich (2013) argues that peer mentoring involves two people who are at the same level or status and who decide to work together to help each other. Peer mentoring differentiates from traditional mentoring because there is not a more experienced person supporting a less experienced one, but rather both people in this relationship have similar characteristics and decide to support each other, either in a formal or informal environment. Actually, Colvin and Ashman (2010) discriminate between two common situations of students helping other students. They provide the concept of peer tutoring in which advanced students help lower level students with course content, as opposed to peer mentoring, where the experienced students help less experienced students not only in the academic aspect but also by providing advice, support and knowledge to the mentee at the same time that the mentors' personal growth is encouraged. This is in line with McCall (2011) regarding the relationships formed through mentoring being deeper than those formed through tutoring as they do not only consider the academic aspects but also the psychological and emotional side of the mentee.

Similar to peer mentoring is group mentoring. During this type of mentoring occurs a relationship between three or more people. The people involved can be either from the same status or level, or there can be a more knowledgeable other working with many mentees, or a mentee working with different mentors (Ensher & Murphy, 2011; Ehrich, 2013). It can be inferred, therefore, that group mentoring covers elements of both traditional and peer mentoring.

Finally, McCall (2011) study focuses on yet another type of mentoring, which is the last of those mentioned by Ensher and Murphy (2011): e-mentoring. McCall (2011) claims that e-mentoring refers to the relationship between a mentor and a mentee through electronic means. It has the same purpose than regular mentoring, which is to develop the mentor's confidence, skills, knowledge and cultural understanding to be successful. E-mentoring is more flexible than traditional mentoring in terms of time and space as it does not require the participants to meet personally at a specific time in a particular place. It also eliminates markers of social status, race and gender, which in certain contexts such as Asian and Arab among others can prove harmful for the mentoring relationship due to stereotypes and/or culture (McCall, 2011). Ehrich (2013) also adds that E-mentoring can be used in formal or informal environments and in either traditional, peer or group mentoring.

Based on the definitions provided above, it can be inferred that both formal and informal mentoring interrelate with traditional, peer, group and E-mentoring. While formal mentoring tends to follow a more hierarchical and traditional relationship (expert – novice), informal mentoring leans more towards a reciprocal relationship, and usually entails peer, group or traditional mentoring.

Mullen (2012) comes up with her own conceptualization of mentoring by distinguishing two other types of mentoring: traditional and alternative. The concept of traditional mentoring is similar to that noted above, as it refers to the "transfer of skills within authoritative and apprenticeship concepts" (Mullen, 2012: 9). When talking about alternative mentoring, she explains that it can be divided into collaborative, mosaic, multiple-co-mentoring and synergistic leadership (2012: 14). Collaborative mentoring refers to the reciprocal relationship occurring between individuals or small groups in which dialogue, constructive feedback, collegiality, transparency and authentic learning are present. Mentoring mosaic refers to a relationship where primary and secondary mentors help to promote interdependence, identity development and ownership, and the emphasis is made on how learning and mastery are achieved rather than the contents being learned. The multiple level co-mentoring theory refers to the context where various levels of the organization work together to decide what changes are necessary such as principals, teachers, and staff. Finally, the synergistic leadership approach is more holistic as it promotes the

integration of leadership behaviour, organizational structure, external forces, and attitudes, beliefs and values.

It is therefore important to understand and know the different types of mentoring that exist, to explore if they have any influence on the development of student-teacher autonomy and identity.

### 2.3.2    Perceived benefits of implementing mentoring in education

There is a myriad of studies such as those of McKimm, Jollie & Hatter (2003), Harrison, Lawson & Wortley (2005), Larose, Tarabulsy & Cyrenne (2005), and McCall (2011), that have explored benefits from using mentoring in language learning, teaching, and in education in general. Among these benefits findings suggest an improvement in grades, confidence, motivation and communicative skills, etc. This section focuses on the description of the benefits that mentoring can offer to education and serves as a basis to later identify them in the data collected.

Larose et al (2005) claim that mentoring can help at-risk students in college to get better academic outcomes and develop autonomy. McCall (2011) obtained similar findings in his study by implementing My UniSpace platform in language learning students, finding that mentoring helped students to increase their confidence, and communicative and language skills. In the teacher training field, mentoring has been used to prevent teacher attrition as according to Delaney (2012) several studies (such as Johnson, 2002; Smith and Ingersoll, 2004) have shown that "half of all new teachers leave their profession within the first five years" (p. S184) due to different factors, being the lack of a supportive mentoring environment one of them.

Mentoring has also been used in other educational areas and professions, such as nursing, medicine, music, and engineering, among others, to enhance the performance of learners. Regarding nursing, for example, a study conducted by Green & Puetzer (2002) shows how mentoring relationships affect the retention of staff at the same time that beginning nurses enhance their skills and the development of their knowledge. Sprengel & job (2004) also discuss mentoring in nursing, and claim that peer-mentoring can reduce anxiety and stress during their first hospital experience.  In the medical field, an article by Paice, Heard, & Moss (2002) discusses the characteristics that students and young doctors find appealing in their mentor role models. Among the characteristics they found are enthusiasm, compassion, openness, integrity and a good relationship with their patients, concluding that mentoring, thus, influences the development of ethical professional practice. Garmel (2004) agrees with the importance of mentoring in medicine as he claims that it aids in the professional growth and maturation of students, residents, and junior faculty.

In the area of music, Hays (2013) and Shaddy (2003) point out the importance of mentoring relationships in the training of musicians and how, if effective, they can aid in the development of the skills and experience of both mentor and protégé. Gaunt, Creech, Long & Hallam (2012) also discuss mentoring to help musicians have an easier transition when getting into their professional career and entering into a real-world context. Regarding engineering, Gage Brainard & Ailes-Sengers (1994), describe how a model of mentoring aided in the confidence and retention of women in engineering, who usually felt less confident due to the characteristic of this profession of being traditionally considered as a "male career". Similarly, Lyon, Farrington & Westbrook (2004) conducted a study regarding gender in engineering but related to the genders of both mentor and protégé. They found that mentoring enhances when both are of the same gender due to the confidence that comes as they identify with each other. Finally, Locurcio & Mitvalsky (2002) talk about the importance of mentoring during the early career phase of engineers so that they develop their practical skills, as most of the programmes tend to focus on content.

As can be seen, mentoring over the years has proven to be beneficial in different professions. As this study focuses on student-teachers, the following section will discuss mentoring in this area.

### 2.3.2.1     Mentoring student-teachers

Research has shown that mentoring student-teachers and/or novice teachers allows them to develop different skills and to have an easier transition between being students and becoming teachers. However, in order for it to work, it must be supported by theory of good teaching, teaching and learning, and reflective practice.

Freiman-Nemser (1996) claims that mentoring novice teachers "represents an improvement over the abrupt and unassisted entry into teaching that characterizes the experience of many novices" (p. 2). Mentoring could have an impact on new teachers' decision of staying in the job, as they would feel supported and guided in their first year as teachers or even before, during their pre-service level. This may help to prevent and reduce the index of teacher attrition (see 2.2.2).

In addition, according to McKimm et al (2003) mentoring can help student-teachers to practice, get experience and develop their skills before getting into the labour market, giving them a professional advantage over other new teachers who have not had any practice before. Elliot & Calderhead (1995) agree that mentoring proves beneficial to novice teachers but also argue that the fact of placing students in schools does not guarantee that they will learn how to teach. Therefore, for mentoring and practicum programmes to work, they "need to be well thought through and founded on appropriate principles of professional learning" (1995: 36).

Apparently the focus on mentoring in research has been on the mentee. Mentors are often unaware of their functions and they do not know how to work effectively with mentees due to the lack of understanding of what is expected from them, or the little experience they have with observing, discussing, and analysing their teaching practice with colleagues (Feiman-Nemser, 1996; Boyle & Boice, 1998; Walkington, 2005; Devos, 2010). Elliot & Calderhead (1995) found that because of this lack of a pre-established role of what exactly a mentor is and what they have to do, there is not a standardised way of training mentees. Therefore, each mentor trains their mentees following different strategies and techniques which can be by being active listeners, linking what student-teachers learned in their universities with what actually happens in the classroom, or in the way they would have liked to be trained themselves.

Ambrosetti & Dekkers (2010) claim that mentoring in a student-teacher context "occurs during practicum in which student-teachers are being placed with classroom teachers to learn, develop and practice their teaching knowledge and skills" (p. 42) and argue that the mentors engage in both mentoring and supervisory roles as they are in charge of guiding the mentee, as well as assessing him and providing him with feedback. They also argue that mentors do not necessarily have to be people with more experience, as student-teachers can learn from their co-workers or peers. That is, mentoring during practicum can occur with someone of equal status or age, someone more experienced as in the traditional role, or someone with the same developmental levels. Student-teachers can also learn from their environment and sometimes feel more confident by being mentored by someone who is at the same level that they are (peer mentoring), as Ambrosetti and Dekkers state that due to the formality and lack of trust, traditional mentoring can have more negative than positive effects in the mentees (2010: 44).

Delaney (2012) presents a review of the literature regarding mentoring in pre-service (student-teachers) and in-service (beginning) teachers. She argues that in pre-service contexts mentees develop different relationships with teaching professionals, as mentoring is a cooperating relationship to provide support and understanding. This relationship changes with in-service teachers as they form a mentoring relationship in the workplace by interacting with their supervisors, principals, department head or fellow teachers to provide emotional and professional support through reflective practice. Hargreaves & Fullan's (2000) ideas are in line to Delaney's as they argue that mentors do not necessarily know more than their mentees. Especially in the XXI century "while assigned mentors may know more than new teachers about certain areas such as school procedure or classroom management, the new teacher may sometimes know more than the mentor about new teaching strategies" (Hargreaves & Fullan's, 2000: 23). This is relevant to this study as in the context where it was conducted it is common that school and university teachers stop updating their knowledge on new trends in education because they have many

other functions assigned by their schools besides teaching. Therefore, they tend to focus on solving their problems in their classrooms rather than on lifelong learning. New teachers, on the other hand, having recently graduated from school, are on the opposite side: they have more current knowledge about teaching strategies, theories and approaches, but they lack the experience of being in front of a classroom. It seems to be important, therefore, to build an effective mentoring relationship of co-enquirers (as suggested by Maynard & Furlong, 1995) in which both mentor and mentee help and learn from each other at the same time that both improve their teaching practice.

Through Delaney's literature review are presented multiple benefits of mentoring student-teachers. For example, she mentions that Zimmer-Loew (2008) stresses the importance of funding mentoring programmes to facilitate teacher training and avoid teacher attrition. Through mentoring, according to Delaney's findings, student-teachers boost their confidence as they get support in developing and improving their skills in classroom management, lesson planning, grammar and teaching abilities, material and strategies design, etc., as they get involved in classroom observations and self-reflective practices (Velez-Rendon, 2006; Malderez, Hobson, Travey, Kerr, 2007; Rajuan, Beijaard and Verloop, 2008; Hobson, Ashby, Malderez and Tomlinson, 2009). Hobson et al (2009) claim that mentoring contributes to professional development and to the formation of professional networks through collaboration, which help and encourage mentor training, self-reflection, observation and research. Delaney (2012) also discusses several aspects for mentoring to be effective. According to Maynard (2000), for example, mentors must have clear expectations and must provide the mentee with advice, constructive criticism and emotional support, as well as recognize the mentee's need of developing their own teacher identity. Chamberlin (2000) argues that mentors must provide non-judgmental comments and nonverbal behaviours of affiliation, which is supported by Leaver and Oxford's (2001) affirmation of good mentors being adaptive to the mentee and not confrontational.

Harrison et al (2005), on the other hand, studied the benefits of mentoring novice teachers. They found that through mentoring new or early teachers, they become more critical and reflective of their practice through Lave and Wenger's (1991) situated learning theory, which attempts to explain how professionals learn to apply technical knowledge within their contexts (2005: 421). This mentoring relationship created in the early career phase, allows the novice teachers to enter the profession in a not so abrupt way, which can also help to prevent teacher attrition as the novice teachers feel supported by other more experienced teachers and feel part of the institution.

It is therefore apparent that mentoring aids in the improvement of the teaching practice of both student and novice teachers.

### 2.3.3 Approaches to mentoring student-teachers

The types of mentoring described in section 2.3.1.1 above can be applied to the mentoring of learners, teachers and student-teachers. Maynard and Furlong (1995), on the other hand, do not conceptualise types but three approaches or models of mentoring that are specifically used with student-teachers. Student-teachers are the main subjects of this study, hence the importance of including these approaches in this literature discussion. These three approaches are: apprenticeship, competency, and reflective practitioner (Maynard and Furlong, 1995).

The apprenticeship model refers to a relationship that occurs when working under the guidance of an experienced practitioner who will serve as a model and help the student teacher see and interpret what is going on in the classroom. It can be said that this approach is similar to the traditional type of mentoring. The competency model, on the other hand, "involves practical training on a list of pre-defined competencies" (Maynard and Furlong, 1995: 19). The mentor under this model observes the mentees and gives them feedback according to the completion of that list of competencies. One difference between the apprenticeship and competency approaches is that in the first type the practitioner or mentee tends to imitate what his mentor does because of the power relationship that exists between them, while in the competency approach the practitioner takes a more active role and does not only observe but also teaches and can even come up with his own strategies instead of only following those of his mentor.

The last approach described by Maynard and Furlong (1995), the reflective practitioner model, consists of a relationship in which the mentor encourages the mentee to reflect on his own practice through different activities such as keeping journals, doing self-observations, etc. During this approach, the student-teacher as a practitioner becomes more aware of what he and his students are doing, focusing on his students' learning rather than on his own teaching. Maynard and Furlong argue that to facilitate this approach, "mentors need to be able to move from being a model and instructor to being a co-enquirer" (1995: 21), that is, mentors should not take a stand in a position of power anymore, telling the practitioner what to do and what not to do, but should instead encourage the mentees to reflect on their practice and think critically about it to improve it themselves. It can be therefore inferred that the reflective practitioner model encourages the mentee to be more autonomous. Lipscomb (2010) argues something similar as he claims that "those individuals who take greater personal responsibility for their career development are the

most likely to benefit from the guidance of a mentor" (p. 1002), this is, the more autonomous (self-directed) the practitioner is, the more he will learn from his mentor.

Based on these three approaches, it can be stated that for the purposes of this study, the practitioner approach could be adopted, as it is the one that seems to provide more advantages for the student-teacher. The practitioner approach allows the student-teacher not only to effectively learn from his mentor, but also to develop his teacher autonomy and skills as he will be constantly reflecting and analysing his professional practice being able, thus, to self-judge it and self-regulate it to improve it and become a better teacher.

Choosing the right approach, however, is not the only factor for mentoring to be successful. There are certain conditions that influence the development of a positive and meaningful mentoring relationship where the dyad mentor-mentee can develop their full potential through collaboration, taking therefore full advantage of it. These conditions will be revised in the following paragraphs.

### 2.3.4        Conditions for successful mentoring and the role of personality

By revising the concept of mentoring and analysing its types and approaches as stated above, it may seem that it can only prove beneficial to students, student-teachers and mentors and that it simply cannot have any failures. However, McKimm et al (2003), Larose et al (2005), Harrison et al (2005) and McCall (2011) talk about the importance of several factors that need to occur in order for its successful implementation. Among these factors are commitment and the carefully pairing of mentors and mentees. This is of relevance to this study as the awareness of these factors could explain and/or justify why mentoring is not being successful in having an impact on the professional development of student-teachers.

Commitment from both mentor and mentee is one of the most important factors linked to the establishment of a successful relationship that can prove beneficial for the people involved. It has been found in several studies that mentoring becomes unsuccessful when there was no commitment from the mentor, mentee or both parties. McCall (2011) found in his study with MyUniSpace that mentoring was not successful in those cases when either mentor or mentee was not committed to this relationship and therefore, there was no communication. He describes cases in which sometimes the mentors did not even reply to their mentees, causing them to lose interest in the mentoring programme and as a consequence end the mentoring relationship.

 McKimm et al (2003) identify this ending of the relationship as the fourth and last stage of the mentoring cycle, which they call ending, termination or divorce. There are different causes for the

ending of mentoring which can be for positive reasons such as the fulfilment of needs and/or completion of the term, or for negative reasons such as an inappropriate matching, lack of bonding between mentor and mentee, lack of commitment from any or both parties, or because the needs were not fulfilled. This is of relevance for the present study as it may serve as a guide to see if the mentoring cycle as proposed by McKimm et al (2003) occurs within this context or if there are any changes in the mentoring cycle.

A good pairing mentor-mentee needs to occur to avoid the termination of the mentoring relationship for any of the latter situations. The importance of an appropriate pairing of mentors with mentees is discussed by Larose et al (2005), as they argue that "without exhaustive mentor selection process and extensive training on the attitudes and behaviour to adopt and prohibit in mentoring, this programme can potentially generate negative effects" (p. 127). Special attention needs to be given to the quality and selection process of the mentors and to the process of pairing them with mentees. An analysis of the needs and profiles of both mentors and mentees should be done so that pairing is based on matching profiles. However, this does not often occur due to the hasty process followed by institutions that have a mentoring programme.

Another factor that affects the effectiveness of the mentoring relationships and therefore, its success, is the personality of both mentors and mentees. According to different scholars (Bozionelos, 2004; Turban & Lee, 2007; Sunderhaus, 2012), even though personality plays a major role in the pairing and the establishment of positive mentoring relationships, little systematic research has been conducted to deeply analyse it and find its role in mentoring contexts. Even though the personality of mentors and mentees is not the research focus of this study, it is hoped that through the collection of data some characteristics of them may come up that might affect the mentoring relationship and that could possibly contribute to filling this literature gap.

Bozionelos (2004) and Turban & Lee (2007) present the Five Factor Model (FFM) used in psychology, which includes conscientiousness, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and neuroticism, as a taxonomy that might be useful to describe some elements of personality that might have a role in mentoring. Turban & Lee claim, "mentoring relationships are most effective when both individuals in the relationship feel comfortable opening up to the other person and sharing aspects of themselves" (2007: 37). This argument is related to the FFM characteristics of agreeableness, as it involves trust, care and support, extraversion, which involves socialization, and openness, which refers to an open-minded, receptive personality. The authors also mention conscientiousness as an important element of mentoring as it "involves being achievement oriented, detail oriented, and organized" (idem: 42) which are characteristics valued by both mentor and mentees as they are trying to collaborate for the achievement of

goals. The authors state that as neuroticism is a negative trait, mentors and mentees should better be emotionally stable (that is, have low neuroticism) to have better control of their emotions and feelings and therefore create a more effective and successful relationship. Finally, and despite not being part of the FFM, the authors argue that another important personality trait in mentoring relationships is to be learning goal oriented (idem), as this characteristic is imperative to set a goal and to work on achieving it. Being learning goal oriented allows mentors and mentees to be motivated to reach that goal which would consequently encourage them to create a positive mentoring relationship.

It can be said, therefore, that these personality traits of mentors and mentees influence their social attraction. Ragins, Cotton & Miller (2000), Turban & Lee (2007) and Sunderhaus (2012) argue that informal mentoring tends to create more successful relationships than formal mentoring due to this social attraction. This is because in contrast to the pairing that occurs in formal mentoring, which is established by the institution, informal mentoring pairing occurs in a natural way and is sought by the mentee. In informal mentoring relationships the mentee looks for a mentor that he feels identified with and that he considers a role model. In addition, the relationship is formed without being forced by a particular institution, so the mentee feels more confident in approaching the mentor, creating therefore a more positive atmosphere.

Richter et al (2013) state that mentoring has three goals: instructional support, psychological support, and role modelling. Instructional support refers to the role the mentor plays in guiding the student-teacher in successfully performing in class, that is, the support given regarding classroom management and planning. Psychological support refers to the emotional help provided by the mentor, including the building and improvement of confidence and autonomy on the mentee. Role modelling, as Richter et al state, "is provided when novice teachers observe their mentor's teaching" (2013: 167), giving the learner (or beginning) teacher the opportunity to analyse and reflect on teaching practice from an external perspective to objectively criticise and further discuss their queries with the mentor, to later put into practice the knowledge obtained. When the student-teacher fails to see their mentor as a role model, marginal mentoring occurs.

According to Ragins et al (2000), marginal mentors are those who fail to provide appropriate mentoring to their mentees (protégés). This lack of mentoring causes disappointment in the student-teachers and may occur due to the lack of preparation or training of the mentor on what to do with the mentee, a pairing mismatch, or lack of interest on the side of the mentor. The authors found that being marginally mentored might have as few benefits for student-teachers as if they had not been mentored at all: "Protégés with highly satisfying mentors may display positive work attitudes, but there may be few differences between non-protégés and protégés

with marginally satisfying or dissatisfying mentors" (Ragins et al, 2000: 1178). It is therefore imperative to be careful in the pairing of mentors and student-teachers in terms of both having matching personalities, goals and motivation to be part of the scheme to have effective and successful mentoring relationships and that both parties can be benefited from them.

### 2.3.5    Relationships between mentors and student-teachers

As there is not a standardised concept of mentoring, the roles of the mentors and the characteristics of a mentoring relationship are not clearly defined. Nevertheless, several studies have been carried out to determine what characteristics of mentors and of a mentoring relationship tend to have a bigger impact on the professional development of student-teachers. As Franke & Dahlgren (1996) and Boyle & Boice (1998) claim, novice teachers perceive practicum and mentoring the most important part of their training, being even more relevant and effective to their professional development than campus-wide seminars or lectures.

Hobson (2002) describes the perceptions of mentoring by student-teachers, and according to his findings, there are several activities that mentors do that student-teachers appreciate the most. Among these activities are observation and feedback, receiving advice and ideas about teaching, being supported by their mentors, having scheduled meetings with the mentors, discussing lesson planning, learning through trial and error and getting immersed in the school culture, etc. All these activities seem to interrelate. For example, by observing the mentors, student-teachers get ideas or strategies about how to teach a particular topic or group of students. Also, they learn classroom management techniques from observation as they imitate their mentors. In addition, they receive feedback about their practice, suggestions and guidance on what to improve and how by being observed by their mentors. Other characteristics of mentors that student-teachers appreciate include the use of collaborative work in construction of identity and the development of autonomy, the encouragement of reflective practice, the commitment and communication between mentors and mentees, and the reception of constructive feedback. These characteristics of a successful mentoring relationship will be further discussed.

Regarding collaborative work, mentoring involves a reciprocal relationship in which both parties collaborate to construct knowledge, improve skills and develop professionally. Franke & Dahlgren (1996), Hargreaves & Fullan (2000), Ambrosetti & Dekkers (2010), Lipscomb (2010), Colvin & Ashman (2010), Delaney (2012), Mullen (2012), Sorensen (2012), Terrion (2012), Burke et al (2015), Izadinia (2015) discuss the importance of establishing a collaborative relationship as it has been found that just as student-teachers learn and benefit from their mentors, mentors also learn from their mentees. It has also been found that by having a reciprocal rather than hierarchical

relationship, student-teachers could develop a relationship of trust so they can open and share more experiences and thoughts with their mentors. Freiman-Nemser (1996) claim that mentors should assist instead of assess to create a relationship in which mentees open to them. In addition, Burke et al (2015) found that teacher attrition is more likely to happen when novice teachers lack support from their institutions and don't have cooperative colleagues.

Professional identity (see 2.2) is therefore shaped and re-shaped through collaboration during student teacher practicum (see 2.2.2). Walkington (2005) defines professional identity as the beliefs one has about teaching and being a teacher which tend to change through experience. Even though Izadinia (2015) claims that professional identity begins to form until student-teachers enter their practicum, Maynard & Furlong (1995) argue that before that, student-teachers "often hold a clear image of the sort of teacher they want to be" (p. 12). This image tends to be very idealistic and it is challenged once they start their practicum. It is because of this that researchers have found that through mentoring, professional identity tends to be shaped and re-shaped (Elliot & Calderhead, 1995; Walkington, 2005; Harrison et al, 2005; Delaney, 2012).

Another characteristic that student-teachers appreciate in their mentors is the encouragement of reflective practice. Elliot & Calderhead (1995), Maynard & Furlong (1995), McNamara (1995), Franke & Dahlgren (1996), Galbraith (2003), McKimm et al (2003), Harrison et al (2005), Walkington (2005), Colvin & Ashman (2010), Kourieos (2012), and Mullen (2012) describe critical thinking and reflective practice as elements that contribute to the effectiveness of mentoring. While doing their practicum, student-teachers tend to observe their mentors and later on, their mentors observe them when it is their turn to teach. As was found in the literature, there are many mentoring programmes that require their student-teachers to keep a journal where they reflect, analyse and evaluate their practice, and also require them to have constant meetings or discussions with their mentors with the purpose of reflecting together to improve their practice. In fact, in the context of this study, reflective practice is a key element to obtain information as the participants will be asked to write journals to see how mentoring is affecting their professional development and see if they show links between mentoring, autonomy and identity.

Commitment and communication are other key elements of a successful mentoring relationship. McKimm et al (2003), Larose et al (2005), Harrison et al (2006), Lipscomb (2010), McCall (2011), etc. argue that as mentoring is a reciprocal relationship, commitment and communication must be characteristics of both the mentors and mentees. Mentees have shown frustration when they do not perceive their mentors as being helpful, supportive or available for discussion. As they see their mentors as role models, if they perceive that they are not interested in their practicum they feel disappointed, discouraged, and are more likely to leave the profession.

The reception of constructive feedback is another characteristic of good mentoring. Harrison et al (2005), Ambrosetti & Dekkers (2010), McCall (2011), Delaney (2012), Kourieos (2012), Mullen (2012), Terrion (2012), etc., claim that student-teachers and novice teachers appreciate feedback given by their mentors to improve their practice. They found that mentees appreciate being told their strengths and weaknesses to improve, and if they are given only positive or only negative comments, they will become discouraged and will not perceive their practicum experience as useful. Kourieus (2012) found that student-teachers were not only dissatisfied with the feedback given by some of their mentors, but also by the infrequent visits of their supervisors and their limited knowledge in the area of teaching of their mentor. This was because as supervisors were not experts in the area, they were perceived as not qualified by the student-teachers to give them feedback. This shows that if student-teachers do not trust either their mentor or supervisor's skills or knowledge in the subject area, they will become disappointed and will not see mentoring as an enriching experience.

Finally, studies have also found that student-teachers appreciate the development of autonomy while being mentored (see 2.1). Research by Franke & Dahlgren (1996), Boyle & Boice (1998), Galbraith (2003), Harrison et al (2005), Harrison et al (2006), McKimm et al (2003), Lipscomb (2010), Kourieos (2012), Terrion (2012), and Izadinia (2015) suggest that even though student-teachers appreciate the guidance and support offered by mentors, they expect to become independent and autonomous eventually. Student-teachers hope to learn different classroom management techniques from their mentors, as well as teaching strategies and ideas, how to plan a class, etc. However, Franke & Dahlgren (1996) and Izadinia (2015) claim that student-teachers want to be given opportunities and freedom to discover and come up with new strategies and ideas, to plan their lessons, and to deal with the class by themselves instead of always being told by the mentors what to do. Lipscomb (2010) talks about autonomy in terms of student-teachers being responsible for their own learning as he claims that "those individuals who take greater personal responsibility for their career development are the most likely to benefit from the guidance of a mentor" (p. 1002).  McKimm et al (2003) argues that in a good mentoring relationship, mentees start by being dependent on their mentors but eventually, as they need less guidance and support because they have more practice, they become more independent.

The notions of autonomy, identity and mentoring seem to be therefore related to each other. However, as it was mentioned at the beginning of this section, even though researchers have conducted a myriad of studies regarding mentoring, autonomy, and identity, either discussing them separately or in pairs, the literature does not seem to provide studies that attempt to find the relationship between these three major trends of the TESOL and IATEFL research agendas. A general overview of the literature in these three areas is shown in figure 2 below.
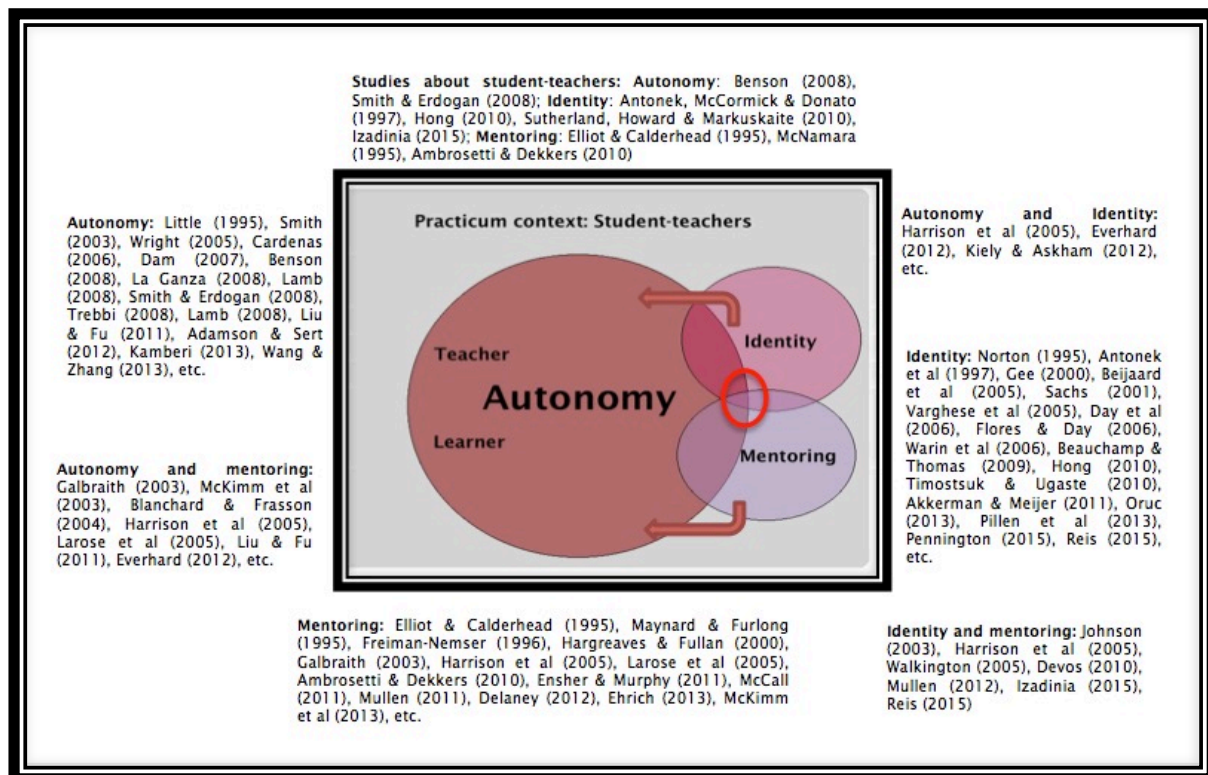


Figure 2 Overview of the literature on mentoring, autonomy and identity

Figure 2 summarises key research that was presented in this chapter relating to the three main areas of study. It shows teacher and learner autonomy as the main theme of this thesis, and identity and mentoring as themes that might have an impact on autonomy. As student-teachers doing their practicum were the participants of this study, their exposure to a mentor and to a new teaching context was likely to impact their views of teaching and of being teachers and hence their autonomy. Outside of the circles, there are examples of authors who have explored each area separately and jointly, and authors that have studied student-teachers in each of these three themes. The figure also shows a possible overlap among these three areas that is also explored in this study.

## 2.4 The sociocultural approach in the development of autonomy, identity and the mentoring process of student-teachers.

As has been seen in the previous paragraphs, there seems to be a connection between context and the development of identity and autonomy. Lasky (2005) claims there exists a relationship between identity and culture as "[teachers'] notions of identity were inextricably interlaced with their beliefs about the right ways to be a teacher, and the purposes of schooling" (p. 913). This means that the professional identity of teachers, the way they see themselves and what they want to be seen as teachers, are part of their internal process of identity. In addition to this, Lasky claims that the context where you teach could also impact the shaping and reshaping of identity and the development of autonomy. This is similar to Lamb's (2011) claim that context may play an important role in encouraging learners to work together with teachers in the construction of their knowledge and that "identity, motivation, and autonomy can all change over time, and that they depend on the context and are socially mediated" (p. 77). An element of context refers to the individuals that form it; in the case of this study, context will be formed by the student-teachers themselves, their mentors (English teachers), their students, the administrative personnel of the school, parents, educational policies, and the school where student-teachers do their practicum.

Context in research, thus, refers to the environment or the circumstances where a study is being conducted and to all the elements that may affect its development. The analysis and description of context is a major element of qualitative research (Creswell, 2013; Gray, 2013; Flick, 2009; and Cohen et al, 2007). According to Merriam (2009), qualitative research focuses on analysing meaning within the context where a phenomenon occurs while Richards (2009) cites Denzin and Lincoln (2003) by claiming that in this type of research participants are studied in their natural context. These characteristics make the understanding of all the factors that are part of the context where a study is being developed of high importance because qualitative research, and especially the case study design, analyses not only the phenomenon itself but also how it unfolds in a particular environment. Therefore, when conducting a research study it is necessary to have a clear idea and a description of the environment where the subjects will be studied to be aware of and understand the possible variables that might affect the way the participants behave and which, therefore, could influence the results of a given study.

This research study follows a case study design because it explores if the parallel shaping and development of their professional identity influence the autonomy of student-teachers during their mentoring process. To do this, it is necessary to take into account context because as the student-teachers of this study did their practicum in different school settings, environment might have played a role in the ways their autonomy developed.

The following paragraphs attempt to show how context may influence or affect the development of autonomy and identity during mentoring with the purpose of trying to get a clearer perspective on what to look for when gathering and analysing data in this study.

### 2.4.1    The educational context

For the purposes of this study it is important to understand what context is when talking about the educational setting. It is not possible to understand what happens in a social or an educational setting nor, in the case of this research, to see how autonomy may be influenced by identity and mentoring unless we are aware of all the factors that can affect the context where the student-teachers carry out their practicum.

Turner and Meyer (2000) argue that classroom context is a broad term that includes the "beliefs, goals, values, perceptions, behaviours, classroom management, social relations, physical space, and social-emotional and evaluative climates that contribute to the participants' understanding of the classroom" (p. 70). They also argue that instructional context, on the other hand, overlaps with classroom context but includes "the influences of the teacher, students, content area, and instructional activities on learning, teaching, and motivation" (ibid). This means that when conducting an educational research study it is important to define what elements of what type of context are going to be taken into account according to the purposes of the study.  They also argue that educational research needs to be qualitatively approached as generally its purpose is to describe the subjective reality of the classroom and thus, the presence of the researcher is highly important to take notes, observe, write reports, conduct interviews, describe the events that occur, etc. (ibid).

This view of Turner and Meyer (2000) supports the choice of a mixed methods approach with emphasis on qualitative research that was made for the design of this study. This is because a description of the subjective reality of the schools and the context where the student-teachers who are participating in this study are doing their practicum is needed to attempt to identify the factors that may influence the way they perceive mentoring. Among the factors that need to be understood for the development of this study are the characteristics of mentoring in the context where they do their practicum, as well as the ways in which their professional identity is being shaped and re-shaped and their teacher autonomy is developing in that environment.

Context influences autonomy according to the region where teachers work. Smith (2003), Dincer et al (2010), Adamson & Sert (2012) and Wang & Zhang (2013) argue that fostering autonomy not only in teachers but also in learners in non-western countries has been a difficult task because in these cultural contexts teachers are not questioned nor challenged by their students; that is, in

Asian and Arab countries students seem to follow what the teachers or mentors teach them instead of being more critical of the information received and develop their autonomy because it is considered a lack of respect. What was achieved in those contexts was that students were becoming more autonomous gradually but always following the guidance of the teacher. In this study, as it was conducted in a western country, this problem did not happen. On the opposite, the data showed that when a student-teacher had a negative perception of their mentor, they found their own ways to teach or even their own mentors. However, teaching in a private or public school did seem to affect their autonomy because in private schools participants had less freedom to teach than in public schools as private schools follow a more rigid curriculum and teaching method.

Another contextual factor that seemed to affect the present study was the relationship between the mentor and mentee in terms of their identity, but also in terms of their autonomy. According to Little (1995), Benson (2003), Smith (2003), Carter (2005), La Ganza (2008), Smith & Erdogan (2008), Benson (2011) Adamson & Sert (2012) Breen & Mann (2013) and Bajrami (2015), autonomy is more effectively and successfully achieved through collaboration. In the early stages of mentoring (regardless if it is peer or traditional mentoring), the student or beginning teacher need more support from their mentor, but eventually mentors should withdraw support as they perceive their mentees are becoming more autonomous (see 2.1.3). The way the class TESOL: Practicum was planned (which is the one the participants of this study were taking) allowed this collaboration at the beginning of the practicum so that gradually student-teachers could teach a class on their own. However, mentors were not trained and they mentored in different ways, thus probably affecting the development of autonomy in student-teachers.

A second major theme in this thesis is professional identity. It is important to understand how context can be accounted for in research regarding the professional identity of teachers, because as Varghese et al (2005) claim identity is closely related to context.

Johnson (2003), Farrell (2011) and Reis (2015) argue that a main contextual factor that impacts the identity of foreign language teachers is their state of being native or non-native English speakers. Reis (2015) argues that non-native English speaking teachers (NNEST) usually feel more afraid of making mistakes, portraying these insecurities in their teaching practice and impacting their development in the classroom and the image they give to their students (see 2.2.3). Johnson (2003) points out that more research is needed regarding the pairing in a practicum context of a NNES student-teachers with native English speaking teachers (NEST), to see if it is more beneficial for the student teacher to have a native English speaking mentor or a non-native one. She claims that a bond is created faster when both mentor and mentee are either native or non-native

English speakers because the student-teachers see not only a model in their mentor but also someone who can understand them as both are in the same situation of teaching a language which is not their mother tongue. Farrell (2011) on the other hand, claims that studies on teacher identity usually focus on both NES and NNES novice teachers but that the identities of experienced NEST have not been explored thoroughly. The participants of this study are NNEST but they are teaching in a context where it is uncommon to have NEST, hence, they may not experience tension because they are not comparing themselves to native speakers and because they are proficient English speakers who have been trained for four and a half years in TESOL. In addition, in the context where this study took place it is common that English teachers are untrained. Therefore, as the participants of this study are usually more academically prepared than their mentors, they tend to feel confident of their teaching skills.

Johnson (2003) also suggests that the relationships between student-teachers and mentors, students and colleagues, which are formed in the school where they do their practicum, have an impact on the development of their professional identity: "our identity shifts in our relationships with people, with learners as well as colleagues" (p. 42). Timoštšuk & Ugaste (2010) argue that "interpersonal relationships were a primary influencing factor especially cooperation with others (pupils, schoolteachers, university teachers, fellow students) in the school context" (p. 1566). These relationships are fundamental in the construction of the teachers' professional identity when they are student-teachers and novice teachers. This is because at this stage of their professional lives they are in the transition between being students and start being in front of a classroom and dealing with their learners, so it is here when new tensions and challenges may appear in the classroom and where they apparently need more support not only in terms of academic guidance, but also moral and emotional advice. This also occurs because during this stage student and novice teachers usually need to adapt their teaching beliefs and methodologies to those of the institution where they teach, requiring therefore support from the institutional authorities and colleagues to get used to their policies and adapt them to their teacher identity.

Findings of this study suggest that student-teachers seemed to demand more academic support rather than emotional, perhaps because the relationships they created with their mentors tended to be more formal and academic instead of formal and personal. These observations will be further discussed (see 4.4). Hong (2010) and Morrison (2013) claim that according to the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future of 2003, teacher attrition is more common within the first five years of their careers being a major factor the lack of emotional support novice teachers feel from both their institution, mentors, and colleagues. Hence, it is of high importance to establish positive and supportive relationships during the student-teachers and novice

teachers' stages of the teaching career, so that teachers develop a stronger sense of identity towards the institution where they work and this index of teacher attrition is reduced.

The last major theme of this thesis is mentoring. Hence, the following paragraphs are dedicated to present a brief overview on how context is accounted for in the literature regarding mentoring, and which factors might be present in the context where this study is being conducted. Larose, Tarabulsy & Cyrenne (2005) approach context in the sense that they perceived bonding as an important element of mentoring. Their study was conducted with teenagers who were mentored because of an academic adjustment programme and they discovered that those who were able to bond with their mentors were more successful in adapting to their new college lives. However, they also claim that those who were not mentored at all or who were mentored very few times showed the same results, thus realising that studies are needed that talk about the effects of little mentoring and no mentoring at all.

Another contextual factor that affects the mentoring of student-teachers is the training of the mentor. Walkington (2005) argues that mentors are not usually trained to support their mentees, thus once that they have a protégé they do not know what their functions are, to what point they are supposed to guide or help their mentees, and usually they mentor the student/novice teachers according to the way they would have liked to be trained and mentored. This is relevant to this study as mentors were in this situation. It is important to take into account these different ways of being mentored, because they might have had an impact on the way student-teachers perceived their mentoring experience and also in the ways in which their professional identity was shaped and re-shaped.

Nevertheless, not only does the training of the teacher in terms of mentoring seem to affect his/her relationship with the mentee, but also its professional and academic background. As discussed in the literature chapter, Timoštšuk & Ugaste (2010) argue that teachers who are at a practicum stage expect their mentors to be "perfect" teachers who will professionally guide them and emotionally support them especially when dealing with anxiety, and that when these expectations are not met, mentees tend to feel disappointed. In the case of this study this situation of disappointment was observed when the novice teachers noticed that their mentors were not academically prepared to be teachers and/or committed mistakes while teaching (see 4.4.1).

In the context where this study took place, it is not uncommon that schools hire people who speak English but who do not have a teaching background as English teachers, hence it is common that students do not actually learn English the way they should. As will be further discussed, findings suggest that when student-teachers realised that their mentors are not professional

teachers or are not English proficient, they felt disappointed and sometimes even put a barrier and refused to learn from their mentors. However, data also shows that when it was their time to teach they tended to make an extra effort to do a good job because apparently they did not want to be seen as the class teacher is seen (see 4.4).

This review of the literature demonstrates the existence of an apparent gap in research regarding the development of autonomy in student-teachers and the ways in which autonomy might be influenced by both identity and mentoring in different contexts. Although autonomy, identity and mentoring have been studied in the language education field, the focus has been on learners and teachers. Therefore, this research focuses on student-teachers in an attempt to get information that may help to strengthen their autonomy and identity through mentoring while they are still students, so that they have an easier transition in the labour market and improve their teaching practice.

# Chapter 3: Methodology

An exploratory mixed methods case study with an emphasis on an interpretative qualitative approach (Creswell, 2003) was conducted in an attempt to answer the research questions presented in section 1.3. This study was carried out in two phases. The first and most important phase analysed the ways in which autonomy developed in four cohorts of student-teachers. It also explored the possible ways in which the shaping of their identity and their mentoring experience influenced the development of their autonomy. There was a smaller second phase that followed five novice teachers to explore the possible impact practicum had on their autonomy and identity as novice teachers. Information was gathered between January 2015 and December 2016 from four cohorts of student-teachers of a B.A. in English Language at a university in the north of Mexico. All participants were in their 9th semester and taking a TESOL practicum course.

This third chapter describes the design of this study and is divided into five sections. The first section describes the approach of the study, that is, why it was decided to conduct an exploratory sequenced mixed methods approach. The second section describes the characteristics of the participants of this study while the third focuses on the selection of the instruments to gather information while relating them to the research questions of this research. The fourth section describes the role of the researcher while the last one presents a description of procedures used to analyse the information obtained.

## 3.1    Approach

This study is an exploratory mixed methods case study (Cresswell, 2003) with an emphasis in an interpretative qualitative approach. The reasons why this approach was chosen will be further explained.

Merriam (2009) claims that the qualitative approach focuses on meaning in context. Richards (2009) suggests based on the definition by Denzin and Lincoln (2003) that it has four important characteristics. First of all, qualitative studies are locally situated, studying human participants in their natural context. Secondly, it is participant-oriented, aiming at understanding how the participants perceive their reality. Thirdly, qualitative research is holistic, that is, studies the phenomenon within its context instead of in isolation. Finally, it is inductive, as it requires immersion in the data to see the different perspectives of the phenomenon for its analysis and interpretation.

Merriam (2009) also notes four characteristics, similarly to Richards, of qualitative inquiry. She argues that qualitative research focuses on meaning and understanding, aiming to see how people interpret their own reality, how they perceive their world. She also claims that in this approach, the researcher functions as "the primary instrument for data collection and analysis" (2009:15), which allows him to directly interact with the participants and clarify information, check for accuracy and explore the different responses that may emerge. Merriam, just like Richards, argues that qualitative research is an inductive process that allows the researcher to "gather data to build concepts, hypotheses, or theories rather than deductively testing hypotheses" as researchers "build toward theory from observations and intuitive understandings gleaned from being in the field" (2009: 15). Finally, she draws upon qualitative research being richly descriptive, as the context, participants involved and the activities developed are described in detail and direct quotes taken from the data are used to understand the phenomenon to be studied.

This study adheres to these characteristics of the qualitative approach. First, it explores ESOL student-teachers' perceptions of the ways in which their autonomy develops during their last semester at university. In addition, it investigates the ways their autonomy might be influenced by their mentoring experience and the shaping of their teacher identity. Therefore, the reality of the student-teachers was observed and analysed through the descriptions of their perspectives of what happens in their context. As the student-teachers' perceptions on autonomy, identity and mentoring are being explored, it was necessary for the researcher to be in intense contact with the participants, condition that happened as I was supervising the practicum of some of them.

A case study paradigm was chosen because, as Yin (2009) claims, it refers to "an empirical inquiry about a contemporary phenomenon (e.g., a "case"), set within its real-world context" (p. 18). This paradigm studies a particular case -or a number of cases- to provide an in-depth analysis and understanding of it. Merriam (2009) points out three characteristics of the qualitative case study: it is particularistic, descriptive and heuristic. Case studies are particularistic because they "focus on a particular situation, event, programme, or phenomenon. The case itself is important for what it reveals about the phenomenon and for what it might represent" (2009: 43). This study follows this characteristic as it focuses on ESOL student-teachers of a northern Mexican university who are taking the class TESOL: Practicum. The second characteristic refers to the descriptiveness of a case study, which means "that the end product of [it] is a rich, thick description of the phenomenon under study" (2009: 42), *thick* referring to "a complete, literal description of the incident or entity being investigated" (ibid). Merriam also adds that this characteristic allows the possibility for case studies to be longitudinal, holistic, lifelike, grounded, and exploratory as they can include many different variables. This descriptiveness is related to the heuristic characteristic

as they provide a better understanding of the phenomenon being studied because "they can bring about the discovery of new meaning, extend the reader's experience or confirm what is known" (2009: 44). This study is a descriptive and exploratory case study because it attempts to both describe and explore the ways in which ESOL student-teachers perceive their autonomy is being affected by the shaping of their identity and their mentoring experience during their practicum.

## 3.2    Participants of the study

According to Merriam (2009), in qualitative research sample selection tends to be non-random, purposeful, and small. Based on these characteristics, the participants for the first phase of this study were 65 ninth semester student-teachers from four different cohorts of a B.A. in English. Data from the first cohort of 11 student-teachers was collected between January and June 2015, from the second cohort of 25 student-teachers between August and December 2015, from the third cohort of 12 student-teachers between January and June 2016 and from the fourth cohort of 17 participants between August and December 2016. For the second phase, an interview and a Likert-type questionnaire were answered by five novice teachers, all of them participated in phase one of this study and got their job as teachers between the time of their practicum and one year after they graduated. Data for the second phase was gathered between January 2016 and June 2017.

The participants were chosen deliberately and intentionally as Rodriguez, Gil & García (1999) suggest. Thus, the sampling procedure used was *purposive sampling* in which "the researcher uses his or her own judgment about which respondents to choose, and picks only those who best meet the purposes of the study" (Bailey, 2007: 96). These characteristics can be seen by the decision of choosing four particular groups of student-teachers from a specific B.A. programme according to the purposes of this study. In addition, for the second phase it was required that the novice teachers had taken the practicum course and had participated in the first phase of this study to follow their perceptions as both student-teachers and novice teachers.

As mentioned in the context of the study section (see 1.2), student-teachers were assigned to different types of schools, were mentored in different ways and were hence exposed to different practicum experiences:

- Some mentors required student-teachers to just observe them at the beginning of the school term (6 – 8 weeks), and then they were allowed to practice by teaching the class.
- Some mentors asked student-teachers to help them with the class, as teacher assistants, from the very beginning of the course.

- Some mentors required student-teachers to teach half of the class from the beginning of the course.

- Some mentors asked student-teachers to teach the whole class every other day from the beginning of the course.

- Some student-teachers were given full responsibility of a group (that is, they were given a class to teach) since the beginning of the practicum. They were assigned a mentor from a different English class to observe and complete their assignments.

Student-teachers were assigned to nine different schools (see Appendix B for a list and description of the schools where the participants did their practicum). The university only worked with schools 1 and 2 (which were private kindergarten, elementary and secondary schools) with the first cohort because, due to internal policies of the institutions, for the second cohort they demanded more hours and more work that student-teachers were unable to carry out due to time constraints. For the second cohort of student-teachers, therefore, six more schools were chosen, and they continued working with the university with the cohorts that followed.

Practicum was conducted in both public and private elementary, secondary and high schools and in a language centre. Public schools are secular and funded by the government, with Spanish as a means of instruction and three hours per week of EFL (English as a Foreign Language). Groups have between 35 and 50 students each. Students attend public schools either in the morning from 7:30 or 8:00 am to 1:30 or 2:00 pm, or in the afternoon from 1:30 or 2:00 pm to 7:00 or 7:30 pm. The morning and afternoon shifts are assigned randomly to students depending on the capacity of each school.

English teachers in public schools vary from trained to untrained teachers. Nevertheless, tenured teachers are required to hold a university degree, preferably in ELT or a similar field, or a TKT certification by Cambridge and they are required to take continuing education courses throughout the school year according to the governmental educational policies. Teachers who do not have a permanent working position in public schools are required to either hold a university degree preferably in ELT or an English certification but schools are more flexible with their requirements as they are not hired permanently. As public schools have big groups of students and not all English teachers are trained in language acquisition or TEFL/TESOL, untrained professors tend to give the English class in Spanish and use very little English. On the other hand, trained teachers tend to use both languages as groups have students of mixed proficiency levels.

Private schools, on the other hand, are usually bilingual. That is, they offer some regular courses in English such as science, reading, history, etc., in addition to EFL courses. Private schools are usually religious (Catholic, Protestant, Mormon, etc.). They only have one shift but as they add

bilingual and religious courses to the regular curricula, their schedule is usually from 7:00 am to 3:00 or 4:00 pm. Parents who send their children to private schools pay extra money for the English courses; hence, emphasis is given to these classes.

Teachers in private schools (English and the other teachers) do not have permanent positions but are required to hold a university degree preferably in ELT, an English proficiency certification and a teaching certificate as well (usually TKT). Private schools have small groups of students, usually varying from 10 to 30, and as they teach English since the early stages, English and bilingual courses tend to be English only, although teachers sometimes use Spanish as well. It is common that parents register their children in the same private school from kindergarten or elementary school to secondary or even high school. That way, students follow the same learning methodology since the early stages and they tend to be English proficient (see Appendix B for a detailed description of the schools and number of mentors each student teacher had during their practicum).

Another contextual difference was that schools and mentors had different requirements for their student-teachers. As mentioned before, some mentors required trainees to teach a class from the beginning of the practicum. Others asked them to prepare some activities to start getting them immersed in the classroom while others asked them to first observe the classes and start teaching after some weeks. Moreover, some student-teachers only had one mentor, others 2 or more while others did not have any mentor to observe them teaching.

In addition, mentors in all schools were paired to student-teachers randomly, that is, there were no criteria to see if they shared interests or personality traits with their mentees. This lack of standardisation in the pairing and characteristics of the schools can be said to be a limitation of the present study because as student-teachers were mentored in different ways, different mentoring relationships developed.

Moreover, as mentioned before, although all participants are students of the same B.A. programme, this programme prepares the students in the areas of both TESOL and translation. This caused that participants had different views of teaching and learning. Fourteen of the 65 participants mentioned at the beginning of the study that they were not interested in teaching, that is, they had a negative teacher identity. Thirteen student-teachers considered themselves good students, having thus a positive learner identity. Only one participant of this study held a negative teacher and learner identity. In addition, as they worked with different mentors, their views on mentoring also varied depending on their perceptions of their mentors as good or bad teachers. See Appendix B for a chart describing these perceptions of student-teachers.

## 3.3    Instruments

The instruments that were used for the collection of data during the two phases of this study were focus groups, questionnaires, in-depth and semi-structured interviews, reflective journals, and a Likert type questionnaire. The criteria for the choosing and design of each instrument will be described in the following paragraphs.

The instruments used in phase one were piloted with the first cohort of participants (January – June, 2015), as they were part of a preliminary study to see the relevance of the research questions. The Likert type questionnaire and the questions for phase two were piloted in early 2016 with 10 students of the B.A. in English programme who were in their last year to check for clarity. The necessary amendments to all instruments were sent to ERGO as part of the ethical considerations of this study, and permission for the conduction of all the phases of the present study was requested and granted with the following numbers:

- 13378: Pre-study TESOL: Practicum class
- 18833: Main study phase 1: Exploration of learner teacher autonomy and professional identity through mentoring: A case study of ESOL student-teachers and novice teachers.
- 24505: Main study phase 2: Exploration of learner teacher autonomy and professional identity through mentoring: A case study of ESOL student-teachers and novice teachers.

Table 1 below presents a summary of the relationship between the research questions and the instruments used to gather information from the participants. A detailed description of each instrument follows the table.

Table 1 Relationship between research questions and instruments

| Research Question | Instrument | Number of instruments collected |
|---|---|---|
| RQ1: In what ways do student-teachers perceive autonomy and how does this change over time? | • Reflective journals<br>• Focus groups<br>• Questionnaires/ semi-structured interviews | |
| RQ2: In what ways does the development of autonomy change in student-teachers during practicum? | • Reflective journals<br>• Questionnaires/ semi-structured interviews | • 982 journal entries (between 8 and 16 per participant)<br>• 8 focus groups (2 per cohort)<br>• 195 questionnaires (3 per participant)<br>• 7 semi-structured interviews |
| RQ3: in what ways does the shaping of identity of student-teachers during practicum | • Reflective journals<br>• Questionnaires/ semi-structured | |

| influence the development of autonomy? | interviews | |
|---|---|---|
| RQ4: in what ways does the process of mentoring of student-teachers during practicum influence the development of autonomy? | • Reflective journals<br>• Focus groups<br>• Questionnaires/ semi-structured interviews | |
| RQ5: In what ways do the experiences student-teachers acquire during practicum affect their professional practice as novice teachers? | • Semi-structured interview<br>• Likert-type scale | • 5 semi-structured interviews<br>• 5 Likert-type questionnaires |

During the first phase of the study, reflective journals written by the student-teachers were the main instrument to gather data. Reflective journals have been used by several researchers as they allow participants to get their ideas into paper to analyse what they did, why they did it, and learn from their reflection. They have been suggested to be used in the field of teacher autonomy by Carter (2005), Sanprasert (2010), Kamberi (2013), Wang & Zhang (2013), among others, in the field of teacher identity by Antonek et al (1997), Walkington (2005), Sutherland et al (2010), Farrell (2011), Slimani-Rolls & Kiely (2014), Pennington (2015), and in the field of mentoring student/novice teachers by McKimm et al (2003) and Colvin & Ashman (2010).

According to Scanlon, Care & Udod (2002), reflecting on our own practice and learning allows people "to step outside the performance treadmill to understand better, accept and reshape what we do over and over again" (p. 143). Moreover, Antonek, McCormick & Donato (1997) talk about the importance of reflective journals and portfolios as part of the educational programmes and training of teachers because they claim that teachers tend to base their instruction on the contents of their writing, and that "student-teachers need to interpret and consider their own actions and beliefs and those of the cooperating teacher, the university supervisor, and their students. The student teacher portfolio becomes the tool for mediating reflections on actions and beliefs." (1997: 17). Hence, through the use of reflective diaries, student-teachers can reflect on their own practice and on the reactions and feedback provided by their students, mentors and even peers. Diaries are also effective instruments to analyse and see how participants consider they develop as teachers and how their professional identity and teaching practice change from the beginning to the end of their practicum experience.

For the development of this study, student-teachers were asked to write a weekly reflective journal entry to describe what happened in the classroom, how they felt and what they learned.

They were given a questionnaire guide for its writing to make sure that they reflected on the areas of mentoring, autonomy and identity in an attempt to gather information to answer research questions 1, 2, 3, and 4 (see Appendix D). A total of 982 reflective journal entries were gathered, that is between 8 and 16 entries per participant. Journal entries were, therefore, the main source of data for this study. The journal entries were part not only of this study but also of the regular TESOL course, which is why some student-teachers handed in more than others. Sometimes student-teachers did not attend their practicum sessions or others only helped teachers to grade exams or check homework, therefore, as their journal entries were not related to their practice and thus irrelevant for this study, they were not considered for this research.

Moreover, two focus groups were conducted with each of the four cohorts of student-teachers to explore their general views on autonomy, identity and mentoring. The first one was conducted in the middle of the semester when all student-teachers had already began their teaching practice, as some participants only observed their mentors during the first half of the course; the second focus group was conducted at the end of their practicum. Although all participants of the four cohorts were invited to the focus-group sessions, the majority of those who attended were those student-teachers under my supervision. The following table shows the number of participants per focus-group session:

| Cohort | Total participants | Participants Focus group 1 | Participants Focus group 2 |
|--------|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1 Jan – June 2015 | 11 | 10 | 10 |
| 2 Aug – Dec 2015 | 25 | 12 | 8 |
| 3 Jan – June 2016 | 12 | 8 | 7 |
| 4 Aug – Dec 2016 | 17 | 7 | 7 |

Table 2 Participants of focus group sessions

During the first focus group, participants were asked questions about their perceptions on autonomy, identity and mentoring. Some of the questions they were asked were:

- In your own words, what is autonomy?
- In what ways do you think you are autonomous?
- In what ways are your mentors and students autonomous?
- How do you want to be perceived as a teacher? What kind of teacher do you want to be?
- What is your relationship with your mentor like?

During the second focus group, they were asked similar questions to see if their perceptions had changed now that they had already been teaching. They were asked:

- In what ways have your perceptions about teaching changed?
- How have your mentors support you during your practicum?
- What did you learn from your mentor?
- Is there anything else you would have liked to learn from your mentor?
- Based on your practicum, in what ways were you autonomous? And your mentor? And your students?
- Were you the kind of teacher you expected to be?

Morgan (1997) claims focus groups require "explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group" (p. 2). Focus groups were chosen because as Morgan claims they are group interviews whose hallmark "is their explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group" (1997: 2). Thus, through focus groups it was expected to gather information to explore how student-teachers understood autonomy and experienced their practicum and also in what ways, if any, they helped or mentored each other to find solutions to their problems, this, in line with Benson's (2003) *autonomous interdependence* (see 2.1.3)*. That is, focus groups were used to get data to answer research questions 1 and 4.

The third set of instruments that were used to gather data were questionnaires and interviews. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to interview all the student-teachers, so interviews were only carried out when there was the need for clarification of certain responses to questions or comments from journals, focus groups or questionnaires. However, all participants were asked to answer three questionnaires (see Appendix D). The literature has shown that this type of instrument can be used in qualitative research as long as they are designed carefully. In studies regarding autonomy, Carter (2005), Sanprasert (2010), Esch (2013), and Wang & Zhang (2013), among others, used questionnaires in their collection of data. In those regarding identity, they were used by Norton (1995), Beijaard et al (2000), Borg (2011), Taylor et al (2013), Pillen et al (2013), etc. Finally, in studies regarding mentoring, questionnaires were used by Larose et al (2005) and McCall (2011) among others.

Interviews are very common instruments when collecting qualitative data. They have been used to obtain information in studies regarding autonomy by Smith & Erdogan (2008), Kamberi (2013), Wang & Zhang (2013), among others. They also seem to be widely used in studies about identity, as it is shown in research done by Norton (1995), Hong (2010), Timoštšuk & Ugaste (2010), Borg (2011), Kiely & Askham (2012), Pillen et al (2013) Trent (2015), etc., and in studies about

mentoring by Colvin & Ashman (2010), McCall (2011) and Delaney (2012) among others. Interviews were also chosen because as Rodríguez et al (1999) claim, their purpose is to see the points of view of the participants and they are flexible in the sense that they can be modified as the conversation flows. In this study, interviews were used in both phases. During the first phase they were used for clarification and in-depth development of responses given in other instruments. During the second phase, they were used as a main instrument to explore the perceptions of autonomy, identity and mentoring of 5 novice teachers.

During the first phase the student-teachers had to answer three open-ended questionnaires, at the beginning, middle and end of their practicum to get an insight of how participants claimed their autonomy and identity were developing and changing and the perceptions they had of being mentored. During this phase, in-depth interviews were conducted when it was necessary to clarify information from either the responses on the questionnaires or the comments from the focus groups. During phase 1, a total of 195 questionnaires were gathered as each participant handed in three, and 7 semi-structured interviews were conducted as follow up. Therefore, both interviews and questionnaires were used to answer research questions 1 to 4.

During the second phase, five semi-structured interviews were conducted to see how novice teachers considered that their practicum and mentoring experiences had influenced their autonomy, identity and teaching practice in general. This, to answer research question 5 (see Appendix D).

For the second phase of this study a Likert-type questionnaire consisting of 30 items and 5 one-word open questions was also used. It was answered by five participants who previously were student-teachers but then became novice teachers (see Appendix D). This questionnaire was used to gather data from novice teachers to obtain information on their perceptions on professional identity (questions 1- 13, 31, 32 and 35), teacher autonomy (questions 14 – 23) and mentoring during their practicum (questions 24 – 30, 33 and 34), that is, to answer research question 5. Even though Likert scales are commonly used in quantitative analysis rather than in qualitative, they were used in this study to triangulate and validate the information of both phases and to attempt to corroborate how novice teachers feel about mentoring, identity and autonomy. The questions of this Likert type questionnaire were adapted from the Professional self-identity questionnaire for the health and social care professions by Crossley J & Vivekananda-Schmidt P. (2009) by adapting them to the teaching context. They were based on the professional identity questionnaire by Fisherman & Abbot (1998), the teacher autonomy survey by William Edward Moomaw (2005) and the aspects considered important through the review of the literature.

## 3.4    Role of the researcher

The role of the researcher in this study was of an insider active participant as I am one of the supervisors of the student-teachers in the TESOL: Practicum class. This class was designed with the purpose of student-teachers learning through observing their English teacher mentors in a real school, being myself a supervisor, facilitator, counsellor and supporter rather than a lecturer. Thus, my role might also be described as a research/mentor. In this class my role was to supervise that student-teachers attended their practicum sessions and completed the tasks required, and even though they indeed turned to me for advice, suggestions and support, their classmates (formally during focus groups sessions and informally outside the classroom) and their mentors helped them during this learning process.

I met the student-teachers that I supervised once a week to discuss what happened during their practicum. During these sessions, student-teachers talked about the problems they experienced during their practicum, and their classmates were asked to give them advice to solve those problems. Student-teachers suggested strategies that their peers could try mainly to solve discipline problems and to design dynamic and fun activities. I limited myself to explain the tasks for the following weeks and to encourage informal peer-mentoring.

I arranged to meet with the student-teachers I was not supervising three times during the semester. The date and time were arranged together with the participants to make sure that they could attend. These participants weekly delivered their journal entries through their supervisors, and did the same with the questionnaires. When it was necessary to arrange an interview, the date and time was set in private with the participant.

The role of research/mentor can be an advantage but also a limitation of this study. It can be an advantage because as the student-teachers know me, they felt confident to tell me if they had a conflict during their practicum and to ask for support and advice. Also this relationship might have allowed them to provide more reliable information about how they felt, as they were more open because they trusted me.  However, it might also be a limitation because precisely due to that close relationship with the learners, I could have been more subjective during the analysis of data. Nevertheless, in an effort to reduce subjectivity and obtain reliable results, the different types of instruments discussed in 3.3 were used to triangulate and validate the information. It is important to note that during the TESOL Practicum course, observations to the student-teachers are carried out face-to-face and throughout videos. Nevertheless, that information was not included in this study to not mix my roles as a researcher and as a teacher trainer and because they were not relevant for this study as the information gathered is to explore student-teachers perceptions on autonomy, identity and mentoring.

## 3.5     Data analysis

The analysis of the data collected was inductive. Data was first analysed individually, from each participant, and later was categorised to find later similarities among participants' answers in an attempt to make generalisations. An inductive approach was also followed as hypotheses were not tested in this study but instead data was gathered to get an understanding of the areas of autonomy, identity and mentoring. The software NVivo was used for the analysis of the information.

Regarding ethics, permission was granted by ERGO for the design and application of each instrument (see 3.3). In addition, all the data was anonymised to protect the identity of the student-teachers and to avoid their possible identification in case they provided compromising information. When student-teachers were invited to participate in this study, they were given the consent form authorized by ERGO which included a general description of the research, the kind of information that was going to be gathered and how their responses were going to be used. The form also informed participants that they would be given a pseudonym and that if they wished to leave the study at any stage, they would be able to do so. As I am one of the professors in charge of the Practicum course, it was also important that student-teachers were told that their participation in this research would not affect in any ways their grades in the class, that they would not be forced to participate and that, in addition to the tasks they needed to develop during the course, they would be required to participate in focus groups, interviews and answer questionnaires. Those who agreed to participate signed the form and kept a copy (see Appendix F).

To identify the participants of the study, they were given a pseudonym using two letters from their real full names and for the purposes of identifying the instrument where data comes from they were also assigned a six-digit code. The code was made of two letters of the pseudonym given to the participant (e.g. Lizette Flores could be assigned to ZF), number of cohort (for example C1), and the instrument where the information came from (e.g., first focus group session F1). See Table 3 below for a description of the coding of the instruments.  For instance, if I were a participant from cohort 1 and the data were taken from the focus group session 2, the code would be ZF-C1-F2 (see Appendix C for a list of the pseudonyms given to the participants).

Table 3 Coding of instruments

| Code | Instrument |
|------|------------|
| PQ | Pre-practicum questionnaire/interview |
| DP | During-practicum questionnaire/interview |
| AP | After-practicum questionnaire/interview |
| JE | Journal Entry |
| F1 | Focus group 1 |
| F2 | Focus group 2 |
| NI | Novice-teacher interview |
| LQ | Likert-type questionnaire |

The instruments were transcribed verbatim in NVivo and the procedure that was used was the constant comparative method (CCM) proposed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and later adapted by Lincoln and Guba (1985). This method consists of comparing newly, collected data with previously collected information. Data gathered from each cohort was compared to that of the other three cohorts and then was categorised. Later, during the second phase, the information obtained from the novice teachers was also compared with that of the first phase to compare, contrast, triangulate, and if possible, generalise and validate.

In qualitative research, the concepts of validity and reliability cannot be addressed in the same ways as in quantitative research. However, to produce objective and trustworthy results, procedures suggested by Shenton (2004) based on Guba's criteria for assessing trustworthiness (1981) were followed. As mentioned before, different instruments were used at different moments to triangulate information. According to Guba (1981), different methods of data collection should be used whenever possible to cross-check the interpretations of data given by participants. In the case of this study, the instruments used were journal entries, questionnaires, focus groups and interviews; these last two mentioned by Shenton (2004) as common instruments used for triangulation to ensure credibility, and data from all of them was gathered at different moments of the participants' practicum.

Shenton claims that another form of triangulation is through the use of a wide range of informants. In this type of triangulation "individual viewpoints and experiences can be verified against others and, ultimately, a rich picture of the attitudes, needs or behaviour of those under scrutiny may be constructed based on the contributions of a range of people" (p. 66). In this

study, information was gathered from 65 student-teachers so this type of triangulation was also used to ensure trustworthiness.

Furthermore, the strategy *member check* was also used. This, as described by both Guba (1981) and Shenton (2004), ensures credibility as it allows participants to read and make sure that what is transcribed reflects exactly the words they intended to say. Another strategy proposed by Shenton was the provision of background information to establish context. This strategy is used to give transferability to the study, which, as a difference from the generalisations made in quantitative research, allows the results provided by qualitative studies to be related in similar contexts (ibid). In this study, a detailed description of the context both of the university where the student-teachers are from and of the schools where they did their practicum was provided. A detailed description of the procedures is also given to ensure dependability and to allow the study to be repeated in similar contexts.

The following procedures were conducted to analyse the data gathered. First, information was transcribed verbatim. Interviews and focus groups were transcribed word by word and were checked three times to see if no word or detail was missing. Focus groups had to be transcribed with special care because as there were many students participating in each group (between seven and twelve), more attention needed to be paid to record what each participant said. In focus groups, two recorders were placed in different areas of the classroom to record what all participants said. Interviews and focus groups were also shown to the participants to ensure that they expressed what they meant in their responses. In addition, questionnaires and journals were transcribed to keep an electronic record of each instrument. Instruments were uploaded to NVivo once they were in electronic form.

After information was transcribed, it was coded into categories using NVivo. As an inductive approach was used, data had to be carefully read to find categories that were common in different instruments by different participants. Instruments were analysed and categorised per participant of each cohort. That is, the whole set of instruments of the same participant was categorised before moving to the next one. This way, notes were taken regarding the congruency between the answers of the same participant. Then, the same process was done with the next student-teacher and notes were taken when there were similarities or differences with the answers of the other participants.

After the instruments of all the participants of a whole cohort were analysed and categorised, they were read again to double-check similarities and differences in their responses. Then, the same procedure was followed with the other cohorts, but every time comparing each other. That is, instruments were analysed first separately to find individual aspects related to the three main

areas of the study, then together to compare and contrast them. At the beginning of the analysis there were three main general categories, autonomy, identity, and mentoring, as they are the main themes of this thesis. As the information obtained with the different instruments was read and analysed, subcategories emerged during coding.

The processes of coding consisted on digitalising data in NVivo and transcribing focus groups and interviews verbatim. They were given to the participants to check that what was registered was what they meant (Guba, 1981; Shenton, 2004). Then, coding began with the three main general themes of this thesis: autonomy, identity and mentoring. Instruments were analysed and coded in the order they were gathered, which was for phase 1: pre-questionnaire, journal entries, mid-practicum questionnaire, journal entries, focus group 1, journal entries, interviews, after-practicum questionnaire, focus group 2, journal entries/interviews.  Then, for phase 2 the order was: interviews and Likert questionnaire.

 While instruments were coded, sub-categories emerged from the main categories based on the concepts and ideas that emerged both from the literature and similarities that emerged from the responses of the participants. Once that all instruments were coded, they were checked again but this time not in the order they were gathered but by participants, that is, all the responses in all the instruments were read again from each participant to see if there were changes in their perceptions throughout their practicum. During phase 2, the same procedure was followed but the emphasis of these interviews was to see if there were changes in the participants' perceptions now that they were novice teachers (see Appendix E). A total of 74 codes emerged under the three main areas: autonomy, identity, and mentoring. The codes were then grouped and organised into similar themes.

 As this is a mixed-methods study, there was also quantification of data. The number of participants that mentioned recurrent ideas and themes (sub-categories on table 4 below) were counted to check the frequency of occurrence and to get percentages. As this study was done based on the ways student-teachers perceived autonomy, identity and mentoring, this quantification was necessary to get a general understanding of the most common concepts student-teachers associated with them. To do this, both the frequency option of NVivo and manual quantification were used.

During the second phase of the study, the Likert-type questionnaire was also used to quantify data and to use it in an attempt to support qualitative information. Due to the limitation of only having 5 Likert questionnaires, the information used was only to see how participants saw themselves as teachers (see 4.5) and quantification was done manually.

As can be seen, all data was treated in NVivo in the same way, as the main purpose was to compare and contrast it and to try to ensure trustworthiness in this study. Everything was digitalised and coded under the same criteria because the purpose of having data from different instruments was to triangulate data to find possible similarities and differences. Questionnaires were used to get general information while journal entries to get more details from the reflective process of the student-teachers. Based on the responses of the participants, the questions for both the focus groups and interviews were designed to clarify or expand information (see Appendix D).

Table 4 below shows a summary of the categories that emerged at the end of the analysis (see Appendix E for a full list of the codes created in NVivo):

Table 4 Summary of categories of analysis

| Categories | Sub-categories |
|---|---|
| Understanding of autonomy by student-teachers | o Autonomy as freedom<br>o Autonomy independence<br>o Autonomy as self-centredness<br>o Autonomy as responsibility |
| Student teacher perceived autonomy | o On themselves<br>o On their mentors<br>o On their students |
| Professional identity of student-teachers | o Understanding of professional identity by student-teachers<br>o Recognition and pride as enhancers of identity |
| Impact of mentoring on student-teachers | o Understanding and expectations of mentoring by student-teachers |
| Impact of teaching practicum on novice teachers | o On autonomy<br>o On identity<br>o On mentoring |

After the data was coded, the analysis for both phases 1 and 2 was carried out by following the constant comparative method (CCM) by Glaser and Strauss (1967) adapted by Lincoln and Guba (1985). Each category was re-read and the participants' thoughts and perceptions reflected in all the instruments, that is, focus groups, interviews, questionnaires and journals were compared and contrasted. Then, similar ideas were grouped and results were interpreted based on the information gathered in the review of the literature and on the researcher's interpretation of autonomy, identity and mentoring. Participants' perceptions were grouped according to the

categories got in NVivo, and then the analysis was written. During the writing of the analysis information was coded with the 6 digits explained above.

In addition to this, during the analysis of the information, some patterns were found regarding the influence that identity and mentoring seemed to have in the development of autonomy in student-teachers (see 5.3.1 and Appendix C). These patterns are supported by evidence in section 5.3.1.1, which presents a description of the trajectories of 7 participants to exemplify each pattern.

The criteria to define what it is meant by autonomy, identity and good and bad mentor comes from the literature and from the students' perceptions and description of their mentors (see 2.3.5). These criteria were discussed with the other supervisors of the TESOL: Practicum course to have inter-rater reliability. The criteria for the concepts used in the design of the patterns presented in the discussion chapter is shown in the following table:

Table 5 Criteria for concepts in the patterns of autonomy, identity and mentoring

| Concept | Definition |
|---|---|
| Autonomy | Student-teachers who seem to take initiative and responsibility for their learning or teaching. They go beyond what is requested by their mentors and supervisors to learn. |
| Lack of autonomy | Student-teachers who do not seem to take responsibility for their learning or teaching. They limit themselves to what they are told to do and do not attempt to go beyond what requested. |
| Strong/ positive teacher identity | Student-teachers who seem to hold a positive view of teaching and wanted to be teachers before starting their practicum. |
| Weak/ negative teacher identity | Student-teachers who seem to hold a negative view of teaching and did not want to be teachers. |
| Strong/ positive learner identity | Student-teachers who seem to hold a positive image of themselves as students. |
| Weak/negative learner identity | Student-teachers who apparently do not see themselves as good students. |
| Good mentor | English teacher perceived by participants as supportive, helpful and encouraging. In addition, student-teachers respected good mentors as English teachers as they considered they acted upon their students' learning when teaching. Good mentors encouraged language production in their students and created activities different from the textbook. |
| Bad mentor | English teacher perceived by participants as not caring neither for guiding |

| | and helping them, nor for the learning of their students. Bad mentors, according to student-teachers, used mainly Spanish when teaching, did not go beyond the activities from the book and seemed to not care about their students' learning. |
|---|---|

The introductory chapter of this thesis presents the ways in which the definitions of autonomy, identity and mentoring are used in this study (see 1.1). However, it is important to mention that under the definition of autonomy, the terms freedom and independence emerged in the understandings of student-teachers as being able to do what they wanted in their lessons, that is, to decide how to teach their classes. This goes in line with the definitions of autonomy by Trebbi (2008) and Benson and Voller (2013).

A detail of the results obtained from the previous categories with examples of each, is provided in the following chapter. Chapter four describes the results obtained from the comparison and contrast done with the data collected and is organised according to the themes that emerged from the research questions of this study. Then, the Discussion chapter presents a synthesis of the analysis of the results of chapter four, and is organized according to the research questions, as it is in that chapter where they are given an answer.

# Chapter 4: Student-teacher autonomy and the development of professional identity and the mentoring process

This chapter reports on findings that resulted from the analysis described in the methodology section (see 3.5). Results are organized into five sections based on the main themes that emerged from the research questions of this study: the perception of autonomy by student-teachers, the changes in autonomy that occurred during practicum, the relationship of autonomy and the development of professional identity, and the relationship of autonomy and the development of mentoring. It includes a fifth section that reports on findings regarding the impact of teaching practicum in novice teachers from the data gathered during the second phase of this study.

The first section presents data related to research question one which examines the perceptions of autonomy by student-teachers. It looks at the ways student-teachers expressed their understanding of autonomy to get an overview of the extent to which they are aware of it. Their understanding of autonomy and their autonomous behaviour will be later compared and analysed to see if there is congruency between their thoughts and actions. Findings suggest that due to their lack of teaching experience, trainees seem to have a limited understanding of autonomy as they usually relate it to freedom and independence only. However, their actions and reactions both in the planning and delivery of their lessons go further than their thoughts. Participants express autonomy not only as these two conceptions but also when taking responsibility and control of both their teaching and learning, when looking for help and when adapting their classes to the needs of their students (aspects of autonomy showed in the research literature by Holec, 1981; Dickinson, 1987; Little, 1995; Gardner, 2000; Lamb, 2008; Benson, 2011; Voller, 2013).

The second section, changes in autonomy during practicum, reports on evidence that describes how autonomy is redefined throughout student-teachers' practicum as a consequence of a shift in their identity. Findings suggest that as student-teachers get more experience, their identity shifts from being centred on themselves as learners to being centred on themselves as teachers, having an apparent impact on the development of their autonomy. Data shows that autonomy changes mainly in the ways participants perceive their responsibility in the classroom and the value of the support given by their mentors. Findings also suggest that student-teachers tend to become more autonomous as their teacher identity becomes stronger.

A third section presents findings regarding the ways autonomy seems to be influenced by the development of professional identity in student-teachers. It explores the ways student-teachers understand the concept of both teacher and learner identity to get an overview of the way they see themselves as teachers and the kind of teachers they want to be. In addition, it presents evidence related to the ways recognition, pride and the interaction with their mentors, students, peers, and supervisors may strengthen the development of a positive teacher identity and thus higher student-teacher autonomy.

The fourth section explores the ways in which autonomy could also be influenced by the process of mentoring that student-teachers experienced. It presents evidence regarding the expectations participants had on their mentors and on being mentored. It also presents evidence on the ways in which collaboration in the different types of relationships that were formed between mentor and student-teacher may influence the development of a higher autonomy and a positive or negative identity. The second sub-section describes the conflict that, in line with Pillen et al (2013B) may arise due to a dissonance between what the student-teachers expect from their mentors and what they get from them, as well as to a dissonance between what they consider effective teaching and what they can do in the classroom (see 2.2.3). It links mentoring to autonomy and identity, presenting a first approach to the relationship between autonomy, identity and mentoring, which will be discussed in depth in 5.3.

The last section explores the possible impact practicum had on novice teachers. It reports on findings regarding how the autonomy and identity student-teachers shaped during practicum by being mentored, may influence the practice of 5 novice teachers.

## 4.1     Perceptions of Autonomy by Student-teachers

Findings suggest that there is incongruence between what student-teachers understand of autonomy and what they exhibit as autonomous behaviour. Due to the lack of teaching experience participants have, they seem to have a superficial conception of autonomy limiting it to being able to do what they want in their classes, that is, to the freedom and independence they have regarding the decisions they make in their teaching. This may be due to the fact that they are still at an early stage of their teaching career and have not yet needed to be more autonomous nor to explore what autonomy is. However, as they get more experience in their practicum, they exhibit autonomous behaviour that seems to go beyond this simplistic view. Evidence of this behaviour will be shown in the following paragraphs.

**4.1.1 Expressions of autonomy in student-teachers.**

This subsection presents findings that explore the autonomous behaviour student-teachers exhibit or believe autonomous teachers or learners should exhibit, that is, the actions they associate with autonomous behaviour.

**4.1.1.1 Autonomy expressed as independence and freedom**

Student-teachers mainly related autonomy to freedom and independence when asked what they understand of it. Participants claimed in the focus groups and questionnaires that they see themselves as autonomous teachers because they work alone and they are free to do what they want in class.

It was found that 40% of student-teachers (26 out of the 65 participants) express their autonomy as independence from other people and from the book or the programme provided by the institutions where they did their practicum. Out of those 26 student-teachers that relate autonomy to independence, 60% claimed that teacher autonomy refers to working and making decisions on their own teaching independently from others' point of view. The following quotes by Luisa, who did her practicum in a public high school, Paula, and Rosie (both did their practicum in a private elementary school) exemplify this point regarding the actions that participants considered to be autonomous related to independence.

Luisa, for instance, considers herself autonomous because she takes initiative and control of her own class without waiting for her mentor's permission:

 *"I don't wait for somebody to tell me what I have to do, if I know, I do it"* (LP-C2-PQ)

Likewise, Paula considers herself to be autonomous because she works on her own at the time of deciding how she would teach her class:

*"I planned my classes without help"* (PB-C3-AP)

Rosie thinks of herself as autonomous because she is able to experiment with different techniques and strategies to find the best way for her students' learning:

 *"you have the opportunity of trying different things and not following other teachers or only one way to teach"* (RL-C4-PQ).

The previous examples show the simplistic view of autonomy that student-teachers seem to hold, as they relate it to the independence they have from other people, in this case, their mentor. However, they also show the underlying actions in their understanding of autonomy, as what they

see as their independence from their mentor results in taking control and responsibility for their class, which are expressions of autonomy that they are apparently unaware of.

In addition, 46% of the participants who hold similar views of autonomy regarding independence, instead of relating it with independence from considering others' point of view or opinions to teach, associated it with working without directly depending on others. Examples of participants who held this view are Adela (who did her practicum in a language centre), Elena (private, elementary school), and Andrea (public high school).

Elena argues that autonomy occurs *"when the teacher works independently and is able to make decisions, like when I choose what activities I use in my classes"* (EH-C3-PQ).

Adela, likewise, claims that teacher autonomy refers to not *"depending on your boss or on the students to do your best as a teacher, when you are a good teacher because you want to. I want to be a good teacher so I prepare myself and think of activities and games to use in class"* (AE-C3-PQ).

Andrea has a similar opinion by claiming that it occurs when *"the teacher does not need help from others. Like I am autonomous because I don't ask anyone for help to plan my classes, I do it on my own"* (AO-C3-PQ).

Participants considered autonomous those teachers who worked on their own, without receiving any support and without collaborating with other teachers or authorities. This type of conceptions of the understanding of autonomy, as can be seen from the code (PQ- Pre-questionnaire), emerges at the beginning of the practicum, that is, when student-teachers just begin to get inserted in a real classroom environment. Most student-teachers have had little to none teaching experience before their practicum stage. Thus, they are probably not aware of the importance of working collaboratively with other teachers, hence the possible nature of their responses of considering autonomy to be an attribute of loneliness of teachers. It seems that they have a view of teaching that is centred on the self.

Another expression of autonomy as independence as understood by participants is not depending on the book or school programme to achieve the objectives of their classes. This was shown in the data from 15 of the 26 participants who talked about autonomy and independence (57% of the student-teachers).

For example, Celia said that *"The teacher can be autonomous in the classroom to put his/her rules, design his/her material and programme. In my classroom I want to decide what rules I will have for discipline, for example."* (CP-C3-PQ).

Ernesto claimed that *"the teacher must be able to teach without depending too much on others or on supporting material, like when you are creative and can teach on your own without asking the mentor."* (EF-C4-PQ)

Alan commented that autonomy *"is something like teach by yourself and not hide behind the material one will use to teach, like as a teacher you think outside of the box and do activities different to the book"* (AZ-C4-PQ).

Similarly, Josue argued that autonomy refers to being *"creative and not just depend on a workbook"* (JD-C4-AP).

According to the previous data, it can be assumed that participants have an idea of effective teachers being able to be independent using their abilities to teach, regardless of having or not having good materials to help them prepare their classes.

Results also show that 13 participants consider themselves autonomous as working independently, but in the sense of taking control of their own learning rather than on their teaching. That is, as they are student-teachers, they seem to focus more on their autonomy as learners.

Elsa talks about herself in terms of being an autonomous student because she acts upon her learning:

 *"I decide to study and do homework, and the teacher doesn't force me."* (EO-C4-PQ)

Similarly, Ada and Victoria consider themselves autonomous learners because they learn not only what is taught in their classes, but also what they want to learn.

Ada said that she was autonomous in *"the way that if I don't know how to do something I investigate until I figure out how to do it, and also if I find a topic interesting, I try to know more about the topic"* (AF-C4-PQ)

While Victoria said that she does *"research on my own to learn more"* (VF-C3-PQ)

In addition, Josias sees himself as an autonomous learner because he is able to learn from different sources and to discriminate information when he is interested in learning something:

 *"I can use my own criterion to jump back and forth from one element of the whole to another until I master it."* (JT-C3-PQ)

Finally, Alan perceives himself as autonomous because he works alone to solve his problems:

*"working on my own, trying to find the answer to my own problems (present and future ones)"* (AZ-C4-PQ)

However, other three participants related autonomy to independence but in the sense of not having. They claim that they are not autonomous because they have to rely on their mentors, and therefore, they do not feel independent.

Kenia and Keila claimed that they do not consider themselves autonomous teachers because they depend on their mentors to teach. That is, they do not feel autonomous to take control of their classes.

Kenia said that she is not an autonomous teacher *"because I have to teach what I'm told"* (KE-C2-PQ)

While Keila said: *"I will have a mentor that is going to be always there to see me, there's going to be evaluation too, they are going to tell me what to teach and many things but it is the same. The teachers need students to learn what they teach so none of them are completely autonomous."* (KL-C2-PQ).

Bertha also talks about having a mentor making decisions for her, but it does not seem to bother her. This may be because Bertha claims that she is not interested in teaching; she is interested in being a good student, though. The following quote does not only show how she does not see herself as an autonomous teacher, but it also gives an indication of her identity:

*"I do what I have to do to get my degree so if I don't hand in what I'm told to hand in, I will get a bad grade and I don't need that."* (BD-C2-PQ).

Student-teachers therefore, express autonomy as the capacity of being independent. Nevertheless, that independence is often associated with taking control of their classes. Another expression of autonomy by the participants of this study involves responsibility and control. This will be further discussed.

### 4.1.1.2 Autonomy expressed as taking responsibility and control of their classes

Student-teachers relate responsibility and control of their classes to autonomy. This was mentioned by 21 of the 65 participants (32.3%) and appears to take two forms in the data obtained. The first is taking responsibility and control of their classes by creating new materials and the second about the planning and adaptation of their lessons to fit students' needs. This information was mainly gathered, again, from pre-questionnaires, that is, at the early stages of their practicum, but also from focus groups (mainly FC1) and journal entries. By the time student-

teachers participated in the focus groups they had either been observing their mentors for half of the school term or they had started teaching themselves, thus their points of view were now also based on observation and experience.

Fourteen participants talk about having control of their classes by making decisions and teaching the way they want regarding materials and activities. Gina, Marina and Lisa, for instance, talk about being autonomous because they can design activities and materials according to what they consider would be of benefit for their students.

Gina said: *"I have the ability to create material for each grade depending on the students' needs"* (GL-C2-PQ),

while Marina claimed: *"I do not like to follow a plan, I like to vary on activities and make them interesting because I always got bored in my English classes because most of the time the material that is provided by the school is not interesting"* (MR-C2-PQ),

and Lisa mentioned that *"I like to create material for the classes because I am interested in my students learning and also because I really like to do things by myself."* (LR-C2-PQ)

Another perception of what autonomous behaviour is by student-teachers is related to taking responsibility for their classes by making decisions in their classroom either due to having or not having a mentor. This sense of autonomy seems to have emerged due to the control of deciding not only what materials they could use or activities they could do, but also what topics to cover and how to plan the whole class. 4 participants mentioned this.

Sandy, for instance, defines autonomy as *"the freedom that you have to do what you want in class"* (SS-C3-F1)

On the other hand, Diana and Ivan talk about being autonomous because they can plan their classes not only by following the book or topics that they have to cover, but also by being able to make decisions based on other elements that they consider important, such as their students. This association of autonomy to making decisions regarding the content of their class was shared by 10 participants.

Diana said that she likes *"to plan my classes considering only my students' needs and not strictly following a book or programme."* (DA-C4-PQ)

While Ivan argued that he does not *"only teach the topics that need to be taught, but mainly I try to create a connection with my students by knowing who they are, why they are in school, what they expect from English in their lives."* (IV-C4-PQ).

Larissa also talks about feeling autonomous in the sense of having full control of her class but, differently from the previous participants, due to not having a mentor. That is, as she was working on her own, she felt free, independent and in control of her class. She said:

*"I am very autonomous because I don't have a mentor, so I decide what I do with my class, I mean, I choose the topics to teach, the activities and even the way of evaluation, so as I have a lot of freedom I think I am autonomous"* (LM-C2-F1).

Karla and Andrea consider themselves autonomous because they can decide what and how to teach.

Karla says that *"in some of my performances as a teacher I make decisions by myself to know how to teach the class and what I want to do."* (KC-C2-PQ)

While Andrea mentions that she is sometimes autonomous *"when I can take decisions of what I cover in class and how to cover it"* (AO-C3-F1)

Student-teachers associate autonomy to the responsibility teachers take when adapting their classes for the sake of the students' learning. That is, participants see responsibility as material and syllabus adaptation. Brianna and Rebecca, for instance, talk about how teachers take responsibility for the learning of their students by modifying their lessons to their students' needs, even if it means to change the syllabus or the original plan.

Brianna claims that autonomy means *"to make a change on what was already predetermined… or when you decide to try something new, of course, all with the purpose of improving or helping the learners"* (BC-C2-PQ)

She talks about how teachers are sometimes forced to follow a programme or regulations given by the institutions where they work or by the Department of Education in Mexico. However, she claims that teachers are autonomous when deciding to adapt those regulations or topics for the effective learning of their students.

Rebecca has a similar view by claiming that teacher autonomy is to have control over the class even if it means to change the programme that was already established:

*"If the teacher observes that students are engaged in a certain learning activity, he or she can modify it and repeat it later on, even if it is not in the programme, just because it has a positive effect in learning"* (RC-C4-PQ).

Both ideas may be interpreted as the responsibility teachers have to be aware of monitoring their students learning and making decisions to adapt the class activities or syllabus based on the students' needs they detect.

Related to the previous idea of adapting the resources given and the programme established, comes the responsibility for planning an effective lesson, which participants also seem to relate to autonomy.  This was mentioned by participants when referring to the responsibility for teachers of designing their own material and activities regardless if they use a book or not. With this idea the element of creativity previously discussed seems to arise again.

Sandy, for instance, claims that teachers are autonomous because *"they also have to prepare the material they will use, what they are going to see in class, also the activities and games to play in the classroom to learn vocabulary"* (SS-C3-PQ).

That is, teachers have to be responsible for the planning and preparation of the class even if they already have a book and/or syllabus to follow. This may be related to the independence from the material idea discussed above

Viridiana has a similar thought, as she claims that teacher autonomy refers to *"being able to plan however she feels comfortable teaching. For example, if the teacher thinks teaching with games is better, she will do it, or just grammar, etc."* (VT-C4-PQ).

This idea also seems to show that for teachers to be autonomous, they must be responsible for the planning of their classes so that both students and teachers take advantage of it. Hence, another link with findings described in the previous paragraphs appears: the relationship of teacher autonomy with responsibility and freedom.

Student-teachers also see themselves as autonomous because they can make decisions regarding the classes they teach. The lack of a mentor may imply the freedom to make decisions regarding the class as student-teachers are completely in charge of the students and of the way they handle their classes. However, here the focus is on those student-teachers who consider themselves autonomous regardless of having or not having had a mentor. Participants mention that although they have to follow a syllabus or teach a particular topic given by their mentors, they are allowed to choose how they want to teach the topic, as well as the activities and strategies they will implement with their groups. This, apparently, makes student-teachers feel autonomous.

Dalia, for example, argues that she was able to handle the class the way she wanted because her mentor *"told me the topic but I decided how to prepare it"* (DG-C2-F2),

which is something that Andrea also claimed: *"I needed to follow the topic but I could decide what activities I did, so it was good"* (AO-C3-F2),

and so did Josias, *"I was given free rein to devise activities, as long as I abided by the topic"* (JT-C3-AP).

These statements show that participants know the limitations of following a syllabus but tend to try to be autonomous in some way.

Nevertheless, not all participants feel the same way as they think they are too restrained by the materials and syllabus provided. They are unable to be autonomous because they are not allowed to make their own decisions. Rebecca, for instance, feels restrained mainly by the class time that she is given as she feels that it was her duty to cover the material of the institution instead of adding other activities,

*"I have encountered situations in which I know that the students require more practice or more explanations but due to deadlines I cannot make it happen as I would like to"* (RC-C4-PQ).

It is worth mentioning that of the four cohorts, she was the only participant that complained about fitting the topics into the two-hour class that she was given. This might be due to the fact that she is an experienced teacher and, in the school where she works, she does not have to follow a syllabus and she has complete freedom to do what she wants during the course. Because of this, she feels the pressure of following the programme of the institution where she did her practicum. Perhaps this pressure is more related to her personal teaching experience than to her practicum, that is, she was constantly comparing the policies of her job with the policies of the school, having thus a clash due to opposing policies.

Alma, like Rebecca, felt restrained by the policies of the school where she did her practicum. Interestingly enough, her complaint was also related to the fact that in her own classes outside her practicum she has total freedom to do as she pleases. Her complaints are regarding discipline and the activities to cover

*"[my mentor] told me what pages to teach, like at the moment when I got there"* (AM-C1-F2).

Alma expresses her discontent with having to teach like her mentor, as she *"had to modify the way I teach, I LIKE to teach, because that's the way her students are and, so I had to, adapt to them instead of them adapt them to my teaching"* (AM-C1-F1).

Apparently, the fact that some student-teachers were already teachers before starting their practicum seems to provoke a feeling of frustration in them because they have to follow their mentors' style and way of teaching. Similarly to what happened with Rebecca, there seems to be

a clash between the different contexts where they are teaching, the practicum context and their job context, and this makes them feel that they are not being autonomous.

Findings, thus, also suggest that student-teachers who have previous experience as teachers, develop their autonomy less than those who did not. Those participants who had already been working for years, that is, those student-teachers who are older than the rest of their classmates and have more experience teaching than the rest of the class, are more reluctant to add extra activities or to challenge or negotiate with their mentors the way to handle the class.

Gina claims that this happens because of respect, as she does not *"feel comfortable enough to handle the classroom as my own because I do understand that my mentor is the one who knows how to handle it and I should respect that"* (GL-C2-JE).

As seen in Gina's comment, it may be the case that experienced student-teachers feel uncomfortable to challenge their mentors' teaching style because, as experienced teachers they would not like their own style to be challenged.

The ways in which student-teachers exhibit autonomous behaviour, therefore, seem to go beyond the simplistic concept they hold of autonomy. The following paragraphs present evidence regarding how they see autonomy in other people, to see if there is congruency between what they say autonomy is and what they say they think autonomous behaviour is.

### 4.1.2    Interpretations and observations of autonomy by student-teachers

To have a better understanding of the concept of autonomy, this section reports on findings regarding the moments and characteristics that the four cohorts of student-teachers relate to autonomy in themselves, their mentors and students during the sixteen weeks of their teaching practicum. This section presents findings obtained from instruments used before, during, and after practicum. In addition, the possible relationships of autonomy with identity and mentoring will be noted as they emerge in the student-teachers' reflections.

Findings gathered at the early stages of their practicum from the pre-questionnaire, suggest that participants sometimes saw themselves as autonomous learners but not as autonomous teachers or vice versa. There were three cases where participants saw themselves as autonomous teachers but not learners. Veronica, who was assigned to a private elementary school (see Appendix B) mentioned that she considered herself an autonomous teacher but that she is not autonomous when learning, as she needs the guidance of a teacher,

*"when learning, I am not that autonomous, I need someone to be pressuring me, but when teaching yes, I give the class according to what I see is needed and not as the book says"* (VT-04-PQ).

Similarly, Celia (assigned to a public high school for her practicum) claimed that she also needs the help of a teacher because she is not a confident student and does not feel ready to learn on her own,

*"as student I could not consider myself autonomous because I am unsure… I always fight with this insecurity. But as a teacher I have to demonstrate that I am prepared for the class"* (CP-C3-PQ),

while Andrea, who also did her practicum in a public high school, claimed that as a teacher she is able to make her own decisions and prepare the class as she wants, but as a student

*"I always need the help of a teacher to learn"* (AO-C3-PQ).

It seems that these three participants feel the pressure of being responsible and autonomous while teaching because they are the ones in the position of power. However, they feel they may relax when being students as they have another person that they can depend upon.

In contrast with these three participants, the majority of the student-teachers considered themselves both autonomous teachers and learners, as they felt responsible for both their learning and teaching. Mary believes that all teachers are autonomous, as they need to plan and design their classes according to the response of their students. She also associated independence with teacher autonomy as she claimed that as teachers

*"we do not follow what others say because only the teacher and the students know 100% what is happening in the classroom"* (MR-C4-PQ).

Through this statement Mary is emphasizing the responsibility teachers have in being aware of what is going on in the classroom to create meaningful lessons for the students. Rosie had a similar view on the teachers' responsibility for being aware of her students, as she claimed that as teachers are the leaders of the group they

*"have the opportunity of trying different things and not following other teachers or only one way of teaching"* (RL-C4-PQ).

Rosie's statement seems to put some responsibility on the teacher of being creative as she apparently claims that teachers should not feel constrained to imitating one person or one style but that they have to find ways to reach their students and make them learn because they are the ones in control of what happens in the classroom.

Diana was another participant that considered herself both an autonomous learner and teacher. She mentioned that as a learner she takes responsibility by doing her assignments and preparing her classes, which, being a student-teacher, is also part of her responsibilities as a teacher. She claimed that she is an autonomous teacher because

*"I like to plan my classes considering only my students' needs and not strictly following a book or programme"* (DA-C4-PQ).

Just as with the previous examples, participants associated autonomy not only to the responsibility they have of planning an effective lesson, but also to the freedom and independence from the syllabus they have. Ernesto showed these aspects in his conception of autonomy too as he said that he does not like to depend on other people but he is aware that collaboration aids in the professional development of teachers too:

*"I understand accepting others' help is necessary in certain occasions but I do like to be responsible for myself"* (EF-C4-PQ).

This shows the emergence of autonomy as collaboration, as mentioned in the literature by Benson (2011), Adamson and Sert (2012), Breen & Mann (2013) and Bajrami (2015).

### 4.1.2.1    Autonomy as creativity

Student-teachers were asked if they considered their students and their mentors autonomous to get a wider perspective of what autonomy meant to them. Their responses gathered from questionnaires during and after practicum, journal entries and focused groups seem to show that they noticed in their mentors and students creativity, responsibility, independence and decision-making as traits of autonomy.

Student-teachers argue that their mentors are autonomous when they make decisions regarding their teaching. For example, participants associate autonomy to creativity and to the way that their mentors modify material to appeal to their students.

Ada (assigned to a private elementary school) says of her mentor: *"She is very creative so she always tries to make the activities visual… she doesn't settle just with what she has, she creates more things and adapts them to appeal to the students"* (AF-C4-DP).

Similarly, Victoria claims that her mentor *"has material but she modifies it to make it more appealing to the children"* (VF-C3-DP).

Participants, thus, seem to associate autonomy with their mentors not having to depend on the material or syllabus the school provides them to give an effective class, but that they take the initiative to modify their strategies according to their students' needs.

Moreover, student-teachers perceive autonomy in their mentors according to the power and control they exert over the class. For instance, Braulio (private elementary school) claims that his mentor is autonomous because she has complete control over the class as

*"the school provides the programme and materials, but she's completely free to decide how to go about teaching her class"* (BG-C4-DP).

Likewise, Salma who was doing her practicum in a public secondary school, says that her mentor *"has her own rules, her own rubrics, she has full control of her class and of the instruments she uses and the decisions she makes"* (SM-C4-DP)

while Karla (private elementary school) argues that her mentors are autonomous *"when they decide what kind of activities or punishments to use to have a successful class"* (KC-C2-DP).

There seems to be, thus, an agreement with what student-teachers think autonomy is, the way they see it in themselves and the way they perceive it in their mentors.

This agreement also occurs with the autonomy they notice in their students.  Participants mentioned that their students were autonomous when taking responsibility for their learning especially when deciding what to do during and after class.

Karla (KC-C2-DP), Elena (EH-C3-AP), Paula (PB-C3-AP) and Elsa (EO-C4-AP), all of them assigned to private elementary schools (see Appendix B) mention that students are autonomous because they work on their own and they decide what to do with their time when they finish the tasks given by the teachers. Victoria (assigned also to a private elementary school), on the other hand, claims that her students were autonomous because

*"they came and asked questions"* (VF-C3-AP),

which may be seen as taking responsibility for their own learning as they are asking for clarification of the topics that they did not understand. Elena (EH-C3-DP) and Lisa (LR-C3-DP) share Victoria's opinion, as they also mention that their students are autonomous in the sense that they have the freedom to ask questions whenever they need clarification of the contents.

Another way in which student-teachers see autonomy in their students is during correction. Both Jorge (JO-C3-JE) and Alan (AZ-C4-AP), who did their practicum in a public secondary school, argue that they observed autonomy when students either corrected themselves or their classmates.

Jorge emphasises that he encouraged peer rather than teachers' correction, *"the students corrected their classmate's errors, and I put them on the spot for self correction"* (JO-C3-JE)

 because he believes that students pay more attention this way and learn more effectively than if he was the one who always corrected them.

This may show that the teachers' role is important in the development of learners' autonomy. Just as Jorge was encouraging autonomy by peer and self-correction, Larissa (assigned to a public high school) was trying to make them autonomous because, as she claims,

 she *"taught them to be aware of their learning process. They were able to self-assess and they would communicate their needs to me"* (LM-C3-AP).

This statement seems to show that Larissa is aware of the importance of autonomy and hence is trying to encourage it in her students, which agrees with the literature that teachers need to teach their students to be autonomous (Little, 1995; Smith, 2003; Benson, 2008; Benson, 2011; Adamson & Sert, 2012; Sanprasert, 2013. See 2.1.1). Another participant that mentioned that he encourages autonomy in his students was Braulio who, as previously mentioned, worked with elementary school children:

 *"I gave my learners the freedom to work in different ways… Some teams decided to do the activity on their notebook and others asked me permission to do it on a piece of cardboard. They were autonomous in the way they worked"* (BG-C4-AP).

It is worth noticing that these student-teachers either held a positive teacher identity at the beginning of their practicum or, like Larissa, strengthened their teacher identity as their practicum advanced. Therefore, as these student-teachers want to be teachers, they were trying to encourage autonomy in their students regardless of their educational level because they were concerned with their learning.

On the other hand, results show that those participants who hold a negative image of teaching are not able to see autonomy in their students, especially when working with children, as they seem to relate autonomy with age. Josue since the beginning of the semester was reluctant to take the practicum course as he argued that he does not see himself as a teacher. As the course is mandatory, he had to take it anyway, and when asked if he thought his students were autonomous he said:

 *"They are not, they are 5 years old"* (JD-04-AP).

Rosie has a similar opinion, and like Josue, she claimed that she was not fond of teaching. She also worked with children (both were assigned to a private, elementary school) and mentioned that

*"for kids this age (6-7) I believe there is no autonomy in learning but they can know what they like better"* (RL-C4-AP).

Her statement shows that although she also associates autonomy with age, there might be an awareness that children may be somehow autonomous as she states that in spite of their age they know what they like.

In contrast, other participants who also did their practicum with children in private elementary schools but who, contrary to Josue and Rosie, have a positive teacher identity, such as Karla, Elena, Paula and Elsa, were able to identify their students' likes and took advantage of it to develop their autonomy. This was done by taking extra activities to the classroom for those students who finished their assignments faster than others. They also gave extra activities to those students that requested them for homework. This idea of how the participants' identity influences their views on autonomy will be further explored in the discussion section (see 5.3*)*.

### 4.1.3     Conception of autonomy by student-teachers

This subsection attempts to describe the understanding of the concept of autonomy of the participants, based on the analysis of their self-reported behaviour. It seems that student-teachers have limited understanding of autonomy even though they associated autonomous behaviour to more complex behaviour. Data shows that student-teachers generally associate autonomy with freedom, independence, creativity, control and authority, and decision-making and that this understanding did not seem to change throughout their practicum. Data from this section was gathered from questionnaires, focus groups and journal entries.

Among the most common concepts that student-teachers related to autonomy is freedom, as was mentioned by 25 of the 65 participants of the study (38.46% of the student-teachers). Findings show that examples of autonomy as freedom in the views of the participants of this study fall into three categories: when teachers can do what they want in their class, when teachers can control their groups and have authority in the classroom, and when teachers are able to make decisions regarding the ways they teach their class. These categories will be exemplified below.

The first association of autonomy and freedom made by student-teachers refers to the ability to do what teachers want in the classroom. This in terms of deciding what kinds of activities, materials and instructional procedures they are able to choose to teach, either by adapting the ones they have or by creating their own. Freedom is associated with creativity in the classroom as student-teachers felt that they can experiment with using existing instructional materials and methods and designing their own as long as they consider these materials would help to facilitate

the learning of their students. However, creativity as a type of freedom is more likely to be described by those student-teachers who hold a positive view of teaching and who want to be teachers, showing thus a link with identity that will be further described (see 4.1.2.1). Salma and Josue exemplify this belief of creativity as an aspect of freedom.

Salma, who did her practicum in a public secondary school, claims that teacher autonomy occurs *"when the school gives you total freedom of your class and when you are able to use your creativity fully, without being restricted"* (SM-C4-PQ).

Similarly, when directly asked, Josue (private elementary school) related autonomy with the freedom *"to be creative and not just depend on a workbook"* (JD-C4-AP).

 Both statements seem to reflect the belief that autonomy as freedom in a teacher's setting can be interpreted as teachers using not only the resources they are given by the institution they work in but also strategies and materials they themselves design that can benefit the students' effective learning. That is, they understand autonomy as freedom as going beyond what is given to teachers to work with by using their creativity to design materials and come up with strategies that they think would improve their classes.

Student-teachers relate freedom to be creative not only in the development of class materials but also in the development of their own personality (or identity) as teachers.

Elena (private, elementary school), for instance, argues that teacher autonomy *"is the freedom that [the teacher] has to work creating his own style"* (EH-C3-AP).

Likewise, when Elsa, who also did her practicum in a private elementary school, talks about what autonomy means for her, she claims that it refers to *"the freedom teachers have to create a specific environment"* (EO-C4-AP).

These points of view relate autonomy to the creativity of teachers to build a learning environment of their choice to achieve their objectives. This creativity is apparently related to the personality and self-image of the teacher, which seems, therefore, to relate to the conception of identity as described in the literature. This will be later discussed in section 4.1.2.1.

Participants, thus, consider autonomy as creativity to be a characteristic of what they believe describes good and professional teachers. They perceive autonomy as a trait to go beyond what is given, to do something more than what they are requested and to be unique.  They want them to show their creativity, to show what they are capable of doing that may differentiate one teacher from the other; that is why they want them to "create" their environment and style, to be unique.

In addition to relating autonomy to creativity, student-teachers associate autonomy to the freedom and authority teachers have of controlling their class and their groups. That is, the freedom and power teachers exert while managing their classes. The following examples show the way in which participants perceive autonomy as freedom with the characteristics of control and authority.

Both Andrea and Brianna, for instance, claim that autonomy focuses on the control teachers have while making decisions in class, while Elena and Alan relate control to discipline and classroom management, associating control to authority.

Andrea says that teachers show autonomy when they *"have control of the way they are teaching the class"* (AO-C3-DP).

Brianna argues that autonomy refers to *"the power or the control that the teacher has to take certain decisions or to try a certain thing or activity with her class"* (BC-C2-PQ).

Meanwhile, Elena relates it to *"the freedom and the authority the teacher has to control the group and to establish a good relationship with her students"* (EH-C3-DP).

Alan said that it meant *"having control of the class"* when avoiding bad behaviour of students (AZ-C4-PQ).

As can be inferred from the student-teachers' responses, participants see in autonomy the element of having the power to control the class, of teachers being the ones responsible for what happens in the classroom in terms of the activities presented, the strategies used, and even the behaviour of the students. That is, student-teachers perceive autonomy as freedom in managing their classrooms.

Another idea that participants seem to associate with autonomy as freedom is the ability of teachers to make decisions regarding their class. The following examples show how participants related autonomy as freedom with the characteristic of decision-making.

Karla mentions that autonomy refers to "*those decisions that teachers can make by themselves, for example, what they have to or do not have to do"* (KC-C2-PQ).

This statement seems to show a relationship between decision-making and independence and freedom, as she is referring to the teacher being autonomous when being able to work alone. Autonomy as independence will be explored in 4.1.1.1.

Other participants show a similar conception of autonomy as working alone, independently and, to some degree, selfishly, that is, focusing on themselves rather than on their students. Bertha

and Josias, for instance, claim that autonomy exists when teachers can make decisions on their own, without considering others' opinions. This self-centredness emerged in the participants' responses prior to their practicum, but, as it will be later explained (see 4.2), this focus on the self decreased as they moved forward in their practicum.

Bertha associates autonomy with decision-making as freedom, as she defines it as *"the ability to make important decisions for you and your class, that you don't need to go and ask for somebody else's opinion about a certain matter but you are able to solve that in the best way you can"* (BD-C2-PQ).

Josias was even more emphatic with his association of decision-making and independence as he defines teacher autonomy as *"the state of being left alone to make decisions regarding one's class"* (JT-C3-PQ).

On the other hand, Braulio also talks about decision-making and freedom as characteristics of teacher autonomy, but he emphasizes the aspect of classroom dynamics rather than class content.

He says that teacher autonomy refers to the *"freedom to conduct the class in a way that he sees appropriate for the class without having the school getting too involved in the decisions the teacher makes, …[not only] about the topics covered in class, but rather the way students should work and carry out their courses"* (BG-C4-PQ).

Decision-making, hence, seems to be an important aspect of a class that student-teachers consider as part of autonomy as freedom. This is perhaps because those student-teachers who have a positive view of teaching, want to make the class theirs, that is, they want to be able to handle it in they way they think is best for the learning of their students.

Findings also suggest that the concept of autonomy as freedom in terms of creativity, control and authority, and decision-making develop as student-teachers move forward in their practicum. Due to their identity as learners, at the beginning of the practicum, participants are more worried about their own learning than about the learning of their students (see 4.2). Hence, they demand more support from their mentors so that they can have a role model to learn from. However, it was found that at the same time, some participants regret the fact that some mentors are too controlling and tell them exactly what to do and what to cover.

Student-teachers who expect their mentors' support include Tina, Paula and Josias.

Tina, for instance, says: *"I was not expecting THAT kind of freedom, because they were like, do your material, you can bring whatever material you want"* (TC-C1-F2).

Paula similarly says: *"I had all the freedom to prepare my class; I chose the topic, activities and everything. I would like to receive more help from my mentor."* (PB-C3-JE).

Josias points out that he *"had freedom of activities, almost unrestrained, but that's pointless when you are terrible at designing activities and end up taking the teacher's suggestions with minimal variations"* (JT- C3-JE).

Although Tina and Paula mentioned at the beginning of their practicum that they want to be teachers while Josias claimed that he did not, the three of them consider their mentors to be good teachers and the three of them had not had previous experience as teachers. This seems to be the reason why they wanted more support from their mentors. As they gained experience and moved forward in their practicum, they wanted more freedom in their teaching.

Tina claims that at the end of the practicum she got to know her students and she was able to plan lessons freely, which allowed her to bond with them. She claims that the overall experience was

*"different, but it was nice, I mean, I really liked my students, at the beginning I hated them, though because I didn't know what to do in my class or how to control them"* (TC-C1-F2).

She says that at the beginning it was hard for her to enjoy the practicum because she had so much freedom that she did not know how to start. Eventually, however, she learned how to work on her own to prepare her lessons. That is, as she adapted to the freedom given she seems to have become more confident and autonomous.

At the end of the practicum, Paula claims that the experience made her feel more autonomous because of the freedom she had. She said that she did not like some of the methods her mentor used so she began appreciating the freedom she gave her:

*"In my case I think I was autonomous because if I wanted to use a different activity my mentor let me choose… I could use games, or other activities. I… uh, I had to use the book too but I could take extra activities"* (PB-C3-F2).

Finally, Josias, who expressed that he did not want to teach neither at the beginning nor at the end of the practicum, claims that although generally speaking he struggled during the whole experience, he felt he became autonomous because he

*"was given free rein to devise activities, as long as I abided by the topic."* (JT-C3-AP).

These findings show that when inexperienced, student-teachers require support and scaffolding while gaining confidence to rely on their own freedom.

Nevertheless, other participants were more reluctant to be guided by their mentors because they wanted more freedom in their classes. Results show that participants who hold this view are those who already had some teaching experience, even if they did not like teaching or did not consider teaching as their first career choice. Some examples are Andrea, Alma and Karla.

Andrea, for instance, regarding the fact that her mentor told her what topics and what pages of the book she needed to cover, says:

 *"At the beginning, I felt uncomfortable, and while teaching a class I didn't feel free"* (AO-C3-AP)

Alma claims that what she did not like was the fact that as her mentor told her how to teach and what she could and could not do, she

*"had to adapt to [the students] instead of them adapt to my teaching"*  (AM-C1-F1).

and that regarding what she considers and excessive use of Spanish by her mentor, in her own teaching she prefers not to use it but that she had to teach in Spanish because her mentor:

*"constantly speaks in Spanish … I have to do it 'cause that's the way they're used to, or else they're lost in class"* .

Similarly, Karla claims that she disagrees with the methods her mentor uses to teach but that she has to follow them. For instance, her

*"mentor told me that I should teach the kids to write English the way it was said … and as it was her class, I had to do it as she wanted but I was not happy"* (KC-C1-F2).

Findings suggest, therefore, that when student-teachers have had some experience they are more reluctant to receive support and scaffolding as they feel more confident and rely on their experience while demanding freedom. However, when they are told what to do, they seem to prefer to comply with their mentors even when they disagree with them because they want to avoid getting into conflict with them. They are respecting their mentor's class and want to work in the same way as them instead of looking for confrontation because they say that they would not like someone to tell them how to teach their own classes. It seems, therefore, that student-teachers with previous teaching experience are less likely to become autonomous during practicum.

After having explored the three areas of autonomy as freedom, it can be said that all of them apparently work within a cycle (see Figure 3 below). All the associations with freedom relate to each other in the sense that when teachers feel free to control the class and they are creative, they feel free to make decisions regarding their classes. Hence, the conceptions student-teachers

have about autonomy and freedom interrelate and support each other. That is, the control and authority teachers have over their classes turn into the different decisions they make to have a successful class. At the same time, these decisions have an impact on the creativity of the teachers with regards to the materials and strategies they design to effectively teach their students, which defines, to some degree, the style and environment teachers create in their class. This may impact the image the student-teachers have of their mentors affecting the authority and control they exert over the class.
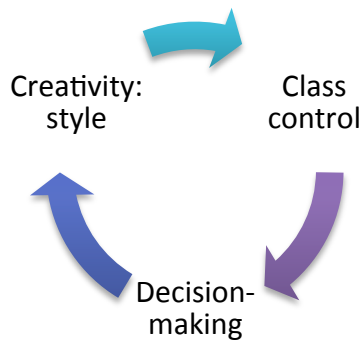
Figure 3 Autonomy as freedom cycle

In addition, the class control and authority teachers have regarding their classes, affects the creativity they have to design materials and strategies for the learning of the students. This creativity, thus, impacts the decisions teachers make in class, which affects the authority and control they exert over the group. Consequently, it seems that although student-teachers identify individual elements of autonomy as freedom, in the end all the aspects seem to be interrelated. For a teacher to be autonomous, in the eyes of student-teachers, they must be free; that is, be creative, have control and authority over the class, and be able to make decisions that would result in the better learning of their students.

## 4.2    Changes in autonomy during practicum

This second section presents findings related to the ways autonomy changed during practicum, hence, it presents evidence to later answer research question two which explores the ways autonomy may develop and evolve in student-teachers. Findings suggest that autonomy changes mainly with regards to the ways participants perceive their responsibility in the classroom and the value of the support given by their mentors. Findings also seem to suggest that student-teachers tend to become more autonomous as their teacher identity strengthens.

Self-centeredness as autonomy while taking responsibility for their classes emerged in the student-teachers' responses. Findings suggest that in the early stages of their practicum, student-

teachers seem to focus on their own learning. That is, there is a tendency towards self-centredness, as according to their own comments, they were focusing on themselves as teachers rather than on their students when planning their classes. That is, instead of having their students as the centre of their practicum, they were thinking of themselves as learners when making decisions regarding their teaching; hence, they were worried about their own learning and about receiving a good grade in their practicum class.

Some examples of this are shown when student-teachers comment on aspects of their practicum regarding mainly their planning, use of vocabulary, pacing and explanations to students. The following quotes by Adela, Alan and Karla exemplify this point.

Adela, for instance, talks in her diary entries about how, after finishing her lesson in the language centre she was assigned to, she realises that she was not considering the students' level of English when planning the lesson. She writes about how she believes that the activities carried out by her mentor were, in her opinion, too easy, so when planning her class she wanted the learners to go beyond their English proficiency level by using both complex vocabulary and different accents in her listening activities. Things did not go as she expected and she realised that when students do not understand, there is no learning:

> "I really think that the accent is very hard but it is a very good exercise for the students and also for the teacher. Most of the students complain about how hard it is to understand that accent… I started the class and I felt confident but then I realized that they didn't actually understand. I saw it in their faces, they were scared and I'm sure they felt that they didn't know English. I thought I was using a very understandable language but at the end my mentor told me that I was going a little fast and that I used some very elevated words… The activities didn't work as I was expecting because they didn't understand the reading nor the song" (AE-C2-JE).

This shows how Adela seems to focus on her own beliefs instead of on the feedback given by her mentor and on the level of students. She wanted to design complex activities but they were not successful because she was too focused on her own learning instead of considering the needs of her learners.

Alan also describes in his journals behaviour that seems to show that he was more worried about delivering the lesson itself in the public secondary school where he was assigned to, than about the understanding and learning of his students.

*"[The student] said in several occasions she did not understand what she needed to do. I explained to her twice and after that I told her she needed to read the blackboard for better understanding as the instructions were already given"* (AZ-C4-JE).

This shows that Alan probably is not patient enough to make sure that his students completely understand his instructions. For him, the easiest way was to tell the student to read the instructions from the board and to continue with his class. He later mentions that this was because the student could later ask the class teacher for clarification. This seems to show that student-teachers focus more on their own learning than on that of the students because they are unable to see the learning of their students as their full responsibility at this point.

Another example is Karla who was in a private elementary school. She expresses in her diary entries that sometimes she feels frustrated because she designs a lot of activities but, as she was working with young kindergarten students, they become easily distracted and she did not have time to do everything she planned.

*"I tried to do as much as possible to complete and finish my lesson plan and remember all of the activities that I designed, but even if I hurry, most of the times I can't"* (KC-C2-JE).

This shows that Karla is more worried about doing the activities in her lesson plan than in choosing those that are significant for the students. This behaviour portrays, as mentioned before, that there is a tendency of student-teachers, at least in the early stages of their practicum, to focus on their teaching instead of on students' learning.

Nevertheless, the self-centred focus of the student-teachers' practice seems to decrease as participants move through their practicum. This may be because they acquire a stronger teacher identity and as a consequence, they begin worrying more about the quality of their activities and their characteristics because they want to design materials that students like so that the learning and teaching processes are effective. For instance, findings show that as student-teachers begin feeling more recognized as teachers by their students and their mentors, they feel more motivated to take initiative in their classes by focusing their planning and design of materials not on themselves, but by thinking about their learners' needs. That is, instead of planning their classes thinking about what they would do as teachers, they begin their planning by thinking of the ways their students might learn better.

Karla, for instance, after teaching lessons and getting to know her students and classroom dynamics, began planning her classes based on the students' behaviour during her class:

*"I could notice that my students like to do grammatical activities, I hope to bring them more of these tasks"* (KC-C2-JE).

This may show that Karla begins to observe and analyse the behaviour of her students and to change the focus of her teaching from her as a teacher to the learning of her students. By doing this, she is able to recognise which activities work better and which do not, and she begins paying attention to the students' wants and needs. In addition, she takes into consideration what she observes to plan her class because she wants her students to get more involved in order for them to learn.

Similarly, Ernesto realised that he needs to pay more attention to his secondary school students:

*"I need to work on being flexible and attentive so the students can learn best because at the end, THEY are the ones that are teaching me how to become a better teacher"* (EF-C4-JE).

Ernesto shows an awareness of the importance of students' needs. He realised that the purpose of teaching is for students to learn, and that, according to his comment, his teaching practice improves in parallel with his students learning.

Alan, likewise, states the importance of considering his students when planning the lesson. He noticed that if students do not understand they will not learn and that if there is a lack of understanding his activities, even if they are apparently effective and fun, they are more likely to be unsuccessful:

*"I need to understand their level of English might not be that good for most of the class and I need to change my activities to others that they do understand."* (AZ-C4-JE)

These examples from Karla, Ernesto and Alan show that as they gain more teaching experience, they realise that they are not the main element for a class to be successful, but that what matters is the learning of the students through their decisions and preparation in class.

The previous examples portray student-teachers' focus on themselves, that is, the element of "self"-centeredness. This may happen due to the fact that they are still teacher learners, hence, they are worried about themselves and their evaluation as teachers rather than on the learning of the students, which is usually the biggest concern of experienced teachers. Student-teachers do not yet have to take the full responsibility for the learning of the class they are teaching as their mentors are the ones who hold this responsibility. If student-teachers make a mistake or are unable to make students understand their explanations, they know that their mentors would be there to help them and to explain again the topics that students did not understand. They know that although they are responsible for acting like professional teachers during their practicum,

their mentors would help them if they experience problems. That is probably why they are more worried about their own learning as teachers than about the learning of their students in the early stages of their practicum.

Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that these opinions only show the conscious thinking participants hold on autonomy. However, it may be that this conscious understanding differs from the growing awareness that they display about it as shown in their actions and reflections, especially as they move forward in their practicum. This seems to have been affected by the shaping and re-shaping of their identity. As their identity as teachers becomes stronger, their autonomy as self-centredness seems to decrease, but their autonomy as actual teachers seems to increase. This will be further discussed in section 5.2.1.

Another aspect that seemed to change during the student-teachers practicum is the way student-teachers feel their mentors support them. Although independence was a common association of student-teachers to autonomy, findings suggest that as participants move forward in their practicum, they begin appreciating the support given by their mentors and peers. In addition, it seems that although participants do not voice this, support might have had an impact on the development of their autonomy.

Alan and Melissa, for instance, claim that peer mentoring allows them to have a better planning of their classes, as they help each other in terms of keeping discipline and monitoring the students. Alan did his practicum in a public secondary school while Melissa worked with adults in a language centre (Appendix B). This peer support seems to have allowed them to deliver a class where they felt comfortable even though the contexts where they did their practicum were different:

*"My partner and I were supporting each other on the control of the class and checking if they were working, although each of us was the main teacher in our respective class"* (AZ-C4-JE)

*"I had the pleasure of working next to my classmate David and it was a very helpful thing because we supported each other whenever we needed help, he is very efficient and I also felt very efficient there."* (MG-C4-JE)

On the other hand, Brianna, Gina and Karla talk about the ways mentoring boosted their confidence as teachers and allowed them to become autonomous due to the fact that their mentors give them freedom and power to control the class. The three of them did their practicum in different contexts, Brianna in a language centre with adults, Gina in a public secondary school and Karla in a private elementary school, but the three of them had a positive teacher identity.

This may show that regardless of the context where student-teachers do their practicum, if they are interested in teaching they would try to get the best out of their experience.

Brianna says: *"I'm very grateful I was assigned to these two teachers because they accept me and they are also excited about me teaching the class. I really feel their support and I feel very confident to talk to them and to ask them questions or just to talk because they also get close to me to talk or even to joke with me at times. They gave me freedom within the classroom and I really appreciate that as well as the fact that they took me into account during the planning of class."* (BC-C2-JE)

Gina argues: *"I felt really supported by the teacher; she helped me with discipline. Even though I really like discipline I didn't feel comfortable by raising my voice. I was kind of afraid. Even though the teacher gave me all her support I couldn't do that. Maybe for the next classes that I get to know them better."* (GL-C2-JE)

Karla claims: *"I do not know if the teacher Fernanda saw me a little bit unmotivated or lazy but she supported me with an extra activity"* (KC-C2-JE)

Braulio, likewise, talks about the support of his mentor but he emphasizes the way in which, as his practicum was coming to an end, he felt more confident about being alone with the students:

*"The teacher helps me a lot with discipline. I feel students don't see me as an authority and don't pay attention to me… I realized that I don't need their teacher in their classroom to support my own commands or ideas."* (BG-C4-JE)

The previous examples show, therefore, that as student-teachers get more teaching practice and acquire more experience, their perception of autonomy as isolation evolves to adding the idea of support to become autonomous. That is, as they become more experienced teachers they seem to realise that by having support from either their peers or their mentors, they get more confidence which allows them to be freer, more independent, more in control of their class and hence, more autonomous.

In addition, findings also suggest that during practicum, the autonomy of student-teachers changed as they reflected on their teaching practice. Student-teachers reflected and became critical of their teaching, identifying thus their strengths and weaknesses to later used them to plan their classes by observing their mentors and through the experience they gained as teachers during the 16 weeks of the course. That is, they analysed their practice and then took control of it, showing therefore, autonomous behaviour.

For instance, Adela realised that one of her weaknesses was her lack of carefully planning her classes, which was a characteristic that she admired from her mentor:

*"I think it is very nice that she has already planned the classes for next week. That's something I don't really do in my job…I'm practicing the attitude of taking the time to do the things also in my job, and my students feel better…Now I plan my class and the time goes very fast because I [give] my students the time to think and to answer the exercises."* (AE-C2-JE).

Brianna also became aware of what she considered her weaknesses as a teacher and acted upon it. She said that

*"something that I am very aware of is that timing is my main problem and actually that is what some students also told me: that some activities were very long. I have a problem with that because at first I did things very quickly and then I realised that I was going really fast so I tried to go not that fast paced so they could really understand me and get the ideas or the topics"* (BC-C2-JE).

This expression of autonomy seems to occur because both participants hold a positive view of teaching and of themselves as students. That is, according to the types of identity described by Gee (2000), their D-Identity was positive as they recognised themselves as good teachers and good students. Hence, they wanted to improve because their identity was strong (see 2.2.1).

Nevertheless, the previous examples show participants who were able to identify their weaknesses and decided to take action upon it. Likewise, student-teachers who were able to identify their strengths did the same. Ivan, for instance, was another participant that had a strong teacher identity and who developed autonomy. Something that appears to help him was the fact that he was delivering successful lessons and, as a consequence, it seems that his identity and autonomy became stronger because of the pride he felt:

*"I would use the same activities for a future class. In fact I am thinking of making a record of all the activities that are successful so I can use them in future classes"* (IV-C4-JE).

Melissa also recognised her teaching strengths and she claimed to have realised that she was learning by observing her videos:

*"I never expected to say this but it really does help to see how you evolve and what you can improve every time, I'm sure I will keep those videos in my computer to see and compare the progress I'm making"* (MG-C4-JE).

This was an important change in Melissa's identity, since at the beginning of the term she claimed that, although she liked teaching and wanted to be a teacher, she felt insecure about teaching.

However, during her practicum in a language centre she claimed that she realised she could teach and that she was able to do a good job. This improvement in her self-image as a teacher seems to have resulted in her becoming more autonomous as she decided to keep the videos to continue observing her improvements.

Salma had a similar realisation, as she claimed that at the beginning she was insecure as it was a big group of teenagers who were used to not working because she had, what she considered to be, a bad mentor. Her strong learner and teacher identity allowed her to be autonomous and to try different strategies and at the end she was able to make students work and pay attention to her. She claimed that she:

*"learned that my only obstacle is myself. I can do so many things with my students, it is all a matter of looking for other options and keeping things dynamic and relevant for them."* (SM-C4-JE)

Therefore, it seems that participants who hold a positive identity are more likely to improve their autonomy to get good results as teachers and learners, and from their students. The fact that the identity of the participants changed during their practicum, seems to evidence the idea presented in the literature that identity is dynamic and changes according to the teachers' experiences and context (Flores and Day, 2006; Beauchamp and Thomas, 2009; Hong, 2010. Identity will be discussed in chapter 4.3).

It can be concluded that, at least in the beginning stages of their practicum, student-teachers apparently think that autonomous teachers have the characteristics of working on their own, using strategies, activities and materials that they consider will work with students, regardless of what school authorities, school policies or other teachers may say. Also, apparently student-teachers who hold a positive teacher identity, become more critical and reflective of their teaching throughout their practicum. This allows them to work on their weaknesses and use their strengths to take better control of their teaching and learning and of the learning of their students, becoming therefore into autonomous student-teachers.

## 4.3    Relationship of autonomy and the development of the professional identity of student-teachers

This section presents evidence to research question 3, which attempts to explore the ways in which the development of autonomy is influenced by the shaping and re-shaping of the identity of student-teachers.

This section starts with a description of the understanding of identity by student-teachers. It is followed by a section on identity and pride, as it was found that student-teachers' identity seems to be affected by the interactions and recognition they had in the context where they did their practicum.

### 4.3.1 Understanding of professional identity by student-teachers

Student-teachers were asked directly what they think professional identity is and how they see themselves as teachers. Findings suggest that they define professional identity as the teachers' style and personality, the image they have of themselves and the one they project to the students.

Student-teachers generally see professional identity as a trait of the teachers' personality and style. Esther, for instance, simply claims that professional identity is

*"her personal way of teaching"* (EP-C2-PQ)

while Dalia says that it refers to

*"the type of personality you have or develop that you use when you work"* (DG-C2-PQ).

Both statements show that they see professional identity as a quality that varies from teacher to teacher as it depends on each teacher; it may refer, thus, to those traits that make teachers unique.

Luisa has a similar view as she claims that professional identity is

*"what identifies your teaching method and identifies you as a teacher in the classroom environment"* (LP-C2-PQ),

This view sees professional identity as the individual characteristic of uniqueness of each teacher. Larissa agrees with this characteristic too as she defines it as

*"the voice that you put out there to represent your teaching style"* (LM-C3-PQ).

However, she goes further to agree with the literature in the sense that identity is dynamic (see 2.2.2) as she also mentions that identity

*"may change according to the situation but in a professional environment, the identity has to suit the service you provide"* .

Through this statement we can see that she seems to be aware that one's view of oneself as a professional varies depending on context. For instance, in terms of teaching, teachers do not have

the same behaviour when working with children than with adults. Likewise, Lisa also shows an understanding of identity being dynamic as she states that it refers to the

*"changes in my mind that I will have after the classes I teach in addition to the ones I have right now, and what will define me as a teacher"* (LR-C3-PQ).

Through this statement, Lisa indicates that she is aware that after having the practicum experience her perceptions of what it is like to be a teacher may change. The practicum course was the first teaching experience that both Luisa and Larissa had, thus, they are aware that being exposed to a real classroom may change the perceptions they hold on teaching.

The second concept that student-teachers commonly associate with identity is image. Participants claim that identity refers to the image people have of what a teacher is. For instance, Karla says it refers to

*"the image that we have of a teacher based on the way she performs her profession in the field"* (KC-C2-DP) as well as *"the image you give in front of the group as a teacher"* (KC-C2-PQ).

Likewise, Tamara defines identity as

*"the image that we as teachers give to the students"* (TF-C3-PQ)

while Melissa gives it a more complete description by stating that it refers to

*"the set of values, strategies, philosophy and experience that I have earned through time"* (MG-C4-PQ).

The definitions given by student-teachers show that professional identity refers to the characteristics teachers have and show to students while they are in front of a class. Moreover, Melissa seems to have an awareness of identity being dynamic as she also relates it to the way it develops over time.

After being asked about their understanding of identity, participants were required to describe themselves as teachers. Results show that most of them have a positive image of themselves as teachers. Participants generally describe themselves as hardworking, responsible, respectful, enthusiastic, caring and dynamic teachers. Two participants, on the other hand, directly show a negative teacher identity.

Rosie, for instance, says that she is *"an average teacher"* (RL-C4-AP)

but in other occasions expressed that she did not see herself as a teacher at all.

Lisa, on the other hand, said that she wants to be a teacher but that she considers herself

*"a shy teacher, who is learning with her students too, because it is not at all the same to study what a teacher is than to be a teacher"* (LR-C3-AP).

In the case of Lisa, as she is motivated to be a teacher, she is aware that she can learn from the students too and she decided to take the practicum experience as an opportunity to work on her shyness. It seems that having a positive professional identity, that is, a good image of teaching, influences the autonomy of the student-teachers because those who fall into this profile tend to take an opportunity to learn from the experiences they have during their practicum.

Findings also suggest that those participants who do not want to teach can develop their autonomy as long as they consider themselves good students. This happens because they are able to take responsibility for their learning, increasing therefore their student-teacher autonomy. Susana, for instance, claimed that she is autonomous in the sense that

*"I set myself some approachable goals, like being more creative as a teacher and being more organized to do a better job"* (SH-CF-DP).

Her statement shows that she is aware of her strengths and weaknesses as she mentioned that she wants to improve. However, she claimed that she is not interested in teaching but she does see herself as a good student. This shows that even though her teacher identity is weak, her student identity is strong and hence she would try to do a good job to continue seeing herself as a good student. Larissa has a similar awareness of her responsibility in learning because she also considers herself a good student,

*"I am aware of my flaws and I understand where and how I can improve them and learn"* (LM-C3-DP),

and, just like Susana, she claimed at the beginning of the practicum that she was not interested in teaching.

On the other hand, lack of autonomy also emerged. Bertha showed the opposite feeling as Susana and Larissa, as she claimed that she did not feel autonomous because

*"I do what I have to do to get my degree so if I don't hand in what I'm told to hand in, I will get a bad grade and I don't need that"* (BD-C2-PQ).

This statement shows that although she sees herself as a good student as she does not want to have bad grades, she is not really interested in teaching, thus, she will do as told to please her mentor and supervisor to get a good grade.

Autonomy in terms of responsibility also occurred in those participants who not only hold a positive view of themselves as students but who also had a strong teacher identity. Karla, for instance, was a participant that claimed that she had always wanted to teach and thus, she was motivated to learn from her mentor. She considered herself autonomous

*"when I make my decisions about what I have to learn and what I don't have to learn from my mentors"* (KC-C2-PQ).

This indicates that during her practicum she was not only observing her mentors but also analysing their actions and then deciding what to learn from them. This may be an indication of her autonomy emerging from the reflections she made during her practicum. Brianna had a similar reaction as she said

*"I'm being "autonomous" somehow because nobody is telling me things but I'm kind of figuring them out by myself with the material and my teacher's comments and opinions"* (BC-C2-JE),

which shows that she was taking responsibility for her learning by analysing the elements of her practicum context. Similarly, Ernesto emphasised his learner autonomy with his teacher identity as he mentioned that he was autonomous

*"in the sense of trying my best to accomplish the Tuesday's tasks provided by the teacher"* (EF-C4-AP).

This statement may be an indication of his interest in being not only a good student but also a good teacher as he is being responsible for his learning and of the planning and design of his class even though his mentor mainly provided the activities. In the discussion section of this chapter, the different patterns that emerged during this research will be explained as well as the ways in which each profile experienced autonomy, identity and mentoring (see 5.3.1).

### 4.3.2    Recognition and pride as enhancers of identity

During the course of their practicum and as they gain experience, student-teachers earn the recognition of their mentors and their students, which seems to have a positive impact on their teacher identity. Participants feel proud in two main situations: when people recognize their good work and when they see positive results in their students and their classes.

Student-teachers express pride when mentors and students openly recognize their efforts, and when their mentors see them as peers. Both Bertha and Annalisa, for instance, mention that they felt proud when their mentors began seeing them as peers and began referring to them as teachers. Annalisa claims that

*"it is nice that your mentor calls you his "partner""* (AG-C2-JE)

 while Bertha expresses that her mentor

*"treats me like a colleague"* (BD-C2-DP).

Similarly, Gina claims that the recognition she received from her mentor as a teacher helps her deal with her nervousness of being in front of a group of 45 secondary school students. She mentions that her mentor

*"made the students aware that I had the same power as she does and that if they didn't behave I could send them to the principal's office. That gave me more confidence."* (GL-C2-JE).

It seems, therefore, that mentor support plays a role in the student-teachers' sense of belonging and in the development of their teacher identity as they seem to feel more comfortable working in an environment where they feel welcome.

Mentor recognition and pride also occurred at the time of giving feedback to student-teachers and it seems to have a positive effect on the participants' identity as teachers. Melissa seems to be aware that the interaction with her mentor plays an important role in her performance as a teacher as she says that

*"the feedback and attitude from my mentors contributed to my positive feelings about the classes"* (MG-C4-JE).

Moreover, participants feel more proud about themselves when mentors went beyond telling them they were doing a good job and they began to imitate them and take advice from them as well. Mary mentions that she felt like a professional teacher when during an activity her mentor congratulated her and told her that

*"she will try to do the same that I am doing, that is, to create my own material to work with the students, to not rely only on the book"* (MR-C4-JE).

Likewise, Mariana who did her practicum in a private elementary school, comments that she also felt like a professional teacher when her mentor began seeing her as a peer to the point that she

*"asked me for some feedback. I told her that she probably should encourage more her students to start using the English language"* (MC-C2-JE).

This type of recognition, of being taken into consideration for class decisions, seems to have a high impact on the student-teacher's self-esteem. One participant, Jonathan became emotional when he received recognition as he claims that his mentor

*"hugged me and told me that I was a good teacher, and that I would be missed; my eyes got watery"* (JL-C2-JE).

Results suggest that feeling part of the classroom and welcome by mentors does have a positive impact on the student-teachers' identity in this study.  It seems that if student-teachers feel comfortable, they may be more open to work with their mentors and develop their identity.

Pride also seems to have an impact on student-teachers' identity when it results from recognition by the students. Findings show that student-teachers feel proud when students begin recognizing them as teachers by demonstrating that they like their classes. Armando claims that he felt proud when students began working harder in his classes because

*"after a few sessions of going they are actually excited for me to teach them and something that they really like and were really fond of is more participation in group activities"* (AG-C1-PQ).

Likewise, Jonathan showed pride about himself as a teacher because

*"it was heart-warming to see that they enjoyed my class and that they would like me to be their teacher"* (JL-C2-JE)

while Salma said *"teaching is very rewarding, I feel awesome when my students say they will miss me"* (SM-C4-AP).

Student recognition, thus, seems to have an impact on the ego of student-teachers, who, as mentioned in the previous section, are at a stage of being self-centred because they are still focused on learning to be teachers. Hence, being told by real students that they are good professionals has a positive influence not only on their self-image as students but also as teachers.

Student-teachers also claim they felt like professional teachers when their students show behaviour that they claim they have not shown in their regular English classes with their mentors. Gisela, for instance, says that she felt proud when one of her high school students told her that she did not talk in English in her regular class but that she felt comfortable with her so she began participating more (GP-C1-F2). Similarly, Alice who also did her practicum in a public high school, claimed that she realised that using activities different from the textbook gave her better results as she said that she

*"was impressed since at the end of the class the team that won was made [up of] the kids that didn't participate and that misbehaved with [their current teacher]"* (AO-C2-JE).

Similarly, Keila expresses her pride when at the end of the term her elementary school students were proud of themselves because of their progress with their projects and

*"they were doing their best because they wanted their family to see their job. IT WAS AWESOME!"* (KL-C2-JE).

 As can be seen, the identity of student-teachers seems to be enhanced during the course of their practicum because as time passes they improve not only their teaching skills but also their confidence, giving them therefore, a positive professional identity. This, in consequence, has an impact on the student-teacher's self-centredness.

## 4.4    Relationship of autonomy and the development of the mentoring process of student-teachers

The fourth theme presented in this chapter is the way in which mentoring may influence the development of autonomy. This section presents evidence to answer research question 4, that examines the ways in which the development of autonomy may be influenced by the process of mentoring of student-teachers. Results suggest that the way student-teachers understand mentoring has an impact on both their professional identity and teacher autonomy. However, findings also suggest that the expectations they hold of their mentors are causes of potential conflict during their practicum.

### 4.4.1    Understanding and expectations of mentoring by student-teachers

Data showed that student-teachers have idealistic expectations of mentors. Participants believed that as teachers, their mentors would only speak English in their classes, would make students participate and would be able to control the class all the time, being this last characteristic the one they hoped to learn the most. Lisa's comment, for instance, portrays this hoping for an ideal mentor as she claimed that she expected him/her to be

*"a teacher who really cares about the students and not just about the money he/she will be paid for being there; someone who always finds the way to make their explanations effective for students and who worries about their learning"* (LR-C3-PQ).

Similarly, Norma claimed that she expected her mentor to be

*"a teacher who really wants to teach, a teacher who loves what she does, a teacher who knows the needs of her students, and a teacher who is dynamic and can be flexible according to their students needs"* (NR-C2-PQ).

Hence, participants expect their mentors to be role models who have a strong teaching vocation for them to be able to imitate them and learn from them.

Likewise, when describing mentors, results show that participants also held high expectations, as they hoped to feel supported and to find an example of behaviour in their mentors. Brianna, for example, expected her mentor to be

*"in a better disposition to talk and work with me, and that she makes me feel supported or at least not that stupid when I get to tell or ask her something"* (BC-C2-JE).

It is important to note that Brianna is one of the participants who had different mentors, and her experience with previous mentors hadn't been pleasant as she did not feel supported. This is why when she changed her mentor she held higher expectations than before. Celia and Ernesto had similar expectations as they also considered communication and a good relationship to be important in this mentoring process.

Celia, for instance, claimed that she expected to have *"a good relationship, because we can have better communication and that is important. Also it would be great that my mentor gives me tips to be a good teacher"* (CP-C3-PQ)

while Ernesto mentioned that he expected their interaction *"to be positive and beneficial for me to become an outstanding teacher"* (EF-C4-PQ).

Both arguments are related to the previously mentioned characteristic of self-centredness. They show that student-teachers are thinking of their mentors being good teachers for their personal benefit, so that they can become better teachers, instead of worrying at this point for the students they are in charge of. As it was mentioned before, this may be due to the fact that they are still students and they are not responsible for the class yet, so they are more worried about their own learning than about the learning of the students of their mentors.

### 4.4.2        Identity and mentoring: Potential conflicts between ideal and actual teaching

During the course of their practicum and while student-teachers were reflecting on their teaching, links between identity and mentoring appeared. Links were shown mainly when conflictive thoughts arose, which is an aspect congruent to the "identity dissonance" that Warin, Maddok, Pell and Hargreave (2006) talked about. During the teaching practicum experience of the participants of this study, disagreements between student-teachers and mentors emerged mainly because of the high expectations and idealization that participants bore of them before actually meeting them. Student-teachers mentioned two main types of conflicts during their reflections: between their idea of what an English teacher should be and the actual skills of their mentors as teachers, and between their idea of good teaching and the way of teaching (strategies, activities, classroom management) of their mentors.

When student-teachers began working with their mentors in a real classroom their expectations were challenged as they were too high. Participants hoped to work with a perfect teacher and mentor, in a utopic environment, and once they were exposed to reality, they realised perfection does not exist and conflicts arose. Participants complained, for instance, about their mentors not being able to control their groups, which, as mentioned before, was the skill they wanted to learn the most. Sonia, for instance, argued that she faced a conflict when she realised her mentor, who was an experienced teacher, was unable to control his class,

*"how can I do it if he can't and he has experience?"* (SH-C1-F1), she wondered.

Armando claimed to feel disappointed when the same thing happened to his mentor, because, he said, his mentor promised to punish bad behaviour but never did it, so students kept misbehaving:

*"my mentor said that the ones misbehaving were going to get kicked out of the class but she never actually kicked anyone out even if they continue to misbehave and I think sometimes this is necessary for the student to no behave in certain way anymore"* (AH-C1-PQ).

Gina also observed lack of class control in her mentor as she was unable to keep discipline. She describes,

*"the students were talking about what they did a day before… [and] even though [the teacher] was aware of the situation she didn't apply any strategy to keep them quiet. Instead she was just there sitting at her desk"* (GL-C2-JE).

As all the participants had expressed that they wanted to learn classroom management techniques from their mentors it makes sense that disappointment emerged once that they realised that even experienced teachers have problems in this area.

In addition, participants complained about their mentors not having the English proficiency or the teaching preparation they expected. Marco, for instance, mentioned that the lack of control over the students might be due to the fact that mentors are unprepared; he said

*"they don't have control in their groups because they don't master the topics they are teaching… [my mentor] doesn't have a good  pronunciation, and he doesn't know vocabulary"* (ML-C1-F1).

He claimed that students notice the lack of preparation of teachers and they do not pay attention to them because they stop respecting the mentors as teachers. Keila also talked about the lack of preparation of her mentor, as she claimed that she had what she considered an irresponsible teacher:

*"[My mentor] made me see how you look when you are not ready, like kids do whatever they want to do and you don't look like a teacher and I don't want to look like that"* (KL-C2-F2).

Karla also argued that having a bad mentor made her realise that she did not want to look like her in front of students. She said that she told herself

*"prepare your class or you will look like her"* (KC-C2-F2).

It is worth noticing that both Keila and Karla have strong student and teacher identities, as they both claimed they want to be teachers and they consider themselves good students. Hence, they took mentoring as an opportunity to learn and improve their skills regardless if they had a good or bad mentor. Similarly, Alice claimed that her mentor was a nice person but not a good teacher,

*"I really hope that the teacher improves with time, I feel sorry for her because she seems a nice lady but I don't think she is prepared to be in front of a classroom"* (AO-C2-JE)

and she claimed that it was a shame that this happened because the group seemed to be very promising as they were fast learners and active participants when they were interested in the activities she took for them.

On the other hand, Cindy did not only complain about her mentor's lack of teaching skills but also about her English proficiency. She said that her mentor

*"had terrible English or at least terrible to be a teacher"* (CC-C3-F2).

Likewise, Josue said that his mentor was not a good example for him as she *"punishes the kids very badly and I don't like her English"* (JD-C4-AP).

Hence, it seems that participants expect their mentors be highly proficient in English as well as to be skilful at the time of managing and preparing an English class.

Finally, conflicts also arose regarding the different way of teaching that mentors and student-teachers have. This is consistent with their expectations of a mentor, as the biggest conflicts were regarding what participants considered boring classes or conflicts regarding the way mentors taught with the way they think classes should be (see Zaree-ee & Ghasedi's ,2014, factors of identity in 2.2). Dalia, for instance, said that she designs her class according to the way her mentor plans her classes but that she

*"didn't like it, is very plain and one way, boring and dull, but I didn't know what to do to make it better, there was no new topic to teach and I felt lost"* (DG-C2-JE).

Dalia also said that she noticed that her students were bored and not paying attention, but yet she continued with the same strategy throughout the class because she was unable to improvise. Dalia is a participant that said she was not interested in teaching, that is, she holds a negative teacher identity, hence, contrary to other participants, although she was not happy with the way her mentor taught, she was not interested in improving the class either. Apparently, she did not develop her teacher autonomy as for her it was enough to teach the class the way her mentor did it even though she noticed that it was not effective as the students were not learning. This is because she is not interested in improving her teaching practice and skills, as she does not want to be a teacher but a translator.

Other participants also had conflicts with the way their mentors taught the class. Karla mentioned that she did not like the way her mentor gave the class and that she had a conflict when she received feedback from her. Her main complaint was about how to teach children to write as she claimed that when she was teaching, her mentor

*"told me that I should teach the kids to write English the way it is spoken"* (KC-C2-F2),

that is, her mentor wanted her to write the words the way they are pronounced. This was a conflict for her because she claims that her mentor did not have a teacher training background, that is, she was a teacher only because she speaks English but she is not educated in foreign language teaching. Hence, her strategy of teaching children to write according to the way words sound was contrary to what Karla believes should be the effective way to teach children. She considers students would get used to writing according to phonetics and they will not learn the spelling of words, which is a problem she had been having with that group. She experienced identity dissonance as described by Pillen et al (2013B). As Karla holds a strong teacher identity, she decided to challenge her mentor by ignoring her advice, and, as her mentor realised that students were improving in their spelling, she allowed Karla to continue teaching with the strategies that she chose.

Likewise, Alma and Adela also had conflicts regarding their mentors' way of teaching as it was clashing with their own teaching identity. Alma is an experienced student-teacher, she began teaching even before entering the major, and thus, she holds a very strong teacher identity. This was conflicting at the time of her practicum as she

*"had to modify the way I teach, I LIKE to teach, because that's the way her students are and, so I had to adapt to them instead of them adapting to my teaching"* (AM-C1-F1).

For Alma, having to change her way of teaching made her uncomfortable as she claimed she did not like her mentor because she was not prepared, that is, she was not a trained teacher, and she

did not make her students work. Alma's comments show this clash between her identity as a teacher and the need of adapting to her mentor's way of teaching because students did not understand her if she tried to teach the way she usually does it. She claimed that she followed her mentors' way of teaching

*"but I didn't like it, it's not my way of teaching, I'm a very strict teacher with other kids… and for me it was so, so hard to not do anything. That's what got me like very frustrated because that's not the way I am"* (AM-C1-F2).

Interestingly enough, she was not able to develop her teacher identity during her practicum as she did not try to challenge her mentor, which, as mentioned before, might be due to the fact that as she is also an experienced teacher, she did not want to be disrespectful because it was not her group, not her responsibility. Similarly, Adela was unhappy with the way her mentor handled her class, but in her case it was because she felt that the teacher's personality was creating a tense environment.

She said that *"the teacher makes the students feel very stressed and the environment is very uncomfortable. The activities are the same, there is nothing new for the students and I think that's a bad thing for them"* (AE-C2-JE),

which seems to show her awareness that a negative environment can have on students.

Contrary to Alma, Adela tried to change this situation at the time of teaching by adding extra activities that challenged the students' language skills. When doing this, Adela had another conflict because her mentor told her that her activities were too difficult for the level of the students. However, she believed that

*"we have to push the students from time to time because if we give them everything in the easy way they will get used to it"* (AE-C2-JE)*.*

Although her mentor did not always give her positive feedback due to the difficulty level of her activities, she claimed to be happy because students were responding and participating in her class:

*"The students seemed to show interest in the topic… I guess that the teacher wasn't getting the students involved in the topics"* (AE-C2-JE).

 Her comments show that she seems to have a strong teacher identity that led her to develop her autonomy to the point that she is willing to challenge her mentor's opinion to teach what she considers to be an effective class. Hence, as can be seen, the participants' teacher identity seems to play an important role at the time of interacting with mentors and teaching their classes.

**4.4.3** **Apparent relationship between autonomy, identity and mentoring.**

Results suggest that although having a strong or positive learner or teacher identity influences the development of autonomy, the relationships between student-teachers and mentoring also seem to affect it.

Support from the mentors seems to be a key element in the development of a positive teacher identity and therefore on the improvement of student-teacher autonomy. For instance, Keila had a strong teacher identity and she appeared to be autonomous in the classroom. This may be also due to the good relationship she had with one of her mentors and the fact that she felt supported by her. When she was not teaching the class because her mentor was in charge, she observed the students' behaviour and acted upon those who she perceived had problems. For instance, she noticed that the class was bullying one of her students because she did not have the same level of English than the rest, and in one occasion the girl began talking to her and she took the opportunity

*"to see what she needs to be at the same level of her classmates… So I decided to dedicate my day to help her and to see what I could do so that this situation changes at least just a little"* (KL-C2-JE).

This shows that Keila was worried about the learning of the students, which is in accordance to the high teacher identity that she has. According to her, this opportunity allowed her to give the student extra support and made her feel proud because

*"she always tells me that she's getting better in her class"* (KL-C2-JE).

Hence, the fact that a student who struggled with English improved because of the help she received by the student-teacher, increased the confidence of the participant as well as her ego, and therefore, her identity as a teacher strengthened.

Likewise, Joaquin took the initiative to participate in the class instead of only observing his mentor. He mentioned that when he arrived to the classroom and his mentor told him to have a seat, he

*"asked the teacher if I could walk around and see how they were doing, she said yes"* (JA-C2-JE).

This appears to be a portrayal of his identity because, just as Keila, he had previously claimed that he wants to be a teacher, hence, he took the opportunity to interact with the class instead of only sitting there observing and doing nothing. Guillermo did the same because he said that his mentor

tended to call the roll when students were working and sometimes they had questions but his mentor did not help them. He decided that while his mentor called the roll he would be

*"looking around [to see] if someone needs help [and] I helped them"* (GV-C2-JE).

Likewise, Alan took initiative when planning the class and even when changing the instructions of the final project. These characteristics of initiative portrayed by the student-teachers while they were in the classroom are consistent with Ponton and Rhea (2006). They claimed that there are four characteristics needed for autonomous learning to occur: motivation, resourcefulness, initiative and persistence, which are attributes that student-teachers seemed to show.

In addition, Alan claimed that his mentor was very encouraging and he felt confident that she would support him with his decisions for the benefit of the students. He said that the teacher would lend him the book but he could add extra activities or videos as he had the freedom to explain, prepare and teach the topic in the way he preferred, and that he had

*"the freedom of changing some rules of the final project as I think it is more convenient. The teacher told me to do it as I think is best"* (AZ-C4-JE)*.*

This, according to Alan, had an impact on his identity because he felt professional as his mentor considered him good enough to have the freedom to decide how to work with the students. Again, ego and pride seem to emerge in the development of the participants' teacher identity. This is consistent with the literature, which mentions that one of the activities that mentors do that student-teachers appreciate the most, is precisely receiving advice and support from their mentors (Hobson, 2002. See 2.3.5).

It appears, therefore, that these participants took initiative because they felt comfortable with their mentors and, according to them, they knew that their teachers would not be bothered if they decided to interact with the students and to make decisions regarding the class. It is apparent, again, that positive mentoring relationships contribute to the development of the autonomy of the student-teachers and the strengthening of their identity.

Mentors, then, seem to play an important role in the confidence that student-teachers felt at the time of being autonomous. Brianna, for instance, had a strong teacher identity and had initiative to be autonomous. However, her relationship with her mentor prevented her from taking further action when she thought there was an opportunity to work with students on her own. This situation caused an internal conflict, which can be seen in her comment regarding one occasion when her mentor left the classroom and left the students with her but did not tell her to do anything with the group. She mentioned that

*"this specific time in which the teacher left for the first time makes me feel unsatisfied because I think that it was an opportunity for me to 'take over' and continue with the class by checking the answers of the exercise they were answering but since she didn't ask me to do it, I thought she might take it wrong, do I just sat there and did nothing"* (BC-C2-JE).

Brianna was afraid of her mentor being upset if she checked the students' answers but, although the teacher did not specifically tell her to take over the class, she did not tell her either that she should not do anything. This is why Brianna's conflict arose, as it seems that her identity and autonomy were "telling" her to act upon the situation, but her lack of communication with her mentor, and maybe even her lack of confidence as a student-teacher, prevented her to do so. Hence, having what Ragins et al (2000) call a *marginal mentor* as described in the literature (see 2.3.4) was a factor that hindered the development of her autonomy as a teacher and probably, the development of her skills as a teacher. Nevertheless, as can be seen, she seems to hold a strong learner identity too because her conflict appears to be more because she missed an opportunity to learn by teaching and taking over the class, rather than by the act of teaching itself.

On the other hand, even though a bad relationship with a mentor and/or being marginally mentored (Ragins et al, 2000) could have prevented some participants to take control of their class, it was not always the case. Findings suggest that when student-teachers held a very strong teacher and learner identity, even having a bad mentor resulted into developing their teacher autonomy.

Salma was one of these cases as she had claimed to be disappointed of her mentor because she felt abandoned by her as she was not giving her feedback and she left her alone during classes. Salma's sense of abandonment increased because her mentor was not even telling her the topic she was supposed to teach with enough time to prepare it, but she was also not allowed to decide what to teach. Therefore, her sense of responsibility, which seems to be a characteristic of her teacher autonomy, allowed her to find a way to deal with this situation; that is, she was forced to be autonomous to some degree. She said that after not receiving a response from her mentor about what to teach,

*"anxious [me] started freaking out… [so] I found the book online and I tried to guess where they stopped last class"* (SM-C4-JE).

This shows that, opposite to some participants with a weaker teacher identity than her, Salma's strong identity both as a teacher and as a learner made her be proactive and take control of the class to the point that she managed to find by herself a way to plan the class that would cover her

mentor's desire of using the book but without having to improvise, which is something that she did not like to do as she considered it unprofessional.

She also claimed that she felt autonomous as a teacher because although at the beginning of the practicum she felt resentful about not having the support of a mentor, eventually she realised that she could

*"plan my classes without my mentor's help. I am interested in teaching my classes and I know that I can improve a lot, but for now, I am satisfied with the fact that my students are happy and willing to work. I like teaching so much"* (SM-C4-JE).

This shows that apparently having a strong professional identity could lead to a high degree of autonomy as the participant's desire to be a good teacher seems to be stronger than the desire to have a good mentor.

Annalisa was another participant that showed an improvement in her autonomy due to having a bad mentor. However, in her case, this perception of her mentor being a bad teacher was not only made by her as a student-teacher, but also by the students who expressed that they disliked her way of teaching. She claimed that because of the students' comments regarding her mentor, when it was her turn to teach the class, she

*"tried to make it different from her class… I feel that the teacher is not caring if the students are learning or not, so I wanted to make the difference"* (AG-C2-JE),

and this change of teaching strategies brought her recognition of the students, which increased her pride, and therefore, her identity as a teacher strengthened. On the other hand, she also developed the ability to see her own mistakes and to adapt the class when she felt that students were not understanding or were overwhelmed by the classwork load, as can be seen when she said that she

*"changed all my lesson plan because at the moment of observing the group I realized that the activities that I prepared were not appropriate for the group since they were too many"* (AG-C2-JE).

This awareness of what works and does not work with the students seems to show a change in the self-centredness previously mentioned (see 4.1.1.1). As the student-teachers were getting more experience working with the groups, those who had a stronger teacher identity seemed to change the learning focus as they became more interested in the students' learning instead of only on their own.

Results, therefore, suggest that student-teachers have a simplistic understanding of autonomy but that they can exhibit and observe autonomous behaviour that goes beyond freedom and independence when making decisions in the classroom. Also, autonomy changes during the course of their practicum as student-teachers re-shape their teacher identity by gaining experience and receiving recognition from their mentors, students and peers. In addition, findings suggest that more than mentoring, the identity that student-teachers hold as teachers has a bigger impact on the development of their autonomy. Mentors can influence autonomy but only if student-teachers have a positive view of themselves either as teachers or as learners.

## 4.5    Impact of teaching practicum in novice teachers

This section reports on findings obtained from interviews and a Likert-type questionnaire given to five novice teachers during the second phase of this study to answer research question 5. As mentioned in the methodology section (see 3.2), they got a job within their practicum and one year after they graduated and all of them participated during phase one of this study. Questions of the interviews focused on the three main themes of this thesis: autonomy, identity and mentoring.

Novice teachers were asked to describe themselves as teachers to get an idea of their teacher identity. The Likert-type questionnaire (LQ) shows that the five participants have a positive teacher identity as they consider themselves responsible (5 participants), creative (4 participants), strict (4 participants), happy (3 participants) and autonomous (3 participants). Three participants used the word autonomous in their description, which may indicate that after their practicum this adjective was considered as a characteristic of being a teacher.

During the interview, participants were asked directly if they considered themselves autonomous and the five of them said they do, even though only three of them mentioned this word in the questionnaire. They answered that they felt autonomous because although they follow a teaching syllabus in their classes, they have the freedom to design and implement activities that they consider may benefit the learning of their students. Alice claimed that although in the school where she works she must follow a programme and she has

*"some mandatory activities for the evaluation of the school, I can teach the class [the way] I want to and choose the activities that I consider good or attractive for the students"* (AO-C2-NI).

On the other hand, Karla also considered herself autonomous but her situation was different from that of Alice as she did not have any restrictions to follow due to school's policies. She said that she is autonomous because she

*"can decide what kind of books, material, and topics I can work with"* (KC-C2-NI).

Similarly, Patricia claimed that she is autonomous *"because if I want to do something new I just do it and I do not need to ask anyone if that's okay as long as it helps me"* (PC-C1-NI).

These three participants related autonomy to freedom, independence and the ability to make decisions in their classes regarding the solving of regular problems that they may have in the classroom.

The other two novice teachers also associated autonomy to freedom, independence and the ability to make decisions, but in addition, they added to their classes an element of creativity. For instance, Keila decided to implement a literature element in her English class' programme because she considers that

*"it helps them a lot with their vocabulary and their speaking skills"* (KL-C1-NI).

Similarly, Norma said that she was asked to teach a geography class and instead of following the book she decided to teach using videos and telling stories to the students to catch their attention. She claimed that enthusiasm allows teachers to go beyond the book and come up with strategies that students like, and that teachers:

*"must have the real passion [of] being a teacher even when sometimes [teachers] weren't prepared for some situations and we just improvise"* (NR-C2-NI).

Results show that participants, thus, seem to hold the same understanding of autonomy they held when they were student-teachers with regards to freedom and making decisions within their classes (see 4.1.3).

Regarding identity, novice teachers were asked how they saw themselves as teachers. The five of them considered themselves to be good but strict teachers. The most common words they used to describe themselves were dynamic, hardworking and creative. In addition, they also used the word *mean* as part of their professional teacher identity. They used this word in the sense that they are strict and students tend to call them like this because they give them homework and make them work,

*"they always say: 'teacher, you're so mean! And I love that"* (KC-C2-NI).

These answers show that they want to be considered good but strict teachers. This identity might have been a result of the reflection of having observed an English teacher that they did not consider was competent or good enough to teach, which was the case of three of the five

participants of the second phase of this study: Karla, Keila and Patricia. Patricia complained that in her opinion her mentor was not involved with the students,

*"he just sat on his desk and made them work but he never noticed if students needed help or not, so I pay attention to my students because that is the only way to know if they are learning or not"* (PC-C1-NI).

Likewise, Karla openly claimed that when she did not feel like planning, she *"just remember my mentor and tell myself that I don't want to be lazy like her, I don't want my students to see me the way I saw her"* (KC-C2-NI).

Keila similarly said that she *"just don't want to be like my mentor. I learned from her what not to do and I don't want to be to my mentees the kind of mentor she was to me because I learned a lot but about what not to do"* (KL-C2-NI).

It is worth mentioning that both Karla and Keila are now mentors as they got a job in the school where they did their practicum.

In addition, they were asked if they loved teaching and only one of them, Patricia, said no. She claimed that teaching secondary school students has been very tiresome and that she does not think she loves teaching:

*"I really like it and I enjoy it, don't get me wrong, but I don't see myself in this profession forever, at least not like in this level because it's really tiresome emotionally, maybe in a different level, but I wouldn't say "love" teaching"* (PC-C1-NI).

However, she claimed that she would like to work with older students or students in a different context. Patricia's feelings might have been affected by external factors, as part of her problem at the moment of being interviewed was that the school that she worked in was in a small town, so she was separated from her family and friends. Being away from her family and lacking emotional support are factors that might have hindered her development as a teacher at that time.

Another participant, Alice, said that she sometimes loves teaching and sometimes she does not. She claimed that she questions her love for her profession when

*"the students make me angry, when they don't care, when they don't want to do anything, when they don't pay attention… And I do love it when I see the students that have a difficult time with languages and they still ask you and you can see their interest"* (AO-C2-NI).

Her statement shows that her teacher identity may be linked to the reaction students have of her class, which is consistent to what was previously explained that pride and recognition play an important role in the development of teacher identity (see 4.3.2).

The other three participants claimed that they love teaching. Norma said that she loves her job and that

*"I don't imagine myself doing something else. I entered this [major] because I wanted to teach and I still do"* (NR-C2-NI).

Karla also showed her passion for teaching a she said that she thinks teaching

*"is the best job in the world. And I would make the same choice one million times more…I LOVE my job and I love to learn more from my students and I love what I do, teaching"* (KC-C2-NI).

Finally, Keila also claimed to love teaching, which is one of the most interesting cases as at the beginning of phase 1 she showed a weak teacher identity as she had openly claimed during her practicum that she preferred to be a translator than a teacher. However, after her practicum experience and after being a novice teacher she said that she loved teaching because she

*"realised that I am good at it and I actually like it a lot. I think I even like teaching more than translating now because I love seeing students learning new things"* (KL-C2-NI).

These findings may show that if student-teachers have a positive experience during their practicum, they are more likely to enjoy the teaching profession and as a consequence, strengthen their teacher identity.

Regarding mentoring, the five novice teachers agreed that the practicum experience, especially observing and being with their mentors, provided benefits for their teaching practice. They claimed that they got experience from teaching and that the practicum course had allowed them to be exposed to reality and that they learned to imitate the positive characteristics of their mentors and avoid those that they did not like.

Alice went beyond this and said that her practicum experienced helped her build her confidence and *"also made me fall in love [with] teaching"* (AO-C2-NI).

This comment shows that the element of practicum in a teaching training programme might have effects not only in the development of the skills of the students, but also in a deeper level to the point that it may increase their self-esteem. This will be further discussed in section 5.4.

Nevertheless, Alice also claimed that she would have liked to be exposed to difficult contexts because when she got her first job after graduating, she was working in a low-income school, which proved to be extremely challenging. She said that in her opinion

*"working in an area with a lot of difficulties would be nice for the practicum, I mean, in those situations you realise if teaching is what you really what to do, if it's really your passion and you learn a lot"* (AO-C2-NI).

She continued claiming that by working in that environment against the difficulties of the school and the lack of interest of the students themselves and their parents, she realised that teaching is what she loved, and it motivated her to feel that if she could work with them, working in any other educational context would be easier. This statement shows that her teacher identity is very strong, as she decided to stay and make students learn instead of leaving the profession as it tends to occur within the first five years of teaching (Johnson, 2002; Smith and Ingersoll, 2004; Flores and Day, 2006; among others, as seen in section 2.3.2).

Similarly, Keila claimed that she would have liked to learn how to deal with the psychological issues of students. Although she got experience while doing her practicum and she learned some strategies to deal with difficult kids, she argued that being completely responsible for the group allowed her to realise that students have psychological problems that hinder their learning. She said that

*"sometimes I have to make some changes to my lesson plans because some of my students have psychological problems"* (KC-C2-NI)

and that she often finds herself lost as she does not know how to help them learn. However, it seems that her teacher identity is also strong as instead of ignoring her students with problems, she reads and asks her colleagues about techniques or strategies that she may use to help them.

Finally, two of the novice teachers that were interviewed, Keila and Karla, are now working in the school where they did their practicum, hence, are now mentors to current student-teachers. They claim that this experience has been rewarding because they are learning from their mentees while the student-teachers learn from them. Keila argued that it is important for her that the student-teacher sees her as a peer because that way trust increases and they can learn from each other:

*"it is very important for me not to be seen by the student-teachers as a superior because I want them to feel comfortable. We are sharing experiences and communication and confidence is going to make both of us learn about our performance in the classroom"* (KL-C2-NI).

Similarly, Karla pointed out the importance of communication because without it and a good relationship, student-teachers are less likely to learn:

*"I had a good relationship with the first student, we used to share experiences or he used to ask me a lot of things about my class"* (KC-C2-NI).

She argued that this relationship allowed her to feel free to give him feedback and that he also felt confident about giving his opinion, which, according to her, allowed both of them to learn and take advantage of this experience. These findings are congruent with the importance of establishing a good mentor-mentee relationship and with literature mentioning that collaboration aids in the development of teacher autonomy (see 2.1.3 and 2.3.5).

In addition, these novice teachers claimed to be very aware of their roles as mentors and of the responsibility that comes with this role. They claimed that they know from experience that they can have either a positive or a negative impact on the student-teachers' learning and professional practice. Karla, for instance, argued that she is aware of her role as a mentor because she knows that

*"I need to share my experiences, methods and techniques with them to help them to be good teachers"* (KC-C2-NI).

This importance that they give to establishing a good relationship in which both parties feel free to express what they feel, may be because they argued that they are mentoring them in the way they would have liked to be mentored. In addition, they claimed that they feel that, as they and their mentees studied the same thing, that is, they graduated from the B.A. programme where student-teachers are registered, they feel a certain bond and connection that has helped them develop good communication. This will be further discussed in the discussion chapter.

# Chapter 5:    Discussion

This chapter attempts to discuss the previous findings, to show the interpretations that resulted from comparing and contrasting them with the literature reviewed. It also attempts to answer the research questions of this study (see 1.3). It is divided into four sections organised according to the answering of the research questions of this thesis and to the results found by the following of the five novice teachers during the second phase of this study.

The first section, The nature of teacher autonomy in student-teachers: congruency between thoughts and actions, analyses the ways student-teachers relate autonomy to *doing what they want*. It describes the ways student-teachers linked autonomy and identity in the sense of taking responsibility for both their learning and teaching, thus answering research question 1 (see 5.1). The second section, Changes over time: becoming a teacher, analyses the ways in which autonomy seemed to change and develop in student-teachers during their practicum, and how as their teacher identity strengthened, the emphasis on the "self" as learners decreased (see 5.2).

The third section, Relationships between autonomy, identity and mentoring, presents an understanding and interpretation of the apparent relationships between the three main areas of this study as shown in the results section above. It analyses and explains the patterns that emerged in the relationships between autonomy, identity and mentoring (AIM). That is, this section analyses the profiles that emerged with regards to the ways in which having a good or a bad mentor, developing or not developing autonomy and holding a strong or weak teacher identity affected or had an impact on the relationship between the three main areas of this study. It also analyses how these three areas linked during the student-teachers' practicum in classroom interaction and when looking for a different mentor (see 5.3).

The fourth and last section, Following novice teachers: Impact of Autonomy, identity and mentoring, presents an interpretation of how the patterns of autonomy previously mentioned continued to occur in novice teachers. This was done by interpreting the findings regarding how autonomy, identity and mentoring may have an impact on the actual professional practice of the graduates who participated in this study. That is, this section attempts to answer research question 5.  As there was not enough data gathered in phase two of this study, information was analysed to see how teacher training programmes can be benefited from the development of autonomy, identity and mentoring and to suggest further research in this area.

## 5.1    The nature of teacher autonomy in student-teachers: congruency between thoughts and actions

This section answers research question one which addresses the nature of student-teacher autonomy in teacher trainees. It contrasts the ways in which the student-teachers of this study understand their own autonomy as compared to how they demonstrate it through their actions. That is, it explains the internal and external conceptions that participants hold of autonomy.

Participants' understanding of autonomy is apparently superficial as, according to what they said, they see it as "doing what they want". They understand it mainly as freedom and independence and they limit it to the decisions made in the classroom. That is, the internal conception student-teachers seem to have of autonomy is reduced to being able to decide how they teach the class in terms of what contents they cover and how to do it. They claim to be autonomous when they can decide upon the activities that they will use to teach a particular topic and when they can decide what topics to cover, having the freedom to modify the syllabus. This may be because, being inexperienced teachers, they do not know yet what autonomy actually entails as they have not been taught autonomy. Therefore, as Little (1995), Smith (2003), Carter (2005), Wright (2005), Benson (2008) and Adamson & Sert (2012) suggest, autonomy should be taught and encouraged in the classroom so that later on, student-teachers understand it at a deeper level and can become autonomous teachers in the early stages of their career.

Student-teachers also considered autonomy a capacity (Benson, 2013A). They associated autonomy to independence, freedom, responsibility and power or control, which is consistent with the literature (Little, 2007; Benson, 2013, among others). Nevertheless, their external expressions of autonomy seem to go beyond their internal understanding as they demonstrate autonomous behaviour not only in terms of independence and freedom but also when expressing power in the classroom and taking control of their learning and teaching when looking for a new mentor, creating material, changing the class syllabus and asking for help (Cotterall, 1995; Smith, 2003; Sheerin, 2013).

In addition, student-teachers are aware that teachers are not completely autonomous as they must follow a programme, use certain books or materials, and follow school regulations. That is, they are not completely free as they must comply with certain restrictions. However, they also show an awareness that regardless of these limitations, teachers can be autonomous as long as they take responsibility and control of the planning and design of their own classes through the adding, eliminating or modifying of content and activities to have a more effective class where

their students can successfully learn (Carter, 2005; Little, 2007; Benson & Voller, 2013; Esch, 2013).

Furthermore, links between the characteristics given to all these conceptions of autonomy were found. That is, although the three main themes associated with autonomy (independence, freedom, and responsibility) were described according to the perceptions of the participants, relationships among them emerged in their descriptions too. For example, participants showed elements of freedom when talking about independence, or of both independence and freedom when talking about responsibility (see 4.1.1). This means that data suggests that the nature of autonomy in student-teachers is a complex phenomenon that involves the interrelation of being free and independent to make decisions that result in taking control of their teaching and learning.

 In addition, the nature of student-teacher autonomy seems to be a mix of learner and teacher autonomy and identity. At the beginning of their practicum, participants demanded freedom from their mentors in terms of the decisions they made in the classroom because they wanted to experiment with their own way of teaching. However, this happened only with those student-teachers that held a positive teacher or learner identity, as they were motivated to get a good grade. Therefore, the focus of the initial autonomy of student-teachers was on themselves, that is, on learning to teach for the purposes of their own learning as students, not for improving the learning of their students. This means that this focus on the self seems to demonstrate that student-teachers have a stronger learner autonomy and identity at the beginning of their practicum, to later shift it to have a stronger teacher autonomy and identity.

This shows an apparent relationship between the development of autonomy through the shaping of their teacher identity. Those participants who held a stronger teacher and learner identity tended to be more autonomous than those who did not because they were looking for ways to improve their learning and teaching skills. This was shown mainly by the characteristic that they displayed of being proactive by taking charge of their own learning and teaching. Those participants who considered themselves good students and who wanted to be good teachers, tended to look for ways of improving their teaching skills in their classes regardless of having a good or a bad mentor. This seems to show, therefore, that identity apparently has more influence on the development of student-teacher autonomy than the act of being mentored.

The nature of student-teacher autonomy seems to be also influenced by the ability to identify their weaknesses and strengths to take action and work on them to improve their teaching practice. That is, student-teachers become more reflective and critical of their own teaching to later improve it through the development of their learner and teacher autonomy (Harrison et al,

2005). This ability to identify their strengths and weaknesses seems to be part of the participants' identity, as those who hold a strong teacher or learner identity are more reflective and more willing to learn.

Nevertheless, it was also found that this improvement in trainee's reflection skills occurred mainly with inexperienced teachers. Those trainees who had teaching experience seemed to develop their autonomy to a lesser degree or to not develop it at all even though they had a positive teacher and learner identity. This happened because they did not want to create conflicts between themselves and their mentors by challenging their teaching strategies. They preferred to comply with the ways they were told to teach instead of being proactive and experimenting or getting creative when it was their turn to be in front of the classroom. They claimed they would not like other teachers to change their teaching methods so they did not want to change their mentors'. This shows that the conflicts between the ideal and actual teaching could have an impact on the trainees' identity and on the lack of development of their teacher autonomy (see Pillen et al, 2013 in 2.2.3).

All in all, findings suggest that the nature of autonomy in student-teachers might refer to the capacity of being free, independent, reflective and adaptable to change to make decisions regarding their own learning and teaching to have control of their classes and to encourage the learning of their students. This capacity seems to develop through collaboration with mentors and peers in the early stages of their practicum and has characteristics of both learner and teacher autonomy. In this early stage, it seems that the nature of autonomy in student-teachers is learner centred while it shifts to being more teacher centred as they get more experience and strengthen their teacher identity.

## 5.2    Changes over time: becoming a teacher

This section answers research question 2 as it explores the ways autonomy developed in student-teachers throughout their practicum. Findings suggest that as student-teachers work with their mentors and students, their identity changes and, as a consequence, their autonomy does too.

At the beginning of practicum, student-teachers are usually more focused on their own learning rather than on their students'. However, as they get more practice and interaction with students, they begin focusing on their learners' needs and, therefore, their self-centredness decreases. In addition, teaching practicum provides the student-teachers with teaching experience at the same time fosters the development of their autonomy and identity. Throughout practicum, as student-teachers begin receiving positive feedback and recognition from mentors, students, peers and supervisors, their pride and motivation increases, and therefore, their D-identity (the

characteristics student-teachers recognise in themselves as teachers) is strengthened as a consequence of their I-identity (the characteristics as teachers that student-teachers are given by others) (Gee, 2000. See 2.2.1).

Moreover, those trainees who initially had or developed a positive teacher identity during practicum began encouraging autonomy in their students. As they became more aware of their responsibility as teachers and of preparing and planning classes focused on their students, they tried to encourage their learners to be aware of their learning processes and to take responsibility for their learning by communicating their needs to the teachers. This is consistent with the idea that autonomous teachers tend to encourage autonomous learners and, therefore, that autonomy can be taught (Little, 1995; Smith, 2003; Benson, 2010, among others).

### 5.2.1 Autonomy and identity: Strengthening of teacher identity and the decrease of the focus on the "self"

Findings show that as the student-teachers got more experience in their practicum, their teacher identity strengthened. This happened because they received recognition from their mentors and their students, strengthening therefore their D-identities through the positive feedback from their I-identities (Gee 2000). Benson (2003) talks about an *autonomous interdependence* that Adamson and Sert (2013) also describe (see 2.1.3.1), where autonomy is developed through collaboration with others. At the beginning of their practicum, student-teachers have their learner identity stronger than their teacher identity, and therefore are more worried about getting a good grade in their TESOL course, focusing on their own learning as teachers rather than on their students' needs and knowledge. Student-teachers showed this self-centredness also in the understanding they have of autonomy.

For example, Adela argued that *"teacher autonomy is the characteristic of no depending on your boss or on the student to do your best as a teacher"* (AE-C2-PQ). It can be inferred that it is likely that unconsciously she follows the conception of autonomy meaning working alone to grow professionally. This statement shows that for Adela, autonomy may indicate self-centredness, as she associates it with doing what is best for the teacher instead of for the students.

This conception may be held because participants are student-teachers, hence, they are taking a class where they are being evaluated so their focus seems to be on their own learning. However, as they had more practice and began feeling more as teachers, that is, as their teacher identity strengthened, they switched the focus of their practicum to the learning of their students and that initial self-centredness began to disappear. Participants, therefore seem to consciously relate autonomy and independence to isolation, which according to the literature is a common

misconception, as authors such as Kershaw et al (2010), Benson (2011), Liu and Fu (2011), etc., insist that the development of autonomy requires collaboration and supportive groups to be successful  (see 2.1.3.2).

Nevertheless, as student-teachers in this study get more experience, those who held a strong teacher identity begin experimenting in the classroom as they trusted their mentors and wanted to improve their teaching skills. This allowed them to plan better classes that resulted in the learning of their students and, as a consequence, both their students and their mentors began praising their work. This means that their I-identity (Gee, 2000) was positive as their mentors and students perceived them as good teachers, and hence, student-teachers wanted to keep that image so that their I- and D-identities were congruent. It seems that this congruency between identities aids in the development of teacher autonomy. As participants realised that their good performance was praised they became autonomous in the sense that they looked for new ways to improve their teaching practice; that is, they took control of their learning to be teachers for the benefit of their students. It can be said, therefore, that there seems to be a correlation between the teacher identity and autonomy of student-teachers' and their learner identity and autonomy: both can be strengthened or weakened at the same time. This strengthening or weakening of these two identities seems to construct the participants' student-teacher identity and autonomy, being its learner characteristics stronger at the beginning of their practicum, and the teaching traits improving as participants get experience through their practicum.

The development of student-teacher autonomy, therefore, changes as they get more teaching experience and strengthen their learner and teacher identities. Participants of this study changed the focus of their autonomy from being learner centred at the beginning of their practicum to being teacher centred. That is, they became less focused on themselves and on their own learning to focus on their teaching to improve their students' learning. In addition, they seemed to change the perception they had at the beginning of their practicum of autonomy being constructed in isolation to developing it through collaboration and support. This was because they realised that working with their mentors and peers boosted self-confidence to teach and experiment in the classroom, resulting in a faster awareness of their autonomy and its development.

In addition, it seems that the shaping of a positive teacher and/or learner identity might have a greater influence on the development of student-teacher autonomy than mentoring itself. However, not all the participants in this study shaped their identity nor experienced mentoring in the same ways. The following section provides an analysis of the profiles regarding the different experiences of identity and mentoring that emerged during the analysis of the results and how

they might impact the development of student-teacher autonomy, showing therefore a possible link between student-teacher autonomy, learner and teacher identity and mentoring.

## 5.3    Relationships between autonomy, identity and mentoring

This third section analyses findings to answer research questions three and four, as it explores the ways in which the development of autonomy can be influenced by the shaping of identity and the process of mentoring student-teachers during practicum.

It explores the emerging patterns regarding the relationship between autonomy, identity and mentoring. Findings suggest that identity seems to have a bigger influence on the development of autonomy than mentoring. The patterns that emerged in the analysis of the data gathered are summarised in Table 6 as follows (to see the criteria used for each code, see Table 5 in 3.5. The patterns will be further described in 5.3.1):

Table 6 Emerging patterns coding

| Emerging patterns: | |
|---|---|
| ▪   + TI good mentor= Autonomy | |
| ▪   +TI bad mentor = Autonomy | |
| ▪   -TI + LI good mentor= Autonomy and + TI | |
| ▪   -TI + LI bad mentor = No autonomy | |
| ▪   - TI –LI good/bad mentor = No autonomy | |
| **Where:** | **Refers to:** |
| TI | Teacher identity |
| LI | Learner identity |
| + | Positive/ strong |
| - | Negative/ weak |
| é | Development |

The second subsection talks about the possible links between autonomy, identity and mentoring during classroom interaction and when looking for a different mentor.

**5.3.1        Emerging patterns in the relationship between autonomy, identity and mentoring**

After analysing and interpreting the data provided by student-teachers, results seem to show five emergent patterns that profile the way participants perceived their autonomy, identity and mentors. The patterns are: 1. A positive teacher/learner identity apparently results in the development of learner/teacher autonomy (+T/LI = éL/TA), 2. A student-teacher with a positive learner identity but negative teacher identity who is exposed to a positive mentor, may result in the development of a positive teacher identity and autonomy (+LI –TI +M = +TI éA), 3. Student-teachers with a positive learner identity but negative teacher identity who are exposed to bad mentors do not seem to change their perception of teaching, that is, they keep a negative teacher identity, however, they develop their autonomy (+LI –TI -M = -TI éA), 4. Student-teachers with either a positive teacher identity but negative learner identity or a negative teacher identity but positive learner identity who relied on their mentors and did everything they were told, did not develop their autonomy (+TI –LI = NoA or –TI+LI =NoA), and finally 5. Student-teachers who held both a negative teacher and learner identity did not seem to develop their autonomy either (-TI –LI = NoA). Appendix C shows the list of the 65 participants and the pattern that emerged from their responses in the instruments based on their self-image as teachers and learners, their perception of their mentor and the autonomous behaviour they seem to demonstrate.

 The following paragraphs describe those patterns to show how different combinations of the perceptions of student-teachers led to different results in their autonomy.

The first identified pattern seems to show that a positive and strong learner and teacher identity resulted in an improvement of the participant's autonomy regardless of having a good or a bad mentor (+T/LI = éL/TA). Most participants (49/65 student-teachers) fell into this pattern, for example, Adela, Salma, Ivan, Karla, Keila, Ernesto, Alan and Armando (see Appendix C). These participants expressed that they had always liked teaching and that they considered themselves good students. Except for Alan, the rest of the participants claimed to have had at least one "bad mentor", and Adela, Karla, Keila, Alan and Armando claimed to have had at least "one good mentor". In spite of the perception they had of their mentors, these participants showed a great interest in teaching and in improving their teaching practice. They went further to what they were asked to do by their mentors and tried different strategies in their classes for their students to learn. At the beginning, their main interest was self-centred as they were more worried about themselves than about the students, but as they taught more classes and got more involved in their classes, their concern seemed to shift from only improving their skills as teachers to focus also on the learning of their students. They became more interested in showing themselves as good teachers, and the recognition of students and evidence of their learning apparently played a

major role in the strengthening of their identity and autonomy. That is, as people began recognising their work, they felt more like teachers and wanted to work harder to plan better classes.

A second pattern showed that those participants who had a positive learner identity, a negative teacher identity and a good mentor, tended to improve their opinion on teaching and became autonomous teachers (+LI –TI +M = +TI éA). These participants (7 student-teachers) had expressed at the beginning of their practicum that they were not interested in teaching. However, they worked with what they considered a good mentor and/or had positive experiences teaching. These participants wanted to do a good job as teachers because they considered themselves good students and findings suggest that the recognition they received by both their mentors and students, allowed them to change their opinion on teaching. Examples of participants who fell into this profile are Larissa, Diana, Dario and Marina (see Appendix C).

On the other hand, pattern three shows that participants who held a positive learner identity, a negative teacher identity and worked with a "bad" mentor, kept their negative opinion on teaching but improved their autonomy (+LI –TI -M = -TI éA). These participants did not change their opinion on teaching because they were not exposed to what they considered a good role model. It seems, thus, that as they did not have a model that motivated them to teach, their negative opinion of teaching remained. However, their teacher autonomy improved as they cared for improving their teaching skills and getting good results in the class because they considered themselves good students. That is, they realised they can teach but they remained uninterested in doing so. Five participants fell into this pattern and some examples are Rosie, Susana and Josue (see Appendix C).

Both patterns two and three exhibited an improvement in autonomy probably because although student-teachers had expressed they dislike about teaching, they considered themselves good students and hence, they wanted to get a good grade. Therefore, they wanted take charge of their own learning and teaching by developing and searching for different strategies and techniques because they wanted to maintain a high GPA. Nevertheless, having a good mentor seemed to influence the participants' identity, as student-teachers in this situation shifter to a positive teacher identity (pattern two). Nevertheless, those who had a bad mentor kept their negative teacher identity (pattern three).

Two other patterns resulted in the lack of development of autonomy. Pattern four seems to show that autonomy did not develop when participants either held a positive teacher identity but a negative learner identity, or a negative teacher identity but a positive learner identity, and, as a result, they tended to rely more on their mentors or do as told to get a good grade in the course

(+TI –LI = NoA or –TI+LI =NoA). These participants either want to be teachers but feel insecure about their learning skills, or feel confident about their learning skills but are not interested in teaching. This prevented student-teachers from developing their teacher autonomy as they depended on their mentors to teach either due to their insecurity or to the fact that they did not want to get a bad grade. That is, they did not challenge their mentors nor created their own strategies because they did not feel confident or willing enough to do so. Andrea and Enrique are examples of this pattern due to a negative learner identity, while Bertha due to a negative teacher identity (see Appendix C).

A fifth and final pattern shows that those student-teachers who held a negative learner identity and a negative teacher identity did not develop their autonomy regardless of having a good or bad mentor (-TI –LI = NoA). As these participants were not interested in teaching nor considered themselves good students (at least not good students in TESOL classes), they did the minimum amount of work to pass and they did not make any efforts to improve their teaching skills. Hence, their identity remained negative and their autonomy did not improve. Josias is the only participant who fell into this profile (see Appendix C).

These profiles evidence that student-teachers may have, indeed, different identities as shown in the literature. Akkerman and Meijer (2006) talked about the multiplicity of identity, which refers to the different identities a person has according to their context (see 2.2.1). In this case, the way student-teachers felt in the different contexts, that is, if they liked or disliked teaching or their mentors and if they felt comfortable or uncomfortable about teaching and learning, allowed them to develop different identities. That is, context and their own personality foster the shaping and re-shaping and development of either a weak or strong teacher identity, which is independent of their weak or strong learner identity.

As can be seen in the previous patterns, student-teachers' identity as learners seems to have had a stronger impact on the development of their autonomy than having a good or a bad mentor. This is because although some student-teachers did not like or were not interested in teaching, they wanted to maintain their reputation as good students and thus, they were able to become autonomous. On the other hand, those who held not only a strong learner identity but also a strong teacher identity developed a higher autonomy as they were truly motivated to be good teachers and they wanted their students to learn. Hence, although the idealistic expectations that student-teachers sometimes hold of their mentors (which, according to Flores and Day, 2006, are very common) were challenged because they did not have the perfect mentors they were expecting, it seems that mentors did not have a considerable impact on the development of the

participants teaching skills and performance, because, apparently that their identity plays a more important role.

**5.3.1.1    Individual trajectories that reflect the patterns of autonomy.**

This subsection shows examples of the trajectories of seven student-teachers, to illustrate comments that allowed me to identify the patterns described above.

The first pattern, the development (é) of learner (L) and teacher autonomy (TA) as a result of having a positive teacher (+T) and learner identity (LI) i.e. +T/LI = éL/TA, will be exemplified by two participants Karla (cohort 2) and Alan (cohort 4). Karla carried out her practicum in an elementary, private school and since the beginning helped her mentor with some activities, however, she considered her mentor to be a bad teacher. Alan also started teaching at the beginning of his practicum course in a public secondary school by helping his mentor with some activities, but unlike Karla, he considered that his mentor was a good teacher (see Appendix B).

Both of them expressed that they wanted to be teachers, and both seemed to have developed their autonomy as a consequence of their positive identities as teachers and learners. In the case of Karla, her autonomy apparently developed even though she did not think that her mentor was a good teacher. It seems that she strengthened her teacher identity by learning what kind of teacher she did not want to be and acting upon that, as she expressed she did not want to be perceived as the same kind of teacher her mentor was (see 4.5, page 144). Both participants held a positive teacher and learner identity throughout their practicum and both made decisions and took responsibility for their teaching and learning based on the kind of teachers they wanted to be. To see examples of quotes that exemplify this, see the chart below.

The second pattern, the development (é) of a positive teacher identity (+TI) and autonomy (A) as a consequence of having a positive learner identity (+LI) but negative teacher identity (-TI) while working with a good mentor (+M), +LI –TI +M = +TI éA, is exemplified by Larissa (cohort 3). Larissa carried out her practicum in a public high school and she considered that her mentor was a good teacher (see Appendix B). She expressed at the beginning of her practicum in that she was not interested in teaching but that she considered herself a good student. Larissa was a top student in her class and she wanted to have good grades.

She began teaching since the beginning of her practicum and as it was her first time, she sometimes got frustrated because she did not know how to handle students regarding discipline. During the weekly sessions, Larissa asked her classmates and supervisor for advice and she began turning to her mentor as well: *"I asked my mentor because she is really good at keeping discipline and I didn't know what to do. She gave me tips and I tried them and I think the class was better"*

(LM-C3-JE). She began receiving positive feedback from both her mentor and students, feeling proud and less reluctant to teach. Her positive learner identity and the support given by her mentor allowed her to learn to teach because as she had mentioned, she understood how she learned (see 4.3.1 page 127) and as a result, she began enjoying teaching.

The third pattern, when autonomy develops (éA) but there is no change in a negative teacher identity (-TI) as a result of having a positive learner autonomy (+LA), negative teacher identity (-TI) and working with a bad mentor (-M), +LI –TI -M = -TI éA, is exemplified by Rosie (cohort 4). Rosie worked in a private elementary school with two mentors, a good one and a bad one. At the beginning of her practicum, she observed what she considered to be a good mentor, but in the middle of it, when she began teaching, she worked with what she perceived as a bad teacher (see Appendix B). She claimed that she was not interested in teaching but that she considered herself a good, responsible student who likes to get good grades.

When she began teaching, she mentioned that her mentor just followed the book and that she did not feel supported, but as she wanted to get a good grade in the course, she began looking for new activities to make her classes more dynamic instead of doing the same as her mentor. During the weekly sessions, she turned to her peers and supervisor for advice. Nevertheless, at the end of the practicum, although she had taken responsibility for her teaching and learning demonstrating autonomous behaviour, she still claimed that she was not interested in teaching and that she was *"an average teacher"* (see page 126).

Pattern four is exemplified by Andrea from cohort 3 (+TI –LI = NoA) and by Enrique from cohort 2 (–TI+LI =NoA). This pattern represents a lack of the development of autonomy (NoA) by having either a positive teacher identity (+TI) but negative learner identity (-LI), Andrea, or a negative teacher identity (-TI) but positive learner identity (+LI), Enrique, due to an over-reliance on their mentors. Andrea carried out her practicum in a public high school and Enrique in a language centre.

Andrea claimed that she wanted to be a teacher and that she was able to choose what activities to do and that she could plan her classes alone. However, she claimed that she preferred to follow her mentor instructions because she felt insecure about learning on her own. She also said that she did not feel free because she was told what topics and book pages to cover in class. Nevertheless, when she was given freedom to choose the activities, she decided to do the same activities that her mentor did, to imitate her. This shows that although she had a positive teacher identity, her negative learner identity did not allow her to take responsibility for her teaching and thus, she did not develop her autonomy.

Enrique, on the other hand, claimed that he was not interested in teaching but that he considered himself a good student. Despite claiming that his mentors were good teachers, instead of taking advantage of their possible positive influence to develop his teaching skills, Enrique decided to "get comfortable" and just do as he was told instead of going beyond, thus, he did not develop his autonomy either.

The last pattern, no developing autonomy (NoA) due to a negative teacher (-TI) and learner identity (-LI), -TI –LI= NoA, is exemplified by Josias from cohort 3. Josias mentioned since the beginning of his practicum that he was not interested in the teaching, in fact, he had already failed the course. He said that he would never teach and he did not consider himself as a good learner either, except when the topic was of his interest, but that at school he was average.

Josias worked in a language centre and consider that his mentor was a good teacher. He perceived himself as autonomous as he was able to make decisions when learning and teaching (see pages 97 and 101), but he failed to demonstrate autonomous behaviour, as he was not interested in improving his teaching. He just wanted to pass the class so he did what was necessary but he did not take responsibility for his teaching and learning to teach.

Table 7 shows a summary of these trajectories with quotes as examples.

Table 7 Student-teachers trajectories

| Participant | Before practicum | During practicum | After practicum | Pattern |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Karla (KC) | "I love teaching! I have always wanted to teach, that's why I entered this major" (PQ) **[+TI]**<br><br>"I think I am a good student, I am always trying to learn and be better" (F1) **[+LI]** | "I don't like the way my mentor teaches, I hate how she treats the kids and I don't think they are learning" (DP) **[Negative image of mentor]** | "I didn't listen to her, I did what I thought was better, especially with the spelling exercises… I looked online for other activities and as they work well, my mentor was not upset" (AP) **[Demonstration of both learner and teacher autonomy]** | 1: +T/LI = éL/TA |
| Alan (AZ) | "I want to be a teacher because I want to share my knowledge with other people" (PQ) **[+TI]**<br><br>"I am a good student, I improved my English because I wanted to be better" (F1) **[+LI]** | "I love my mentor! She helps me a lot and is always giving me advice. I love how she teaches the kids, she is very patient and always happy" (DP) **[Positive image of mentor]** | "I feel confident to bring my own activities because I know that my mentor trusts me" (AP) **[Demonstration of teacher autonomy]** | 1: +T/LI = éL/TA |

| Larissa (LM) | "I don't want to teach, I don't think I am patient enough" (F1) **[-TI]** <br><br> "I am an excellent student, I have really good grades and I am very responsible" (PQ) **[+LI]** | "My mentor is really good and she helps me a lot. She told me I'm doing a good job and the students are happy with my class, I like this feeling!" (JE) **[Positive image of mentor]** | "Now I think I am not that bad, I don't know, my mentor always told me I do a good job and my students said they really liked my class. Now I feel more confident" (JE) **[+TI]** <br><br> "I prepare activities different from the book, I know that my mentor likes them because she always tells me they are good so I feel I am autonomous". **[Demonstration of autonomy]** | 2: +LI −TI +M = +TI éA |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Rosie (RL) | "I don't really like teaching" (PQ). **[-TI]** <br><br> "I am a good student, I always do my homework and do what I have to do to get good grades" (PQ) **[+LI]** | "My mentor never does anything, just tells the students what to do but doesn't really teach" (JE) **[Negative image of mentor]** <br><br> "My mentor never helped me to prepare the class, just told me what pages to cover and that's what I did" (F1) **[Negative image of mentor]** | "I still don't like teaching but I didn't want to get a bad grade in this class, so I knew I had to teach better than just following the book, so I tried with different activities to get students to work" (F2) **[-TI / Demonstration of autonomy]** | 3: +LI −TI -M = -TI éA |
| Andrea (AO) | "I want to be a teacher because I want to help others because I remember how my teachers helped me, but it is not my first career choice because I am very nervous" (PQ) **[+TI]** <br><br> "I don't think I'm a good student. Probably I'm just regular, I don't know, I always need my teachers to tell me what to do or I get very nervous" (F1) **[-LI]** | "I prefer that the teacher tells me what to do because I think she knows better than me" (DP) **[Positive image of mentor]** | "I was given a topic but I could always choose my activities. I always chose activities that the teacher did because that way I knew she would like them" (AP) **[No autonomy]** | 4: +TI −LI = NoA |
| Enrique (EE) | "I don't really like teaching, I prefer to translate" (F1) **[-TI]** <br><br> "Yes, I am a good student. I am older than | "My mentors were very good teachers. They knew what they were teaching and students liked their classes" (DP) **[Positive** | "I always did what my mentors told me to do, like they told me what activities and that's what I did" (AP) **[No autonomy]** | 4:−TI+LI =NoA |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | some of my classmates so I am here to learn and not waste time" (F1) **[+LI]** | **image of mentor]** | | |
| Josías (JT) | "I hate teaching. I will never do it even if it was my only choice" (PQ) **[-TI]**<br><br>"I am an average students or perhaps a bad one, I don't know. I just go with the flow in most classes but I really like the literature ones, so in those I do ok" (F1) **[-LI]** | "My mentor is good, I guess. She does her job and students understand" (DP) **[Positive image of mentor]** | "I just did whatever I needed to do to pass the class and to not have to go through this dreadful teaching process again. I said it before and I say it again, I hate teaching" (AP) **[No autonomy/ -TI]** | 5: -TI –LI = NoA |

### 5.3.2 Links between autonomy, professional identity and the mentoring process of student-teachers

This section reports on findings that show a link between the three main areas of this study: autonomy, identity and mentoring (AIM) and thus, answers research questions 3: In what ways is the development of autonomy influenced by the shaping of identity of student-teachers during practicum? and 4: In what ways is the development of autonomy influenced by the process of mentoring of student-teachers during practicum?

Findings suggest that links between these three areas emerged mainly in two situations of the participants teaching practicum experience: during classroom interaction, and when participants felt the need to look for a different mentor.

### 5.3.2.1 AIM links during classroom interaction

The relationship between autonomy, identity and mentoring emerged when student-teachers were active participants in the classroom. This happened mainly when participants decided to interact with students during class, both when their mentors asked and did not ask them to do so.

Sandy, for instance, had a strong teacher identity as she claimed she wanted to be a teacher and, in addition, she developed a good relationship with her mentor. The fact that she was able to feel confident with her mentor, in an environment of trust, allowed her to make decisions and be an active participant of her own learning during her practicum. She constantly helped her mentor in the classroom but she mentioned that she added her "personal touch" to the class, even to the way of marking students' assignments, which according to her, had a positive impact on the students:

*"… the teacher went to my place and told me how to sign the students' assignments, but I didn't do it as she told me… I used a pink pen for girls and blue for men, so when I was checking I just wrote "excellent" or "very good" and draw a happy face to all of them. I heard one student saying, "go to check with the new teacher because she draws you a happy face and it looks great"* (SS-C3-JE).

She said that by changing the way of marking the assignments, students felt more motivated to work because they wanted to have the happy face too. It can be said, therefore, that Sandy's identity gave her the confidence to be autonomous in the way she worked with her students, which also happened due to the confidence and support she felt with her mentor. This, as seen in the literature, allowed this mentoring relationship to be effective and successful because apparently both the mentor and the student teacher felt comfortable with each other (Turban and Lee, 2007. See 2.3.5)

In addition, this is congruent with Bajrami (2015) who argued that to have an autonomous classroom it is necessary that there exists constructive interaction between both parties. Although Bajrami referred to the relationship between teachers and students, this can also be applied to the relationship between mentors and student-teachers as findings show that this relationship is crucial for the development of autonomy.

### 5.3.2.2    AIM links when looking for a different mentor

Finally, results also suggest that a link between autonomy, identity and mentoring emerged when participants decided to look for a different mentor. This occurred regardless of participants having a good, a bad, or no mentor at all.

When participants did not have a mentor but held a strong teacher identity and autonomy, they looked for someone to help them with their classes. Marco, for instance, claimed that he was struggling with class control because his students refused to behave and participate. He said that as he

*"walked to my classroom I saw teachers giving Math, giving Physics class. I was shocked because students were behaving; they were all quiet, like paying attention. It was something critic, something that changed my view of them as students"* (ML-C1-F1),

and this situation allowed him to see that he had to be stricter with the students because he asked the teachers for discipline tips. This shows that he was interested in his class and especially in his students paying attention and learning. Marco's class were a group of students who voluntarily took English lessons, that is, they were not going to be graded and that is why it was

likely that they misbehaved. However, being there voluntarily also meant that they were interested in learning English, and he wanted to take advantage of this. Having observed and talked to other teachers, therefore, allowed him to have better control of his class and to become, according to him, a better teacher because his students were working harder.

Similarly, Gisela did not have a mentor and at the beginning she was not assigned a group because the school was just registering students. So, she decided to help her classmate, Tina, and observe and learn from her, that is, she turned to peer mentoring. She claimed that she

*"spent time with her so I wasn't just walking around because my classroom was alone, so that was a good experience because I didn't have any experience teaching and this way I was practicing with her instead of by myself"* (GP-C1-F2).

Her decision of helping her classmate and learn in a classroom instead of doing nothing could have happened because she held both a strong teacher and learner identity. The fact that some participants decided to observe or support themselves on their peers, is consistent with the literature. Terrion (2012) based on Kram (1983), Ensher and Murphy (2011) and Ehrich (2013) claimed that sometimes peer-mentoring is preferred by mentees because as an informal relationship is developed they feel as equals, and thus, more trust and confidence tends to emerge, and communication tends to flow in an easier way.

Participants who had a positive or negative relationship with their mentors but held a strong teacher identity and autonomy also decided to look for another mentor when they wanted extra advice. Interestingly enough, they tended to look at their Practicum supervisors for support, as expressed by Esther (EP-C2-DP), Victoria (VF-C2-AP), Myrna (MA-C3-DP), Ernesto (EF-C4-AP) and Salma (SM-C4-AP). This might have been because practicum supervisors are experienced EFL teachers and they were the student-teachers' professors in several TESOL classes during their major. In addition, participants chose their supervisor when they enrolled in the course, hence, the student-teachers felt confident to ask them questions regarding teaching strategies and techniques.

Although mentoring with supervisors is not considered peer mentoring but traditional due to the hierarchical relationship that exists, there seems to be a relationship of trust because, contrary to their mentors, student-teachers had spent time with and known their supervisors for years, so they tended to trust their teaching skills and they were open to talking to them. This is congruent with the literature because as Turban and Lee (2007) claimed, a successful mentoring relationship forms when both parties feel comfortable with each other, and as mentioned before, sometimes

student-teachers felt more comfortable talking to their supervisors than to their mentors because their relationship was longer than that with their mentors.

However, supervisors were not the only sources of extra advice, as participants also turned to relatives who were also teachers and also to their classmates. Salma, for instance, claimed that her aunt is an experienced teacher and that, as her mentor did not help her, she turned to her for help with her class management techniques and teaching strategies in big groups. She said that she

*"asked my aunt to check my lesson plan when I was done (she has been a high school teacher for 20 years) and she told me that the activities were cool but that I was very optimistic with the timing, and she was right"* (SM-C4-JE).

This was important to her because she was working with secondary school students and, according to her, her mentor was not able to keep discipline and she was even indifferent towards that and the students' learning. She, on the other hand, wanted the students to learn and as her mentor was not giving her feedback she decided to look for somebody else who did. Likewise, Ada turned to her father, who was also a teacher, to

*"guide me and give me advice about teaching"* (AF-C4-DP)

especially when she needed ideas to make the class more interesting for her students. This is related to Zaree-ee & Ghasedi's (2014) historical model as a factor for the development of teacher identity, because participants turned for advice to previous role models in teaching (see 2.2).

In addition, as mentioned before, participants also turned to their classmates to get more ideas about activities to use, that is, they were peer mentored. Keila, for instance, worked in collaboration with her classmate Marcia, as sometimes they worked with the same teacher and classroom. However, Keila is the one that worked as a mentor to Marcia as she was the one making the decisions regarding the class while Marcia just followed her. She said,

*"So I told [Marcia] that we should prepare the microteachings about the topic they were seeing last class we were there. It was about parts of the body. And so we prepared the class"* (KL-C2-JE).

Interestingly enough, while Keila held a strong teacher identity as has been said before, Marcia did not. Marcia had claimed that she was not interested in teaching so it appears that this is the reason why she agreed to follow Keila instead of both working as peers. This caused that Keila developed their teaching autonomy while Marcia did not as she refused to take control of her teaching.

It seems, therefore, that teacher autonomy and identity go hand in hand in the professional development of student-teachers. That is, those students who hold a positive teacher identity seem to develop their autonomy higher than those who do not. In addition, mentors seem to have an impact on the professional development of the student-teachers when they hold a strong identity regardless if the mentors were good or bad.

As can be inferred, the findings and analysis shown above, seem to be contradictory to the literature, as according to Ragins et al (2000), having a bad or a marginal mentor tends to be compared to not being mentored at all. This is because of the few or none benefits that it is claimed that student-teachers get from being mentored in this way. Nevertheless, at least from what can be observed that happened in this study, as long as student-teachers hold a strong identity, they will be able to develop not only their skills as teachers but also their teacher autonomy.

Based on the analysis of the data gathered, hence, it seems that the answer to research questions 3 and 4 can be summarised in Figure 4 below.
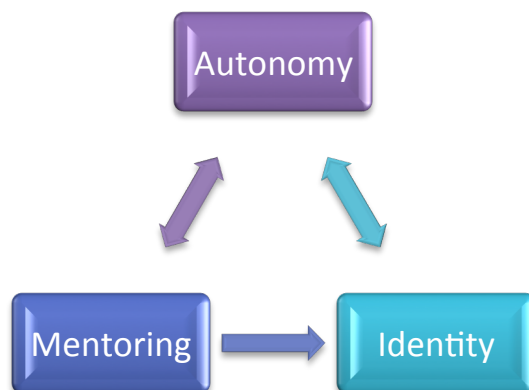


Figure 4 Relationship between autonomy, identity and mentoring in
student-teacher contexts

The figure shows that, according to the data gathered in this study, both the shaping of identity and the mentoring process in student-teachers' contexts impact autonomy. Autonomy is affected by identity because when student-teachers have a strong teacher and/or learner identity, they will try to improve their teaching skills by showing a proactive and independent behaviour while doing their practicum. It is affected by mentoring when working with what participants consider a good teacher as a mentor because, as seen in the results chapter (see 4.4.3), when student-teachers feel comfortable and have a good relationship with them, they feel free to make decisions regarding their classes and to actively participate in the classroom.

Likewise, autonomy has an impact on both the development of identity and mentoring. As seen in results, autonomy may impact the student-teachers' shaping and re-shaping of a stronger teacher identity when they felt proud of the way they were teaching. This happened both because of the recognition given by students, mentors, supervisors or peers and because of the confidence that mentors gave them by allowing them to make decisions in their classes. This situation made them feel and see themselves as professional teachers, which resulted in a better self-image as teachers. On the other hand, autonomy seems to also have an impact on mentoring in the sense that student-teachers who were not mentored or who did not like their mentor, decided to look for another role model because they wanted to learn. That is, there seems to be a relationship between autonomy and mentoring as a result of their identity. Autonomy, hence, seems to have a bigger influence in mentoring than identity, because even if student-teachers have a strong identity, if they are not autonomous, it seems that they will not look for a different mentor. Therefore, it seems that a strong identity is a characteristic of autonomous people but autonomy is not necessarily a characteristic of people with a strong teacher identity.

The last relationship shown in the diagram indicates that mentoring has an impact on identity. As seen in the result section, having a good mentor can have a positive impact on student-teachers' identity as long as they consider themselves good students. If student-teachers have an open mind towards learning, even if they do not want to be teachers, they might be motivated by their mentors and even end up liking teaching. However, if they have a bad mentor, their perceptions towards teaching are not likely to change, that is, their teacher identity may not be affected. It seems, however, that in the case of a student-teachers' context, identity does not affect mentoring, as although some participants that were exposed to marginal mentoring had a very strong positive identity, they were not able to create a good relationship with their mentors, as mentors were not interested in supporting them.

To summarise, the findings in this study indicate that the relationship between autonomy, identity and mentoring is a cycle where autonomy affects and is affected by both mentoring and identity, and mentoring affects identity but identity does not affect mentoring as this is a student teacher context.

## 5.4    Following novice teachers: Impact of Autonomy, identity and mentoring

This last section attempts to answer research question 5: In what ways do the experiences student-teachers acquire during practicum affect their professional practice as novice teachers?

As mentioned in the results section, having done a teaching practicum before entering the labour market, apparently allowed student-teachers and novice teachers to increase their self-esteem.

Participants' experiences are in line with the literature as they claim that practicum allowed them to be more confident in their skills and performance as teachers in general. That is, mentoring and the teaching practicum itself seem to have an impact on the development of their teacher identity. Findings suggest that, in line with McKimm, Jollie and Hatter (2003), being mentored gives teachers an advantage in comparison to novice teachers who were not mentored. Through their teaching practicum they got more practice and experience which, according to findings, made student-teachers feel more prepared to enter the real world, have a stronger sense of what being a teacher means, and have an easier transition between being a student and being a teacher, which is what Freiman-Nemser (1996) claimed.

Findings also show that mentoring also had an impact on the development of their identity and their own mentoring skills. As mentioned in the results section (see 4.5), two participants of phase two became mentors as they got a job in the institutions where they did their practicum. They were asked how they felt as mentors and they mentioned that the most rewarding part of mentoring is that they were learning from their student-teachers as they were mentoring them. This has an impact on their autonomy because as Bajrami (2015) mentioned, autonomy develops where there is interaction and both parties learn from each other. Hence, the fact that novice teachers who are mentors are interested in developing good communication and good relationships with their mentees, might mean that they are interested in improving their skills collaboratively and, as a consequence, developing their autonomy.

As was mentioned in the methodology section (see 1.2), during the first phase of this study mentors did not have any formal training regarding the responsibilities and obligations that they were acquiring by agreeing to be mentors. This was the same case with the novice teachers that became mentors. Therefore, they were asked how they made decisions regarding strategies to mentor student-teachers and they claimed that they treat their mentees in the ways that they would have liked to be mentored. This is consistent with what Elliot and Calderhead (1996) claimed because they mentioned that as there are no standardized ways of mentoring, every mentor does it in the way they understand they have to do it or, as in the case of the two participants of this study, in the ways they would have liked to be mentored.

In addition, novice teachers argue that they would have liked to learn how to deal with difficult contexts or with students that have psychological problems that might hinder their learning. Hence, although their confidence in their skills boosted because of their practicum experience, they seem to show certain identity tensions as described by Pillen et al (2013). Apparently

participants experience *teacher with care-related tensions* as they are worried about their students learning and they do not want to leave behind those learners with problems. This is because they do not want to identify themselves with their mentors who ignored the problematic students. This conflict arises because they feel incapable of helping their students to learn, and hence their identity tension increases (see 2.2.3). However, their autonomy seems to loose this tension because instead of only being frustrated about not knowing how to deal with problematic students, they decided to take action and learn on their own about the problems their students have and how to reach them to help them learn. Then, by noticing changes in their students' learning, their tension is reduced and their pride increases, strengthening therefore their teacher identity (see 4.3.2).

Hence, it can be seen that mentoring does seem to have an influence on the autonomy and identity of student-teachers. However, there also seems to be a relationship between autonomy, identity, and mentoring in novice teachers' contexts, similar to the one of ESOL student-teachers' context. Based on the analysis of the data gathered, hence, it seems that research question 5 can be answered through the relationship between autonomy, identity and mentoring in novice teachers, summarised in Figure 5 below:
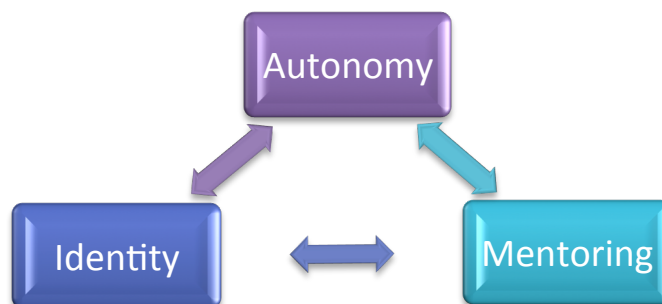


Figure 5 Relationship between autonomy, identity and mentoring in novice teachers' context

The figure shows that the relationships between autonomy, identity and mentoring are very similar in a novice teacher and student-teacher context. Autonomy seems to be affected by both mentoring and identity. It is affected by identity because when novice teachers have a strong teacher identity, they try their best to be good teachers showing a proactive and independent behaviour while taking responsibility for their learning at the time of teaching. When they were presented with difficult students or difficult contexts, they took initiative and looked for ways to deal with those situations. Autonomy is also affected by mentoring because those teachers had good mentors when they were student-teachers learned from their mentors those strategies that they considered useful, while those who had bad mentors kept what their considered to be their "bad example" to not behave in the same way and not commit the same mistakes.

Likewise, autonomy has an impact on both the development of identity and in mentoring. Autonomy seems to have an impact on allowing novice teachers to develop a stronger teacher identity when they feel proud of the way they are teaching by being recognised by the students, parents and school authorities. On the other hand, autonomy also had an impact on mentoring in two ways. First of all, and as previously mentioned, novice teachers decided to imitate or not imitate the strategies and behaviours of their previous mentors. Second of all, as two of them became mentors themselves, they took responsibility for the mentoring of their student-teachers by trying to give them a good example.

The last relationship shown in the diagram indicates that mentoring has an impact on identity, and in the case of novice teachers, identity seems to have an impact on mentoring, too. The previous experience with a mentor allowed novice teachers to form an idea of what it means to be a good teacher, thus, making them behave in such ways that they complied with that image. They did not only remember their mentors as good examples and kept strategies learned from them, but also remembered their bad mentors as they considered them bad teachers, to have an example of what not to do in their teaching practice. Nevertheless, differently from a student-teachers' context, in a novice teachers' environment identity seems to have an impact on mentoring. Two novice teachers that are now mentors, expressed that they wanted to be a positive example for their student-teachers as they did not want to be seen in the ways they saw their previous mentors. As they wanted to be considered good teachers and good mentors, they made an effort to bond with the student-teachers and to take strategies to the classroom that could be adopted by them. They wanted to be examples of good teachers, that is, they wanted to be recognised by student-teachers as professional teachers and good mentors.

Therefore, the relationship between autonomy, identity and mentoring in novice teachers' contexts is a cycle where autonomy affects and is affected by both mentoring and identity, and mentoring affects and is affected by identity.

### 5.4.1    Autonomy in teacher training

Finally, there seems to be little empirical research carried out on teacher autonomy, and even less on student-teacher autonomy (see 2.1). However, after having conducted this research and after having analysed the data gathered through the different instruments, findings suggest that autonomy develops through both practicum and the shaping of identity.

Therefore, it seems sensible that teacher training programmes teach autonomy to their student-teachers as suggested by Carter (2005), so that they later become autonomous novice teachers. If student-teachers have a better understanding of what autonomy is and of the role it plays in the

development of their teaching professional skills, as a consequence, their students' skills will also improve and there would be a more effective language acquisition. Results suggest that student-teachers developed autonomy without being aware of its importance, so it is suggested that if they begin their teaching practicum course with a better understanding and awareness of all the elements of autonomy and all the benefits it may have in both students and teachers, they will be able to develop it faster because they will know how to be autonomous. That is, they will be able to consciously follow and design strategies that will lead them to autonomous behaviour and they will also encourage the development of autonomy in their students. Hence, classrooms would benefit from the advantages of autonomy described by Little (1995), Dickinson (1995), Smith (2003), Harrison et al (2005), Ponton & Rhea (2006), Smith & Erdogan (2008) and Benson & Voller (2013) regarding autonomy allowing learners (or in this case student-teachers and novice teachers) to control what they learn and how, to be more motivated to continue learning in the future, and especially, to promote autonomous learning in their own students when they become teachers (see 2.1.2).

In addition, autonomy remains an important element of the teaching practice of novice teachers. Novice teachers apparently continued being autonomous in their professional practice consciously and unconsciously. They experienced conscious autonomy because when asked if they considered themselves autonomous they still related it to freedom and independence. However, they also exhibit unconscious behaviours of autonomous professionals. For instance, they mentioned that they are autonomous because they have the freedom to plan their classes and design activities the way they consider is better for the benefit of their students, buy they still do not consciously associate autonomy to the decisions they made regarding their own learning. However, they exhibited this type of autonomous behaviour by adding a creative element to their classes, such as the geography class or the addition of the literary element to their English classes presented in section 4.5. Another example are that those novice teachers who experienced conflicts with their students and who took initiative in learning how to handle them on their own; that is, they took control of their own learning and teaching. These participants showed that, as Carter (2005) and Everhard (2012) claimed, autonomous teachers are more likely to continue developing professionally (see 2.1).

Hence, autonomy is an important aspect of teaching professionals that should not be overlooked. Efforts should be made, therefore, to include autonomy notions in teaching training programmes. Nevertheless, a more expensive study on novice teachers is needed to fully explore and describe the relationships between autonomy, identity and mentoring in this type of context.

# Chapter 6:    Conclusions.

This final chapter presents a general summary of the findings obtained in this thesis and shows the contributions to research obtained through this study. In addition, it describes the limitations of the study and presents recommendations for future research.

## 6.1    Nature and development of autonomy: what student-teachers understand and what they do

Learner autonomy has been widely studied as well as teacher autonomy but at a lesser degree. However, research is needed with regards to student-teacher autonomy. This thesis focused on the exploration of learner and teacher autonomy in student-teachers to find the way it develops during teaching practicum and how it may be affected by the shaping of their teacher identity and by being mentored by English teachers. Through this study, the following general conclusions were made.

Findings suggest that there are differences between the internal and external conceptions of autonomy of student-teachers, that is, between what they understand of autonomy with the autonomous behaviour they exhibited. Student-teachers seem to have a superficial understanding of autonomy as they tend to relate it with independence and freedom only. Independence, according to the understanding of student-teachers, refers to working alone, while freedom to doing what they want. This response was consistent both at the beginning and end of their practicum, showing therefore no change in the simplistic understanding of autonomy they had.

Nevertheless, their actions reflect understanding at a deeper level and a change of behaviour throughout their practicum. At the beginning of their practicum, student-teachers usually showed autonomous behaviour while making decisions regarding their class, while doing "what they wanted" in the classroom in terms of teaching and resources, and while finding solutions to their teaching problems. That is, their autonomous behaviour was limited to the planning and delivery of their classes: to teacher autonomy. However, as they moved forward into their practicum, they exhibited autonomous behaviour while taking the initiative to help their mentors without being asked, looking for extra resources and designing different types of activities that they considered would be more effective for their students, and when looking for their own ways to understand a particular topic. These actions showed that student-teachers developed their autonomy as teachers and as learners to be teachers; they took control not only of the way they taught their

classes but also of their learning to teach the classes. They did not limit themselves to what they decided to do in the classes, but they took their autonomy further to researching and learning how to become better teachers to then demonstrate that learning through the planning and delivery of their classes.

In addition, student-teachers became aware that teachers are not completely autonomous as they are restricted to following a syllabus, using certain books or materials, and following school regulations. That is, the nature of teacher autonomy is not completely related to freedom as teachers must comply with certain restrictions. However, as student-teachers got more practice, they also showed an awareness that regardless of these limitations, the nature of teachers is to find the way to be autonomous as long as they want to and are proactive in the planning and design of their own classes, such as adding, eliminating or modifying content or the programme to have a more effective class in which their students are able to successfully learn.

At the beginning of their practicum, student-teachers did not have much real teaching experience. This made them have a stronger learner identity than teacher identity as they were initially focused on the way they taught the classes to get a good grade. However, as they moved forward in their practicum, student-teachers were recognized by their mentors and by their students, increasing their sense of pride and motivation and thus developing a stronger teacher identity. This positive feedback encouraged them to plan and give better classes and to prepare themselves better, thus, encouraging their learner autonomy as they decided to learn how to be better teachers to keep receiving praise. They saw their mentors as motivation and usually felt free, confident and supported by them to try new strategies in their classes. Their learner autonomy, therefore, had an impact on their teaching autonomy as they decided to learn to be better teachers.

This also happened with those students who had a strong teacher identity but who had a bad mentor. As they saw better results and received a better response from students in terms of participation and discipline when teaching their classes than when their mentors taught, they became motivated to improve their classes to keep having positive feedback from students. These student-teachers wanted to change the image students had of English courses and teachers as they did not want to be perceived as bad and unprepared teachers. Therefore, they also increased their learner autonomy as they looked for ways to learn to be better teachers than their mentors, and this was also reflected in their teacher autonomy in terms of the decisions they made in the classroom.

Student-teachers who held a negative teacher identity also showed an improvement in their teaching autonomy provided that they had a positive learner identity. Student-teachers who

considered themselves good students did not want to get a bad grade in the practicum course even though they did not want to teach. They took advice from their mentors and tried to improve their skills as teachers increasing, therefore, their learner autonomy to find strategies to teach. However, although they took initiative in making decisions of their learning, they limited them to improve their own teaching based on what their mentors told them to do but without considering the needs of their students. That is, their learner autonomy developed more than their teacher autonomy.

The only student-teachers who did not show an improvement in the development of their autonomy (neither learner nor teacher autonomy), were those who held a negative teacher and learner identity. These participants lacked motivation and therefore did not try to improve their teaching skills, thus, they did not take responsibility or control of their teaching nor learning.

 Hence, it can be said that the nature of autonomy changes in student-teachers depending on how strong their teacher and learner identities are. Also, their autonomy changes from being focused on teacher autonomy or learner autonomy only in the early stages of their practicum, to being focused on both learner and teacher autonomy as they get experienced and develop a stronger identity as teachers. That is, student-teachers in this study experienced changes in their identity and autonomy because learning to teach is an on-going process of becoming (Timoštšuk & Ugaste, 2010; Devos, 2010; Varghese et al, 2009; Walkington, 2005).

## 6.2 Conditions for the development of teacher autonomy in student-teachers

According to the information gathered, autonomy can develop in student-teachers during their practicum and it seems to run in parallel with the shaping of theirs identity. In addition, it seems that the main condition for the development of autonomy is to have a strong student or teacher identity, as it was found that the role of mentoring and of context did not seem to have a significant impact on autonomy as long as student-teachers hold a positive view of teaching.

Findings suggest that for autonomy to develop, student-teachers need to have a strong teacher identity. It was found that when student-teachers want and feel motivated to teach, they would try their best to make their students learn. When they seem to have a passion for teaching, they would take initiative to look for extra materials to teach, use the feedback provided by their mentors, supervisors and students to improve their practice, and they would consider students' needs when planning their classes, that is, they would take responsibility for their teaching and for the learning of their students.

In addition, findings show that the role of mentoring and of the context where student-teachers teach, seem to be secondary to the influence of identity for the development of autonomy. Contrary to the claims of Ragins et al (2000) that marginal mentoring has negative effects on the development of autonomy, the student-teachers of this study who had bad mentors did exhibit autonomy when they felt motivated to teach, that is, when they had a positive teacher identity. They took their mentors as models of the kind of teacher they did not want to be and looked for different ways to teach their students to give a positive teaching impression. On the other hand, those participants who had a good mentor but did not have a positive view on teaching or learning did not seem to develop their teacher autonomy as they were not interested or as they were even reluctant to teach. It is worth mentioning that those participants who did not want to teach but who had a positive view of themselves as learners, showed an improvement in their autonomy as they wanted to get a good grade in the practicum course. Findings showed that having a good mentor and a positive view of themselves as learners may help in the development of a neutral or positive view of teaching. Participants in this study got involved in their teaching and developed their autonomy to the point that they changed their perceptions to a positive view of teaching.

Nevertheless, those participants who held a negative view of teaching and of themselves as learners and in addition had a bad mentor were unable to develop their autonomy. They did not make efforts to learn as they were reluctant to teach, and hence, they did not give themselves the opportunity to learn from this experience. Ironically, experienced teachers did not show an improvement in their autonomy either even though they had a positive teacher and learner identity. They were reluctant to take the initiative as they did not want to upset or contradict their mentors. They were not interested in challenging their mentors or experimenting with their practicum classes as they were able to do this at their work with their own groups.

Regarding context, findings do not seem to show any significant impact on the development of student-teachers autonomy. Findings showed that as long as student-teachers hold a positive view of teaching, the context where they teach does not play a role in the ways they take responsibility for their actions.

In conclusion, it seems that the development of autonomy of student-teachers is influenced by a positive view of teaching and that as long as they have a desire to teach, context and mentoring will not significantly influence it. Nevertheless, if student-teachers do not have a positive view of teaching but have a positive view of learning and work with a good mentor, their teacher identity may strengthen, and hence, they could become autonomous as they start developing a liking for teaching.

Therefore, autonomy in student-teachers runs parallel with their identity as both teachers and learners. That is why it is suggested that the term student-teachers could be better represented as learner teachers as the word learner seems to have a wider connotation than the word student. The word *student* seems to have a connotation of an apprentice, which is a needed condition for mentoring. However, it also involves a hierarchy as the mentor is perceived as a superior and it tends to be used when the person is enrolled in an academic degree. Nevertheless, although participants do fit into this description, their mentoring was not limited to this hierarchical, academic-restricted context. Participants experienced mentoring in a process that was not restricted to being enrolled in an academic programme but that was rather experienced through collaboration and support from their mentors, supervisors and even peers to acquire and improve their teaching skills. That is, the relationship trainees – mentor is not restricted to being apprentices that follow orders, but rather a horizontal relationship is formed as both mentor and trainee work in collaboration to design lessons that were effective for the students' learning and for the acquisition of the skill of learning to teach (Ambrosetti & Dekkers, 2010; Lipscomb, 2010; Delaney, 2012; Izadinia, 2015). The word learner, on the other hand, seems to involve these aspects that include academic studying and the efforts made to acquire more knowledge outside the classroom, to understand and reflect on the information learned to then put it into practice to see if it works. It involves the development of teaching and linguistic skills, pedagogical knowledge, sociological, psychological, policy and management awareness (Smith, 2000; Lamb and Simpson, 2003).

Therefore, you can stop studying but you never stop learning. In the case of teachers the concept of learning is more suitable than the one of studying as they are in a constant search for improving their skills and adapting to the contexts and new policies where they teach. Student-teachers are always learning during their practicum, even if they are not studying any theory to improve their skills, hence, the term learner-teachers could be more appropriate than student-teachers in further research.

## 6.3    Contributions and implications of this research

Although this case study shows the perceptions of particular individuals in a northern university in Mexico, it is worth noticing that the four cohorts were studied in different periods of time and that all the student-teachers did their practicum in different contexts and yet similar results were found in terms of their understandings of autonomy, identity and mentoring. Because of this, the findings follow the criteria of transferability by Guba (1981) and Shenton (2004), that is, they can be replicated in similar contexts (see 3.5). After having analysed the results obtained in this thesis, the findings, conclusions and lessons learned can be summarised in the following paragraphs.

**6.3.1     Contributions to the literature on autonomy, identity and mentoring**

Student-teachers seem to have a limited understanding of what autonomy is but they demonstrate it at a deeper level. Student-teachers kept relating autonomy to freedom and independence when asked directly what they understood of it throughout the sixteen weeks of their practicum. However, at the moment of teaching, they demonstrated behaviour that went beyond these two concepts. They began taking responsibility and control for their learning to teach and teaching itself and also for the learning of their students. They also began looking for new ways and strategies to teach as they wanted to be perceived as good teachers. Student-teachers are not experienced teachers as they are too young and just finishing their B.A. programme. Therefore, their awareness of both autonomy and teaching is too simplistic as they have not had time yet to experience full time what is like to teach. This apparently also happens because trainees are still both students and teachers, that is, they are still enrolled at the university, taking different classes, and they are working as teachers just part-time or less (only during their practicum), so they still cannot fully focus on being both autonomous and teachers as they have too many different responsibilities to focus on.

This research attempted to understand how student-teacher autonomy develops as there seems to be a literature gap in this area. It was found that student-teacher autonomy is dynamic as it has characteristics first of learner autonomy and then of teacher autonomy. It changes as their dual identity during their practicum is shaped and re-shaped. As student-teachers in the early stages of their practicum focus on their own learning because they are playing the role of students who are being evaluated in a course, they begin developing their learner autonomy. Therefore, they express autonomous behaviour in the sense that they look for different ways to take control of their learning by observing their mentors, looking for different ones when they need help (other teachers, supervisors, peers or family members with teaching experience), and researching to solve their problems. However, all these actions are carried out with the purpose of student-teachers learning to teach to get a good grade in the course and without considering or focusing on the students they are teaching. They do not feel responsible for their learning yet because students have an English teacher (their mentor) who is the authority in the classroom.

Nevertheless, as they gain experience and move forward in their practicum, their actions, that result from taking control of their learning, make their mentors and students recognise and praise their teaching. This recognition provokes a feeling of pride in the student-teachers that results in a shift to focusing on their teacher autonomy. Once this happens, the student-teachers in this study began taking control of their teaching by looking for different ways to make their students learn as they wanted to keep planning classes that promoted effective learning to keep being

recognised as good teachers as their teacher identity strengthened. Autonomous behaviour exhibited in this stage included looking for different mentors and researching to find better strategies and to design activities that contributed to the active learning of their students.

Student-teacher autonomy can be therefore defined based on the findings of this study, as a dual capacity of taking responsibility and control first of their learning to teach by looking for new strategies and making decisions regarding the improvement of their teaching skills, and then by taking responsibility and control of their teaching, by looking for new strategies and making decisions regarding their teaching in an attempt to improve the learning of their students.

The second gap that this thesis attempted to fill was related to the possible relationship between autonomy, identity and mentoring. In this study, identity played a bigger role than mentoring in the development of the autonomy of student-teachers. Most participants wanted to be teachers, that is, they had a positive and strong teacher identity. However, they experienced differences in the ways they were mentored as student-teachers were assigned to what they considered good and bad mentors. Those trainees who wanted to teach but were mentored by a good teacher, developed their autonomy the most as they felt supported by their mentors in their decisions and they were not afraid to experiment with new strategies and techniques in the classroom. Similarly, those who were mentored by what they considered a bad teacher also developed their autonomy but for different reasons: they did not want to be perceived as the kind of teachers their mentors were. Therefore, they made efforts to design good classes and to be seen as good teachers by their students. Thus, their strong teacher identity allowed their autonomy to develop more than the influence of their mentors.

Nevertheless, good mentors seemed to play an important role in those student-teachers who did not have a positive teacher identity, that is, those who had either a neutral or negative opinion of teaching. In these cases, those who were mentored and supported by good English teachers developed their autonomy as they felt encouraged to teach. In addition, they usually shifted to a positive teacher identity as they realised they could do a good job as teachers. This can show that teaching is a skill that can be learned provided that the person has a positive teacher or learner identity and that is paired with the right mentor.

Hence, given these findings related to the nature and changes of autonomy in student-teachers, it is important that teacher training programmes encourage real teaching practice in trainees. Those student-teachers with a positive teacher and learner identity will not have problems becoming autonomous as they have the drive to become better teachers. Those student-teachers with a positive learner identity but negative teacher identity will also become autonomous as they will try to be good teachers to have a good grade and to keep being considered good students. When

these student-teachers are paired with a good mentor, they are more likely to become autonomous and to re-shape their teacher identity into a positive one, starting a desire to teach because of the positive influence of their mentors.

Nonetheless, results show that special attention must be paid those student-teachers who have negative or weak teacher and learner identities. These trainees are not motivated to teach so it is suggested to pair them with the best mentors to provide them with a positive teaching influence. A good mentor may guide and scaffold student-teachers in hopes to change their attitudes towards teaching and re-shape their identity so that they can develop autonomy. Similarly, it is suggested that those trainees who have teaching experience are assigned in their practicum to schools where they are not given a mentor or, if possible, to contexts different from the ones where they work, to motivate and encourage them to experiment and become active participants in their practicum classes. They need to be challenged to find motivation and to encourage the development of autonomy.

Finally, findings suggest that novice teachers who were mentored seem to have an easier transition into the labour market as well as to have strengthened their identity as teachers and as mentors. Novice teachers who were mentored before becoming mentors themselves tended to be more supportive with their mentees. This seems to be because as they themselves were student-teachers before, they know the fear and anxiety student-teachers experience when teaching for the first time. The two novice teachers that became mentors claimed to be supportive and helpful as they were treating their mentees the way they would have liked to be treated by theirs. In addition, these novice teachers became more autonomous as they were confident to teach their classes because they already had experience in the contexts where they were working (both got a job in the same school where they did their practicum). Therefore, they were not afraid to take responsibility for their own learning and teaching.

### 6.3.2    Implications for teaching practice

After having conducted this research, it seems that the development of autonomy and identity through mentoring in student-teachers during their practicum allows them to learn how to teach more effectively. The impact of having what student-teachers consider to be a good or bad mentor, and the parallel shaping of their identity and autonomy are further discussed.

 Findings suggest that mentoring might help to shape and re-shape the teacher identity of student-teachers. Good mentoring encourages trainees with positive and negative teacher identities to be better teachers and to stay in or enter the profession. Mentors who seemed to have a positive influence in student-teachers were those who showed interest in the professional

practice of the participants. They observed the student-teachers, advised them, guided them and treated them as equals. These mentors trusted their trainees to experiment in their classes by developing their own activities and strategies provided that they followed the curriculum. Moreover, these mentors were also willing to learn from their student-teachers. That is, through the creation of a positive atmosphere and the establishment of a relationship of trust and support with the participants, student-teachers felt confident to experiment at the same time that they developed their teacher autonomy. This confidence, which was also established by the good response obtained from the students, encouraged them to prepare better classes as their sense of pride increased.

 Bad mentoring had a similar effect, as this study shows that it can also encourage the development of autonomy provided that the trainee has a positive teacher identity. When the student-teachers were interested in the profession, they saw their mentors as examples of what not to do in the classroom and, therefore, tried to change their practice to be perceived by the students as different from the way they perceived their mentors. This desire to be a better teacher allowed them to develop their autonomy as they were taking responsibility for their teaching by taking responsibility for their learning: they learned to teach.

These findings corroborate the idea from the literature that careful attention should be paid when choosing mentors. If possible, universities should be able to choose those teachers that show the previous characteristics of support and motivation in their learners, those who have a positive teacher identity and who are autonomous teachers. Nevertheless, it is not always possible to do this as many times the selection of mentors depends on the institutions where student-teachers do their practicum.

If it is not possible to choose the mentors, however, the supervisor of the teaching practicum should make an effort to pair those trainees who already have a positive and strong teacher identity with those teachers who are considered "bad" mentors as this study shows that they do not seem to have a negative impact on them. However, extra attention should be paid to pair those trainees that have a negative teacher identity with good mentors so that they can guide them and, ideally, re-shape their teacher identity to a positive one.

Based on the findings of this study, the B.A. programme that was the focus of this thesis, is already working on the dynamics of the practicum course and on future improvements to the other TESOL courses. Currently, we have been working with the same schools and mentors for approximately four years and we have made efforts to pair student-teachers with a negative teacher identity with those mentors that have more positive comments by previous student-teachers. In addition, we are planning to modify the TESOL courses in the next curriculum re-

design to include tasks that encourage reflection on learner, teacher and student-teacher identity and autonomy.

## 6.4    Limitations of the study, lessons learned and recommendations for future research.

This study was conducted in a period of two-years time (January 2015 to December 2016) with four cohorts of student-teachers. One of the main difficulties was that the TESOL: Practicum class began with the first cohort that participated in this study. This means, it was a brand new course, thus, the programme faced changes during the data collection of this study. Each semester the syllabus was modified to improve the course and the experience of the students. Nevertheless, this study attempted to get an overview of the perceptions of the student-teachers, therefore, the syllabus was not taken into consideration for the development of this study as the focus was on the perceptions of the students rather than on the tasks they did. This means that although the four cohorts of student-teachers were assigned different tasks throughout this research, what was of interest were the perceptions that they had regarding their autonomy, identity and mentoring in their practicum; this was not related to the practicum course assignments.

Another limitation of this study might be that all student-teachers were sent to different contexts. Student-teachers were assigned to different educational levels, from kindergarten to university in both private and public schools. In addition, as mentors did not receive any training, each participant was mentored in different ways as explained in section 1.2. Even though the different contexts where this study was carried out might be seen as a limitation because, as there was no homogeneity in the way mentoring and practicum were conducted, the autonomy and identity of student-teachers might have been affected, it could also be seen as an advantage. The positive aspect of the study being conducted in places with different characteristics is that there were similarities in the results regarding the feelings and perceptions of student-teachers, therefore, results may be generalizable to different contexts.

Despite all these limitations, there were many lessons learned. I learned to analyse teaching from a different point of view. Changing the "switch" from being a teacher trainer to a researcher allowed me to pay closer attention to what was happening in the different classroom contexts where my participants were doing their practicum. I had to allow them to develop their own autonomy and their reflective skills as I was not guiding them into what aspects of their teaching to write to not obtain biased results. I had to observe without interfering in their practice as I had to separate my role of guiding them as a supervisor from my role as a researcher. I learned to see their practice with a more objective lens and I dare to say that I learned to help them become

autonomous teachers while I myself was developing my autonomy not only as a trainer but also as a researcher. Therefore, both my teacher and researcher identities were re-shaped.

In addition, having looked at how I can help my trainees become better teachers has allowed me to change my own teaching practice, as now I am trying to develop their autonomy from the first courses I teach them while I am also trying to encourage and shape a positive teacher identity. This research, thus, allowed me to develop my own autonomy and identity and improve my own teacher and researcher practice through the observation and analysis of these same areas in my participants.

Given the opportunity to do this study again, I would probably use fewer participants to analyse their practice more deeply. That is, I would observe them in their practice besides just getting information from their perspective, this to see if there is congruency between what they say and do. Another thing that I would have liked to do is to have them record all their practice sessions and, during the weekly sessions, play the videos so that they provide feedback to each other and encourage peer-mentoring and self-evaluation.

Based on the results and analysis of the information and on the limitations of the study, it is suggested that to obtain a broader perspective of the impact of practicum in student-teachers with regards to the development and shaping of their teacher autonomy and professional identity through mentoring, a new study is carried out considering and stressing the perceptions of mentors and supervisors. This to have different perspectives on how student-teachers exhibit their autonomy. The opinions of mentors were irrelevant to the present study as the focus was on attempting to contribute to the research literature regarding student-teachers. Nevertheless, it might be of interest to see how mentors feel by having under their supervision student-teachers. This might help to contribute to the literature on the perceptions of mentors and to the literature on teacher autonomy, as mentors are English teachers as well.

Another recommendation for future research is to follow a bigger number of novice teachers to conduct an in-depth study analysing their perceptions. The present study included only the opinions of five novice teachers due to time constraints. However, to understand in a deeper level how practicum affects the performance and the teaching practice of novice teachers, a longitudinal study could be carried out where at least 50% of the student-teachers are followed for at least the first year of being novice teachers. This will allow the researcher to have more generalizable results regarding novice teachers.

# Appendices

This section includes five appendices. Appendix A, Description of the TESOL: Practicum course, shows the description of the TESOL Practicum class to have a better understanding of the nature of the course and of the tasks student-teachers did during the 16 weeks of their practicum. It includes the syllabus given to students of the four cohorts. It also includes the description of the activities that is given to their mentors at the beginning of the semester, where it is explained what student-teachers are expected to do during their practicum.

Appendix B, Practicum schools, presents a chart with information regarding the schools each student-teacher attended, as well as the number of mentors they had and the way they perceived them, and the moment in practicum where they began teaching.

Appendix C, Patterns of autonomy as identified in participants, includes a chart with information regarding the perceptions each student-teacher had of their mentors, if they wanted to teach or not, that is, if they had a positive or negative teacher identity, and the pattern of autonomy identified in the profile of each participant.

Appendix D, Instruments, presents the questions used to collect information for the development of this study. It includes the questionnaires used in phase 1, as well as the model for the interview and the guidelines to complete the journals. It also includes the questions and the Likert-type questionnaire for phase 2.

Finally, Appendix E, NVivo codes, presents a comprehensive list of the 74 codes that emerged during the analysis of the information of the present study. They fall into the three main areas of this study: autonomy, identity, and mentoring.

# Appendix A      Description of the TESOL: Practicum course

**1. Syllabus description:**
**COHORTS 1 and 2 (2015)**
Course: TESOL: Practicum
Semester: 9<sup>th</sup>, August- December 2015
Instructors: Lizette Flores, Cecilia Villarreal and Paola Cancino.
E-mail: drusilaf@yahoo.com, avillare@uach.mx , paolacancino@hotmail.com
**1. Course Description:**

The main goal of the practicum course is the development of a reflective, well-informed and practice-based philosophy of teaching and learning of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). This course provides teachers in training who are planning to teach English in different contexts and types of schools with an opportunity to interact, observe and perform with teachers and students in a real classroom. Practicum students will acquire an understanding of the complexity of English teaching, including the challenges confronting teachers, students, and institutions, as well as the resources available to deal with these challenges.

Students will engage in: extensive reading about teaching topics, focused classroom observation of teachers, class discussions, written assignments and several in-school practicum sessions. This course is set up as an independent study; you will manage your activities and provide documentation of your teaching activities, as well as complete observations and organize materials. Practicum students are encouraged to ask questions. This course seeks to prepare these students for student teaching and the professional and personal challenges of teaching.

**2. Objectives and competencies:**
Students will:
- Observe other teachers and their pedagogical practices and identify a central focus/theme; strategies used to accomplish lesson goals and how those practices impact language acquisition and pedagogy.
- Write and reflect on their experiences during group visits and their in-school practicum through one-page journals and reflection papers.
- Design lesson plans suitable for the context in which practice takes place.
- Develop a statement of teaching philosophy, articulate a view on teaching and assist in professional preparation.
- Work well with other teachers in a team environment
- Move from the realm of student into the realm of beginning professional, with a sense of the contribution of their services to learners and to the profession as a whole.

**3. Basic Texts**
Bailey, K, Curtis, A and Nunan, D. (2001) *Pursuing Professional Development: the Self as Source*, Heinle & Heinle.
Gower, R., Phillips,  D., and Walters, S. (2005). *Teaching Practice. a Handbook for Teachers in Training*. McMillan.
Wallace, M. (1991). Training Foreign Language Teachers: A Reflective Approach. UK: Cambridge University Press.

**4. Course requirements and evaluation.**
Observation tasks (12)          35%
Practice tasks (5)          35%
Portfolio          10%
Journals          10%
Lesson plans          10%

**5. Tentative Course Schedule and Tasks**

| Semester progress | Topics and Tasks | Assignments to hand in |
|---|---|---|
| Week 1: Aug 10 -15 | Introduction to the practicum course | |
| Week 2: Aug 17 - 22 | Assignment of schools | Teaching philosophy-first draft |
| Week 3: Aug 24 – 29 | OBSERVATION TASKS Complete: <br> • Class Profile <br> • Teacher's Action Zone <br> • Conditions for learning | Curriculum vitae |
| Week 4: Aug 31- Sept 5 | OBSERVATION TASKS Complete: <br> • Classroom Dynamics <br> • Giving instructions | • Class Profile <br> • Teacher's Action Zone <br> • Conditions for learning <br> • Diary entry |
| Week 5: Sept 7 – 12 | OBSERVATION TASKS Complete: <br> • The teacher's questions <br> • Wait time | • Classroom Dynamics <br> • Giving instructions <br> • Diary entry |
| Week 6: Sept 14 – 19 | OBSERVATION TASKS Complete: <br> • Pacing <br> • Unplanned classroom language | • The teacher's questions <br> • Wait time <br> • Diary entry |
| Week 7: Sept 21 – 26 | OBSERVATION TASKS Complete: <br> • The use of the mother tongue <br> • Accuracy and fluency | • Pacing <br> • Unplanned classroom language <br> • Diary entry |
| Week 8: Sept 28 – Oct 3 | OBSERVATION TASKS Complete: <br> • Blackboard work <br> • Oral correction techniques | • The use of the mother tongue <br> • Accuracy and fluency <br> • Diary entry |
| Week 9: Oct 5 - 10 | PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASKS Complete: <br> • General impressions of your teaching and use of voice | • Blackboard work <br> • Oral correction techniques <br> • Diary entry |
| Week 10: Oct 12 – 17 | PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASKS Complete: <br> • Giving instructions | • Lesson plan <br> • Lesson plan adapted after lesson <br> • General impressions/ voice <br> • Diary entry |

| | | • Video |
|---|---|---|
| Week 11:<br>Oct 19 – 24 | PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASK<br><br>Complete:<br>* Wait time and Teacher Questions | • Lesson plan<br>• Lesson plan adapted after lesson<br>• Giving instructions<br>• Diary entry<br>• Video |
| Week 12:<br>Oct 26 – 31 | SEMANA DEL HUMANISMO<br><br>PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASK<br><br>Complete:<br>* Blackboard Work | • Lesson plan<br>• Lesson plan adapted after lesson<br>• Wait time and Teacher Questions<br>• Diary entry<br>• Video |
| Week 13:<br>Nov 2 – 7 | PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASK<br><br>Complete:<br>* Oral correction techniques | • Lesson plan<br>• Lesson plan adapted after lesson<br>• Blackboard work<br>• Diary entry<br>• Video |
| Week 14:<br>Nov 9 – 14 | PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASK | • Lesson plan<br>• Lesson plan adapted after lesson<br>• Oral correction techniques<br>• Diary entry<br>• Video |
| Week 15:<br>Nov 16 – 21 | FINAL TASKS | • 2nd teaching philosophy<br>• Self-evaluation<br>• Students' feedback<br>• Final reflections |

**COHORT 3 (January – June 2016)**
Course: TESOL: Practicum
Semester: 9<sup>th</sup>, Spring 2016
Instructors: Lizette Flores and Paola Cancino
E-mail: drusilaf@yahoo.com, paolacancino@yahoo.com

**1. Course Description:**

The main goal of the practicum course is the development of a reflective, well-informed and practice-based philosophy of teaching and learning of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). This course provides teachers in training who are planning to teach English in different contexts and types of schools with an opportunity to interact, observe and perform with teachers and students in a real classroom. Practicum students will acquire an understanding of the complexity of English teaching, including the challenges confronting teachers, students, and institutions, as well as the resources available to deal with these challenges.

Students will engage in: extensive reading about teaching topics, focused classroom observation of teachers, class discussions, written assignments and several in-school practicum sessions. This course is set up as an independent study; you will manage your activities and provide documentation of your teaching activities, as well as complete observations and organize materials. Practicum students are encouraged to ask questions. This course seeks to prepare these students for student teaching and the professional and personal challenges of teaching.

**2. Objectives and competencies:**
Students will:
- Observe other teachers and their pedagogical practices and identify a central focus/theme, strategies used to accomplish lesson goals, and how those practices impact language acquisition and pedagogy.
- Write and reflect on their experiences during group visits and their in-school practicum through one-page journals and reflection papers.
- Design lesson plans suitable for the context in which practice takes place.
- Develop a statement of teaching philosophy, articulate a view on teaching and assist in professional preparation.
- Work well with other teachers in a team environment
- Move from the realm of student into the realm of beginning professional, with a sense of the contribution of their services to learners and to the profession as a whole.

**3. Basic Texts**
Bailey, K, Curtis, A and Nunan, D. (2001) *Pursuing Professional Development: the Self as Source*, Heinle & Heinle.
Gower, R., Phillips, D., and Walters, S. (2005). *Teaching Practice. a Handbook for Teachers in Training*. McMillan.
Wallace, M. (1991). Training Foreign Language Teachers: A Reflective Approach. UK: Cambridge University Press.

**4. Course requirements and evaluation.**
Observation tasks(12)          35%
Practice tasks (5)             35%
Portfolio                      10%
Journals                       10%
Lesson plans                   10%
       **Tentative Course Schedule and Tasks**

| Semester progress | Topics and Tasks | Assignments to hand in |
|---|---|---|
| Week 1: Jan 25 - 30 | Introduction to the practicum course | |
| Week 2: Feb 1 - 6 | Assignment of schools | • Teaching philosophy-first draft |
| Week 3: Feb 8 - 13 | OBSERVATION TASKS<br>Complete:<br>• Class Profile<br>• Teacher's Action Zone<br>• Conditions for learning | • Curriculum vitae<br>• Diary entry 1: Expectations |
| Week 4: Feb 15 - 20 | OBSERVATION TASKS<br>Complete:<br>• Giving instructions | • Class Profile<br>• Teacher's Action Zone<br>• Conditions for learning<br>• Diary entry |
| Week 5: Feb 22 - 27 | OBSERVATION TASKS<br>Complete:<br>• The teacher's questions | • Classroom Dynamics<br>• Giving instructions<br>• Diary entry |
| Week 6: Feb 29 – March 5 | OBSERVATION TASKS<br>Complete:<br>• Unplanned classroom language | • The teacher's questions<br>• Wait time<br>• Diary entry |
| Week 7: March 7 - 12 | OBSERVATION TASKS<br>Complete:<br>• The use of the mother tongue<br>• Accuracy and fluency | • Pacing<br>• Unplanned classroom language<br>• Diary entry |
| Week 8: March 14 - 19 | OBSERVATION TASKS<br>Complete:<br>• Blackboard work<br>• Oral correction techniques | • The use of the mother tongue<br>• Accuracy and fluency<br>• Diary entry |
| | **SPRING BREAK MARCH 20th – APRIL 3rd** | |
| Week 9: April 4 - 9 | PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASKS<br>Complete:<br>• General impressions of your teaching and use of voice | • Blackboard work<br>• Oral correction techniques<br>• Diary entry |
| Week 10: April 11 - 16 | PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASKS<br>Complete:<br>• Giving instructions (beginning of practicum) | • Lesson plan<br>• Lesson plan adapted after lesson<br>• General impressions/ voice<br>• Diary entry<br>• Video |
| Week 11: April 18 - 23 | PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASK<br><br>Complete:<br>* Wait time and Teacher Questions | • Lesson plan<br>• Lesson plan adapted after lesson<br>• Giving instructions<br>• Diary entry<br>• Video |
| Week 12: April 25 - 30 | SEMANA DEL HUMANISMO<br><br>PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION | • Lesson plan<br>• Lesson plan adapted after lesson<br>• Wait time and Teacher Questions |

| | TASK

Complete:
* Blackboard Work | • Diary entry<br>• Video |
|---|---|---|
| Week 13:<br>May 2 - 7 | PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASK

Complete:
• Oral correction techniques
• Giving instructions (end of practicum) | • Lesson plan<br>• Lesson plan adapted after lesson<br>• Blackboard work<br>• Diary entry<br>• Video |
| Week 14:<br>May 9 - 14 | PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASK | • Lesson plan<br>• Lesson plan adapted after lesson<br>• Oral correction techniques<br>• Giving instructions<br>• Diary entry<br>• Video |
| Week 15:<br>May 16 - 21 | FINAL TASKS | • 2nd teaching philosophy<br>• Self-evaluation |
| Week 16:<br>May 23 - 28 | FINAL TASKS | • Students' feedback<br>• Final reflections |

**COHORT 4 (August – December 2016)**
Course: TESOL: Practicum
Semester: 9th, Fall 2016
Instructors: Ana Cecilia Villarreal, Lizette Flores.
**1. Course Description:**

The main goal of the practicum course is the development of a reflective, well-informed and practice-based philosophy of teaching and learning of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). This course provides teachers in training who are planning to teach English in different contexts and types of schools with an opportunity to interact, observe and perform with teachers and students in a real classroom. Practicum students will acquire an understanding of the complexity of English teaching, including the challenges confronting teachers, students, and institutions, as well as the resources available to deal with these challenges.

Students will engage in: extensive reading about teaching topics, focused classroom observation of teachers, class discussions, written assignments and several in-school practicum sessions. This course is set up as an independent study; you will manage your activities and provide documentation of your teaching activities, as well as complete observations and organize materials. Practicum students are encouraged to ask questions. This course seeks to prepare these students for student teaching and the professional and personal challenges of teaching.

**2. Objectives and competencies:**
Students will:
• Observe other teachers and their pedagogical practices and identify a central focus/theme, strategies used to accomplish lesson goals, and how those practices impact language acquisition and pedagogy.

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- Write and reflect on their experiences during group visits and their in-school practicum through one-page journals and reflection papers.
- Design lesson plans suitable for the context in which practice takes place.
- Develop a statement of teaching philosophy, articulate a view on teaching and assist in professional preparation.
- Work well with other teachers in a team environment
- Move from the realm of student into the realm of beginning professional, with a sense of the contribution of their services to learners and to the profession as a whole.

**3. Basic Texts**

Bailey, K, Curtis, A and Nunan, D. (2001) *Pursuing Professional Development: the Self as Source*, Heinle & Heinle.

Gower, R., Phillips, D., and Walters, S. (2005). *Teaching Practice. a Handbook for Teachers in Training*. McMillan.

Wallace, M. (1991). Training Foreign Language Teachers: A Reflective Approach. UK: Cambridge University Press.

**4. Course requirements and evaluation.**

| | |
|---|---|
| Observation and Practice tasks | 50% |
| Lesson plans, video, journals | 15% |
| Supervisor observations | 15% |
| Attendance* | 10% |
| Final Portfolio | 10% |

**5. Tentative Course Schedule and Tasks**

| Semester progress | Topics and Tasks | Assignments to hand in |
|---|---|---|
| **Week 1**<br>**August 14 – 18** | Introduction to the practicum course and assignment of schools | * Curriculum Vitae |
| **Week 2**<br>**August 21 -25** | First school visit<br>Planning a lesson | • Teaching philosophy 1<br>• Lesson plans<br>• Diary entry 1: Expectations |
| **Week 3**<br>**Aug 28 – Sept 1** | OBSERVATION TASKS<br>• Class Profile<br>• Conditions for learning | • Class Profile<br>• Conditions for learning<br>• Diary entry |
| **Week 4**<br>**September 4 - 8** | OBSERVATION TASKS<br>Complete:<br>• Teacher's action zone<br>• Giving instructions | • Teacher's action zone<br>• Giving instructions<br>Diary entry |
| **Week 5**<br>**September 11 - 15** | OBSERVATION TASKS<br>The use of the mother tongue | • The use of the mother tongue<br>Diary entry |
| **Week 6**<br>**September 18 - 22** | OBSERVATION TASKS<br>Blackboard work | • Blackboard work<br>• Diary entry |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Week 7**<br>**September 25 - 29** | OBSERVATION TASKS<br>Classroom management and discipline | • Classroom management and discipline<br>• Diary entry |
| **Week 8**<br>**October 2 - 6** | OBSERVATION TASKS<br>Promoting language use and communication | • Promoting language use and communication<br>Diary entry |
| **Week 9**<br>**October 9 - 13** | PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASKS<br>   General impressions of your teaching and use of voice | • General impressions of your teaching and use of voice<br>• Diary entry<br>• Lesson plan<br>• Video |
| **Week 10:**<br>**October 16 - 20** | PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASKS<br>•   Teacher's action-zone | • Teacher's action zone<br>• Diary entry<br>• Lesson plan<br>Video |
| **Week 11**<br>**October 23 - 27** | PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASK<br>   * Giving instructions | • Giving instructions<br>• Diary entry<br>• Lesson plan<br>• Video |
| **Week 12**<br>**October 30 – Nov 3** | PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASK<br>* Use of the mother tongue | • Use of the mother tongue<br>• Diary entry<br>• Lesson plan<br>Video |
| **Week 13**<br>**November 6 - 10** | **SEMANA DEL HUMANISMO**<br>PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASK<br>     * Blackboard work | • Blackboard work<br>• Diary entry<br>• Lesson plan<br>Video |
| **Week 14**<br>**November 13 - 17** | PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASK<br>   *Classroom management and discipline | • Classroom management and discipline<br>• Diary entry<br>• Lesson plan<br>Video |
| **Week 15**<br>**November 20 - 24** | PRACTICE AND SELF-OBSERVATION TASK<br>•   *Promoting Language Use and Communication | • Promoting language use and communication<br>• Diary entry<br>• Lesson plan<br>Video |

| Week 16 Nov 27 – 30 | FINAL TASKS | • Self-evaluation <br> • Students' feedback <br> • Final reflections (including 2$^{nd}$ teaching philosophy) |
| --- | --- | --- |

### 2. Student teacher activities

The student teacher must:

- Attend to their practicum in the schedule given during the present school term. During the first half of the semester they will have to **observe** their mentors and during the second one they will have to **teach** the English class.
  - The practicum course is scheduled on Tuesdays between 8am and 2pm, unless an alternative schedule is negotiated between the student teacher and the mentor.
  - They should practice between 3 and 5 hours a week.
  - The mentor must sign the attendance record every class.
- Complete all the observation and practice tasks given during the semester.
- Participate with and support the mentor in the classroom with activities, classroom management, etc.
- Teach and plan classes according to the requirements and guidelines given by their mentors. They should hand in the lesson plan at least one day before the class, and the mentor has to sign it to show that s/he approves it.
- Meet with their supervisors once a week to discuss their experience during their practicum.

<table>
<tr><td>_____</td><td>_____</td></tr>
<tr><td align="center">MENTOR</td><td align="center">STUDENT TEACHER</td></tr>
</table>

# Appendix B    Practicum schools

| Cohort | Participant | School | Perception of mentors | Moment in practicum when they began teaching |
|--------|-------------|--------|----------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| 1 | Alma (AM) | School 1 Private, kindergarten | 1 – Negative | Middle |
| 1 | Armando (AG) | School 2 Private, elementary | 1 - Positive | Beginning- some activities |
| 1 | Cristina (CM) | School 3, Public, high school | No mentor | Beginning |
| 1 | Fanny (FB) | School 2 Private, kindergarten | 2 – Good / Bad | Beginning- some activities |
| 1 | Gisela (GP) | School 3 Public, high school | No mentor | Beginning |
| 1 | Liliana (LC) | School 1 Private, secondary | 1 – Bad | Middle |
| 1 | Marco (ML) | School 3 Public, high school | No mentor | Beginning |
| 1 | Patricia (PC) | School 1 Private, secondary | 1 - Bad | Beginning – some activities |
| 1 | Sonia (SH) | School 3 Public, high school | No mentor | Beginning |
| 1 | Tina (TC) | School 3 Public, high school | 1 - Good | Beginning |
| 1 | Verónica (VA) | School 1 Private, elementary | 1 - Good | Middle |
| 2 | Adela (AE) | School 7 Language centre | 3 – Good/ Good/Bad | Middle |
| 2 | Alice (AO) | School 5 Public, high school | 1 – Good | Middle |
| 2 | Annalisa (AG) | School 7 Language centre | 3 – Good | Middle |
| 2 | Bertha (BD) | School 6 Public, secondary | 1 –Bad | Beginning – Some activities |
| 2 | Brenda (BI) | School 7 Language centre | 3 – Bad /Good/Good | Middle |
| 2 | Brianna (BC) | School 7 Language centre | 3 – Good | Middle |

| 2 | Cindy (CC) | School 4<br>Private, elementary | 1 - Bad | Middle |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Dalia (DG) | School 3<br>Public, high school | 1 - Bad | Beginning |
| 2 | Enrique (EE) | School 7<br>Language centre | 3 - Good | Middle |
| 2 | Esther (EP) | School 5<br>Public, high school | 1 - Good | Beginning- Some activities |
| 2 | Gina (GL) | School 6<br>Public, secondary | 1 - Good | Middle |
| 2 | Guillermo (GV) | School 5<br>Public, high school | 1 - Good | Middle |
| 2 | Jaime (JC) | School 9<br>Public, high school | 2 – Bad / Good | Middle |
| 2 | Joaquin (JA) | School 9<br>Public, high school | 1 - Good | Middle |
| 2 | Jonathan (JL) | School 8<br>Private, elementary | 2 – Good /Bad | Middle |
| 2 | Karina (KH) | School 4<br>Private, elementary | 1 – Good | Middle |
| 2 | Karla (KC) | School 8<br>Private, elementary | 1 – Bad | Beginning – Some activities |
| 2 | Keila (KL) | School 4<br>Private, elementary | 1 – Bad | Beginning – Some activities |
| 2 | Kenia (KE) | School 7<br>Language centre | 3 – Good /Bad/ Good | Beginning – Some activities |
| 2 | Lucía  (LL) | School 7<br>Language centre | 3 – Good | Middle |
| 2 | Luisa (LP) | School 5<br>Public, high school | 1 – Good | Beginning – Some activities |
| 2 | Marcia (MS) | School 6<br>Public, secondary | 1 – Bad | Beginning – Some activities |
| 2 | Mariana (MC) | School 4<br>Private, elementary | 2 – Good / Bad | Middle |
| 2 | Marina (MR) | School 4<br>Private, elementary | 2 – Good | Beginning – Some activities |
| 2 | Norma (NR) | School 4<br>Private, elementary | 2 – Good | Middle |
| 3 | Andrea (AO) | School 5 | 1 - Good | Middle |

| | | Public, high school | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3 | Celia (CP) | School 5<br>Public, high school | 1 - Good | Middle |
| 3 | Elena (EH) | School 8<br>Private, elementary | 1 - Bad | Middle |
| 3 | Jorge (JO) | School 6<br>Public, secondary | 1 - Bad | Beginning – Some activities |
| 3 | Josias (JT) | School 7<br>Language centre | 1 - Good | Middle |
| 3 | Larissa (LM) | School 3<br>Public, high school | 1 - Good | Beginning |
| 3 | Lisa (LR) | School 7<br>Language centre | 3 – Good/Bad/Good | Middle |
| 3 | Myrna (MA) | School 7<br>Language centre | 3 – Good/Good/Bad | Beginning – Some activities |
| 3 | Paula (PB) | School 8<br>Private, elementary | 2 – Good/Bad | Middle |
| 3 | Sandy (SS) | School 6<br>Public, secondary | 1 – Good | Beginning – Some activities |
| 3 | Tamara (TF) | School 4<br>Private, elementary | 2 – Good/Bad | Middle |
| 3 | Victoria (VF) | School 8<br>Private, elementary | 1 - Bad | Beginning – Some activities |
| 4 | Ada (AF) | School 8<br>Private, elementary | 1 – Good | Middle |
| 4 | Alan (AZ) | School 6<br>Public, secondary | 1 – Good | Beginning – Some activities |
| 4 | Braulio (BG) | School 8<br>Private, elementary | 1 – Bad | Beginning - Some activities |
| 4 | Dario (DM) | School 7<br>Language centre | 2 – Good | Middle |
| 4 | Derek (DP) | School 7<br>Language centre | 3 – Good | Middle |
| 4 | Diana (DA) | School 4<br>Private, elementary | 2 – Good/ Bad | Beginning – Some activities |
| 4 | Elsa (EO) | School 4<br>Private, elementary | 2 – Bad/ Good | Beginning – Some activities |
| 4 | Ernesto (EF) | School 6<br>Public, secondary | 1 – Bad | Beginning – Some activities |

| 4 | Ivan (IV) | School 8 Private, elementary | 1 – Good | Beginning – Some activities |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | Josue (JD) | School 8 Private, elementary | 2 – Bad/ Good | Middle |
| 4 | Mary (MR) | School 4 Private, elementary | 1 – Good | Middle |
| 4 | Melissa (MG) | School 7 Language centre | 3 – Bad / Good/ Good | Middle |
| 4 | Rebecca (RC) | School 7 Language centre | 3- Bad/Bad/Good | Beginning- Some activities |
| 4 | Rosie (RL) | School 8 Private, elementary | 2 – Good/Bad | Middle |
| 4 | Salma (SM) | School 6 Public, secondary | 1- Bad | Middle |
| 4 | Susana (SH) | School 4 Private, elementary | 2 – Good/Bad | Beginning – Some activities |
| 4 | Viridiana (VT) | School 8 Private, elementary | 2 – Bad/Good | Middle |

Table Key:

- School 1: Private Catholic kindergarten, elementary and secondary school. Students age range: 4 – 15 years old. Groups of 10 – 30 students. Bilingual school with EFL classes and other courses (e.g. Biology, reading, geography, etc.) given in English. Modern classrooms with a whiteboard, projector, blinds, speakers and a computer. In English curricular courses there is little to no use of Spanish as English is the main means of instruction and students are proficient.

- School 2: Private Protestant kindergarten, elementary and secondary school. Students age range: 4 – 15 years old. Groups of 10 – 20 students. Bilingual school with EFL classes and other courses (e.g. Biology, reading, geography, etc.) given in English. Modern classrooms with a whiteboard, projector, blinds, speakers and a computer. In English curricular courses there is little to no use of Spanish as English is the main means of instruction and students are proficient.

- School 3: Public, technical high school. Students age range: 14 – 18 years old. Groups of 35 – 50 students. Classrooms are equipped with two whiteboards and a projector; teachers need to take their own laptop and the institution can provide them with speakers. They offer EFL classes and have a conversational group for those students who are already proficient in the language. In EFL courses there tends to be a mixture between the use of English and Spanish

because students' level varies from beginner to intermediate. In conversational courses English is the means of instruction.

- School 4: Private, kindergarten, elementary and secondary school. Students age range: 4 - 15 years old. Groups of 15 – 30 students. Classrooms equipped with a whiteboard, blinds and a projector; teachers need to take their laptop and speakers. EFL courses and reading courses in English; both courses use English as the main means of instruction but teachers sometimes use Spanish too.

- School 5: Public high school. Students age range: 14 – 18 years old. Groups of 40 – 50 students. Classrooms equipped with two whiteboards, blinds and a projector; teachers need to take their laptop and speakers. EFL courses, 3 days a week with a duration of 50 minutes each session. Courses are taught using a mixture of English and Spanish, being the mother tongue the main means of instruction.

- School 6: Public secondary school. Students age range: 12 – 15 years old. Groups of 30 – 45 students. Classrooms equipped with two whiteboards, blinds and a projector; teachers need to take their laptop and the institution can provide them with speakers. EFL courses, 3 days a week with a duration of 50 minutes each session. Courses are taught using a mixture of English and Spanish, being the mother tongue the main means of instruction.

- School 7: University's Language Centre. Students age range: 12 years old and up. Groups of 5 – 20 students. Classrooms are equipped with a whiteboard, a projector, a computer, speakers and blinds. EFL courses with different groups for teenagers and adults, with duration of 40 hours each module. Weekly courses are of 2 hours a day sessions (from Monday to Friday) during 4 weeks, while Saturday courses are of 5-hour sessions during 8 Saturdays. Courses are taught using English mainly but some teachers use Spanish too.

- School 8: Private Daycare, Kindergarten, elementary and secondary school. Students age range: 2 – 15 years old. Groups of 10 – 30 students. EFL courses, an hour three days a week (daycare and kindergarten) and of three hours in a row sessions two days a week (elementary and secondary school). English is the main means of instruction but teachers sometimes use Spanish too.

- School 9: Public high school. Students age range: 14 – 18 years old. Groups of 40 – 50 students. Classrooms equipped with two whiteboards, blinds and a projector; teachers need to take their laptop and speakers. EFL courses, 3 days a week with a duration of 50 minutes each session. Courses are taught using a mixture of English and Spanish, being the mother tongue the main means of instruction.

# Appendix CPatterns of autonomy as identified in participants

| Cohort | Pseudonym | Perceptions of Mentor as role model | Wants to teach? | Pattern of autonomy |
|--------|-----------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| 1 | Alma (AM) | 1 – Negative | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 1 | Armando (AG) | 1 - Positive | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 1 | Cristina (CM) | No mentor | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 1 | Fany (FB) | 2 – Good / Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 1 | Gisela (GP) | No mentor | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 1 | Liliana (LC) | 1 – Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 1 | Marco (ML) | No mentor | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 1 | Patricia (PC) | 1 - Bad | No | +LI −TI -M = -TI éA |
| 1 | Sonia (SH) | No mentor | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 1 | Tina (TC) | 1 - Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 1 | Verónica (VA) | 1 - Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 2 | Adela (AE) | 3 – Good/Good/Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 2 | Alice (AO) | 1 – Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 2 | Annalisa (AG) | 3 – Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 2 | Bertha (BD) | 1 –Bad | No | -TI +LI = NoA |
| 2 | Brenda (BI) | 3 – Bad/Good/Good | No | +LI −TI +M = +TI éA |
| 2 | Brianna (BC) | 3 – Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 2 | Cindy (CC) | 1 - Bad | No | +LI −TI +M = +TI éA |
| 2 | Dalia (DG) | 1 - Bad | No | +LI −TI -M = -TI éA |
| 2 | Enrique (EE) | 3 - Good | No | +TI −LI = NoA |
| 2 | Esther (EP) | 1 - Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 2 | Gina (GL) | 1 - Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 2 | Guillermo (GV) | 1 - Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 2 | Jaime (JC) | 2 – Bad / Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 2 | Joaquin (JA) | 1 - Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 2 | Jonathan (JL) | 2 – Good /Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |

| 2 | Karina (KH) | 1 – Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | Karla (KC) | 1 – Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 2 | Keila (KL) | 1 – Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 2 | Kenia (KE) | 3 – Good /Bad/ Good | No | +LI −TI +M = +TI éA |
| 2 | Lucía  (LL) | 3 – Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 2 | Luisa (LP) | 1 – Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 2 | Marcia (MS) | 1 – Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 2 | Mariana (MC) | 2 – Good / Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 2 | Marina (MR) | 2 – Good | No | +LI −TI +M = +TI éA |
| 2 | Norma (NR) | 2 – Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 3 | Andrea (AO) | 1 - Good | Yes | +TI −LI = NoA |
| 3 | Celia (CP) | 1 - Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 3 | Elena (EH) | 1 - Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 3 | Jorge (JO) | 1 - Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 3 | Josias (JT) | 1 - Good | No | -TI −LI = NoA |
| 3 | Larissa (LM) | 1 - Good | No | +LI −TI +M = +TI éA |
| 3 | Lisa (LR) | 3 – Good/Bad/Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 3 | Myrna (MA) | 3 – Good/Good/ Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 3 | Paula (PB) | 2 – Good/Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 3 | Sandy (SS) | 1 – Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 3 | Tamara (TF) | 2 – Good/Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 3 | Victoria (VF) | 1 - Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 4 | Ada (AF) | 1 – Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 4 | Alan (AZ) | 1 – Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 4 | Braulio (BG) | 1 – Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 4 | Dario (DM) | 2 – Good | No | +LI −TI +M = +TI éA |
| 4 | Derek (DP) | 3 – Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 4 | Diana (DA) | 2 – Good/ Bad | No | +LI −TI +M = +TI éA |
| 4 | Elsa (EO) | 2 – Bad/ Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 4 | Ernesto (EF) | 1 – Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |

| 4 | Ivan (IV) | 1 – Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
|---|-----------|----------|-----|----------------|
| 4 | Josue (JD) | 2 – Bad/ Good | No | +LI –TI -M = -TI éA |
| 4 | Mary (MR) | 1 – Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 4 | Melissa (MG) | 3 – Bad / Good/ Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 4 | Rebecca (RC) | 3- Bad/Bad/Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 4 | Rosie (RL) | 2 – Good/Bad | Yes | +LI –TI -M = -TI éA |
| 4 | Salma (SM) | 1- Bad | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |
| 4 | Susana (SH) | 2 – Good/Bad | Yes | +LI –TI -M = -TI éA |
| 4 | Viridiana (VT) | 2 – Bad/Good | Yes | +T/LI = éL/TA |

Chart key:

- A: Autonomy

- NoA: Lack of development of autonomy

- TA: Teacher autonomy

- LA: Learner autonomy

- éA: Improvement in autonomy

- TI: Teacher identity

- LI: Learner identity

- +: Positive perception

- -: Negative perception

- +M: Positive perception of mentor

- -M: Negative perception of mentor

# Appendix D     Instruments

**1. Phase 1 Novice teachers instruments**

**Exploration of learner teacher autonomy and professional identity through mentoring: A case study of ESOL learner teachers and novice teachers**

<u>**INSTRUMENT I: Questionnaires**</u>

**PRE- PRACTICUM QUESTIONNAIRE**

(To be answered before the participants start their practicum)**.**

**I. Please answer the following questions as complete as possible.**

IDENTITY

- Why did you decide to become a teacher?
- How do you see yourself as a teacher? What/who influenced you to imagine yourself in this way?
- How do you expect the classes you will observe to be? Describe your ideal classroom (students, facilities, materials, etc.)
- For you, what is professional identity?
- According to your definition, how would you describe your professional identity?

AUTONOMY

- What is teacher autonomy for you? How can a teacher be autonomous in the classroom?
- What is learner autonomy for you? How can a learner be autonomous in the classroom?
- How important is autonomy in teaching and learning? Why?
- Do you consider yourself autonomous? In what ways?

MENTORING

- Define "mentor".
- During your practicum, who do you think will be your mentor(s)?
- What do you expect to learn from your mentor?
- How do you expect your relationship with your mentor to be?

**MID-PRACTICUM QUESTIONNAIRE 2**

(To be answered during the participants' observation phase of their practicum)**.**

**I. Please answer the following questions as complete as possible.**

MENTORING AND IDENTITY

- What have you learned from observing your mentor?
- Before your practicum you were asked about what you expected to learn from your mentor. Now that you have observed him, how were your assumptions challenged by the environment where you conducted your practicum?
- What have you learned from your mentor? What did you like? What you didn't like?
- Describe your relationship with your mentor. Is it friendly? Is it professional? Do you feel confident with him/her? Why? Etc…
- What do you consider you still need to learn from your mentor?
- In what ways have you changed your perceptions about teaching based on what you observed?
- After having observed your mentor, what is professional identity for you?

- At this point, how would you describe your professional identity?

MENTORING AND AUTONOMY

- At this point, what is teacher autonomy for you?
- At this point, what is learner autonomy for you?
- In what ways is your mentor autonomous in the classroom?
- In what ways are the students autonomous in the classroom?
- In what ways are you are autonomous learner at this point?
- How important is autonomy in teaching and learning and why?

MENTORING:

- Who has/have been your mentor(s) so far?
- Have you turn to a mentor different from the English teacher mentor for guidance? What kind of guidance did you receive and from whom?
- So far, what is your relationship with the English teacher mentor like?
- Has your relationship with your mentor affected your views on teaching? In what ways?

**AFTER-PRACTICUM QUESTIONNAIRE**

(To be answered at the end of the participants' practicum)**.**

**I. Please answer the following questions as complete as possible.**

IDENTITY:

- After having taught a real English class during your practicum, how do you see yourself as a teacher now?
- In what ways have your perceptions about teaching changed after doing your practicum?
- What is professional identity for you?
- How would you describe your professional identity?
- Complete this sentence with 1 to 3 words:
  I'm a _____ teacher.

AUTONOMY:

- What is teacher/learner autonomy for you?
- In what ways were you autonomous?
- In what ways were your learners autonomous?
- How important is autonomy in teaching and learning? Why?

MENTORING:

- Who was/were your mentor(s) during all your practicum?
- Did you turn to a mentor different from the English teacher mentor for guidance? What kind of guidance did you receive and from whom?
- How was your relationship with the English teacher mentor like?
- How did your relationship with your mentor affect your views on teaching?

MENTORING, IDENTITY AND AUTONOMY:

- In what ways did your mentor affect your views on teaching?
- In what ways did your mentor affect your views on how a teacher should be?
- How did you feel being mentored?
- In what ways did your mentor shape your professional identity?
- In what ways did the practicum experience shape your professional identity?
- In what ways did your mentor shape your autonomy?
- In what ways did the practicum experience shape your autonomy?

**INSTRUMENT 2: SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW:**

The questions were developed based on the participants' responses to the questionnaires. The following are examples of such questions:

- What is an ideal classroom for you?
- How do you see yourself as a teacher?
- Describe your relationship with your mentor.
- Based on your interaction with your mentor and with your students, in what ways have your perceptions of teaching changed through your practicum?
- What influence has your mentor had on you? And your students?
- Do you consider yourself an autonomous learner? And an autonomous teacher? In what ways?

**INSTRUMENT 3: Guidelines to write the journal entries.**

| Diary entry: | Reflect on: |
|---|---|
| FIRST (Before Practicum) | • What is the image of the ideal teacher for you?<br>• What kind of teacher will you like to be?<br>• How do you imagine your future students?<br>• How do you imagine an ideal English class?<br>• For you, what is a mentor?<br>• What do you expect to learn from your mentor?<br>• How do you expect your relationship with your mentor to be?<br>• What are your expectations for this class? |
| WHILE OBSERVING | • In general, describe what happened in today's class.<br>• Does the class look organized?<br>• Did the students learn what they were supposed to learn in this class?<br>• What challenges/ problems/ situations came up today?<br>• How were they solved?<br>• How did you feel observing today's class?<br>• What advice would you give to your mentor to improve today's class?<br>• What did you learn today (from observing your mentor or the class)?<br>• How can today's observation practice help you improve your teaching practice? |
| WHILE PRACTICING | **General Questions.**<br><br>• Do you have any feelings about the lesson that you would like to express first? How did you feel while you were teaching?<br>• What problems did you encounter and how did you deal with them?<br><br>**The planning**<br><br>• How long did it take you to prepare this class? |

- How did your mentor help you to prepare this class?
- Did anyone else help you to prepare this class? Who? How?
- How much freedom did you have to plan your class?
- In general, how did you feel about planning your class? (Did you need more help, more freedom, more preparation, etc.).
- How useful was the plan once you were teaching?
- In retrospect, was your lesson prepared thoroughly?
- What difficulties did you anticipate? Did these areas prove difficult or were there others?
- Did your students learn from this lesson what you expected them to learn or something different? Give reasons for any differences.
- Did you depart from the plan? If you did, why was this necessary? Did the timing go according to plan?
- Was there a logical and smooth linking of the stages?
- How worthwhile were the activities? Write down any evidence that your activity was successful/unsuccessful.

**The lesson**

- In general, describe what happened in today's class.
- Was the lesson well-structured? Did it have a clear beginning, a logical procession, and a sense of an ending?
- Was there enough variety in the lesson? Did it have rhythm and flow?
- What were the most effective parts? Give your reasons. What were the least effective parts? Give your reasons. Were your instructions clear?
- What classroom arrangement did you use? What will you do next to follow up this lesson?
- How did you keep the students interested and motivated?
- How did you encourage learner participation?
- In what ways were you responsive to the students' needs?
- How did you give learners feedback on their effort?
- Did you use your mother tongue? When? Why?
- How was your use of English? Was it fluent, clear, accurate, etc.?

**The students**

- Did the students work well for you?
- Were the students involved? (Who was not involved? Why?) Did the students have a fair share of time to talk?
- Did you provide a high level of active practice for all learners?
- Write down something(s) that a pupil said where language was used meaningfully. Which questions provided a thoughtful answer? Write down the question(s).
- Were the activities at an appropriate level to stretch and challenge them intellectually? Were there any opportunities for students to give their own ideas?

**Conclusion**

- How did you feel teaching today's class?
- Would you do anything differently if you taught this lesson again? What?
- What do you think you need to improve for the next class you teach?
- In general, what did you learn today?

| | |
|---|---|
| | • How can today's teaching practice help you to improve your teaching? |
| LAST (After finishing your practicum) | • After having completed your practicum, how do you see yourself as a teacher now?<br>• In what ways have your perceptions about teaching changed after having completed your practicum?<br>• How did your relationship with your mentor affect your views on teaching?<br>• Did you learn everything you expected to learn from your mentor?<br>• What did you learn from your teaching practicum experience?<br>• In general, what do you feel you still need to learn to become a better teacher?<br>• What is your final reflection after having taken this course? |

**2. Phase 2 Novice teachers instruments**

**QUESTIONNAIRE/ SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW**

(To be answered by novice teachers)**.**

**I. Please answer the following questions as complete as possible.**

1. How long have you been working as a teacher after you finished your B.A.?
2. What challenges have you encountered in your teaching experience?
3. Do you consider your mentoring experience while you were a learner teacher help you in your professional practice? In what ways?
4. How do you feel your mentoring experience would have been more helpful?
5. Have your ideas of what a teacher is changed from the moment you started your practicum until today? How?
6. Do you consider yourself an autonomous teacher? In what sense?
7. Have your ideas of what an autonomous teacher is changed from the moment you started your practicum until today? How?
8. Do you think your mentoring experience affected your perceptions on your profession? How?
9. Do you think your mentoring experience affected your perceptions on your autonomy? How?

**LIKERT SCALE ON MENTORING, AUTONOMY and IDENTITY OF NOVICE TEACHERS**

(To be answered by novice teachers)**.**

The following Likert scale was designed with the purpose of getting a perspective on your views on your mentoring experience, professional identity and teacher autonomy. Although your name is being requested here, it will be anonymised.

It was based on the *Professional self identity questionnaire for the health and social care professions* by Crossley J & Vivekananda-Schmidt P. (2009), the *Professional identity questionnaire* by Fisherman & Abbot (1998), the *Teacher autonomy survey* by William Edward Moomaw (2005) and the findings by reviewing the literature.

Date: _____

Name: _____

Graduation term: _____ Age: _____ Gender: _____

Time working as a teacher after graduating: _____

Level where you teach: ☐          ☐          ☐          ☐          ☐

KINDERGARTEN  ELEMENTARY                              SECONDARY  HIGHSCHOOL

☐     UNIVERSITY OTHER: _____

**Please indicate (by circling the appropriate number) how you feel at present with regards to the following statements. If you feel a statement does not apply to you please circle NA.**

- **NA=** Not applicable
- **1=** strongly disagree
- **2=** more or less disagree
- **3=** neither agree nor disagree
- **4=**more or less agree
- **5=** strongly agree

| Statement | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1.  I always wanted to be a teacher | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2.  It is important for me to be/become a teacher | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3.  I'm not comfortable introducing myself as a teacher | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4.  Being in front of a group makes me feel comfortable | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5.  The transition from being a student to being a teacher was difficult | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 6.  I know the kind of teacher I am | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 7.  I know the kind of teacher I want to become | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8.  I feel like a qualified teacher when I'm working with other teachers | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 9.  I don't feel like a professional teacher when teaching others | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 10. I feel confident enough in my current job as a teacher | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 11. I often feel tense/ stressed as a teacher | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 12.  Teaching is not an intellectual challenge for me | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 13. Being a teacher makes me feel happy and fulfilled as a person. | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 14. I feel free to be creative in my teaching approach | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 15. I am able to choose the student-learning activities, teaching methods and strategies. | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 16. I don't feel free to choose ways of evaluation and assessment in my classes | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 17. I choose the content and skills that I will teach in my classes | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 18. I feel free to make any changes to the class syllabus if I consider it necessary | NA | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

| | |
|---|---|
| 19. I feel confident in the decisions I make in my class | NA  1  2  3  4  5 |
| 20. I feel confident in finding solutions by myself for any issues related to my teaching practice | NA  1  2  3  4  5 |
| 21. I am aware of my strengths and weaknesses as a teacher | NA  1  2  3  4  5 |
| 22. I know how to deal with/ use my strengths and weaknesses in class | NA  1  2  3  4  5 |
| 23. I consider myself to be an autonomous teacher | NA  1  2  3  4  5 |
| 24. My mentoring experience when I was a learner teacher had a positive effect in my professional practice | NA  1  2  3  4  5 |
| 25. I feel I learned more about teaching and being a teacher from my mentoring and practicum experience than from my courses during my B.A. programme | NA  1  2  3  4  5 |
| 26. I feel I learned more about teaching and being a teacher from my courses during my B.A. programme than from my mentoring and practicum experience | NA  1  2  3  4  5 |
| 27. I feel I became more autonomous as a teacher during my practicum experience | NA  1  2  3  4  5 |
| 28. Working with a mentor changed my perceptions on teaching and learning | NA  1  2  3  4  5 |
| 29. I would have liked to learn more from my mentor when I was a learner teacher | NA  1  2  3  4  5 |
| 30. I consider mentoring to be a key element in teacher training programmes | NA  1  2  3  4  5 |

31: In three words, describe the characteristics of the ideal teacher:

a. _____  b. _____  c. _____

32: The three biggest challenges of being a teacher are:

_____    _____    _____

33: Write the three most important things that your mentoring experience during practicum left you:

_____    _____    _____

34: Write the three things that you would have liked to learn from your mentoring experience during practicum but you didn't:

_____    _____    _____

35: In three words, describe YOURSELF as a teacher:

_____    _____    _____

_____

Participant Signature

# Appendix ENVivo Codes

| Phase 1: Student-teachers | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Category** | **Sub-Categories** | |
| 1. Autonomy | a. Autonomy definition | • Freedom<br>• No freedom<br>• Teacher autonomy definition before practicum<br>• Teacher autonomy definition while observing<br>• Teacher autonomy definition after practicum<br>• Learner autonomy definition before practicum<br>• Learner autonomy definition while observing<br>• Learner autonomy definition after practicum |
| | b. Observed autonomy | • Self-observed<br>• In students<br>• In mentors |
| | c. Looking for different mentors | |
| | d. Forced autonomy | |
| | e. Autonomy in problem solving | |
| | f. Importance of autonomy | |
| | g. Autonomy and identity | |
| | h. Autonomy and mentoring | |
| 2. Identity | a. Identity definition | |
| | b. Reasons to become a teacher | |
| | c. Like teaching | |
| | d. Teaching expectations | |
| | e. Sense of belongingness | |
| | f. Reflection for future teaching | |
| | g. Pride and recognition | |
| | h. Self-image | |
| | i. Conflicts | |
| | j. Identity and mentoring | |
| 3. Mentoring | a. Mentoring definition | • Image of mentor<br>• Mentor expectations |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | b. Support          198 | • Peer support<br>• Feeling supported<br>• Satisfied with mentoring experience<br>• Not feeling supported<br>• No communication with mentor<br>• No good relationship with mentor |
| | c. Like their mentor | • Imitate mentor |
| | d. Don't like mentor | • Disappointment regarding mentor<br>• Dissatisfied with mentoring experience |
| | e. Learning from mentoring | • Expectations<br>• Things they have learned |

| Phase 2: Novice teachers | |
|---|---|
| **Category** | **Sub-categories** |
| 1. Autonomy | |
| 2. Identity | |
| 3. Mentoring | a. Influence by mentor |
| | b. Novice teacher as new mentor |
| 4. Practicum impact | a. Changed perceptions after practicum |

# Appendix F ERGO Information and consent

## Participant Information Sheet  (Face to Face)

**Study Title**: Exploration of learner teacher autonomy and professional identity through mentoring: A case study of ESOL learner teachers and beginning teachers

**Researcher**:   Lizette Drusila Flores Delgado          **Ethics number**: 16914

**Supervisor:** Dr. Vicky Wright

**Please read this information carefully before deciding to take part in this research. If you are happy to participate you will be asked to sign a consent form.**

**What is the research about?**

My name is Lizette Drusila Flores Delgado, I am a first year PhD in Modern Languages student at the University of Southampton, UK. The purpose of this study is to see how mentoring affects the development of professional identity and autonomy of ESOL learner teachers. The study will be conducted in two phases. During the first phase of the study I will collect information regarding the ways in which mentoring (traditional, online and/or peer mentoring) affects the development of professional identity and autonomy by answering the following research questions:

1. In what ways does mentoring influence the development of autonomy in ESOL student teachers?

2. In what ways does mentoring influence the development of identity in ESOL student teachers?

3. How do different mentoring relationships affect the development of identity and/or autonomy?

4. How do mentoring, autonomy and identity interrelate? / What's the link between autonomy, identity and mentoring?

**Why have I been chosen?**

You have been chosen to take part of this pre-study because you are a 9th semester learner teacher of the B.A. in English of the School of Philosophy and Letters at the Autonomous University of Chihuahua.

**What will happen to me if I take part?**

During the first phase of the study (August – December 2015/ January – June 2016), you will be asked to take part in at least 2 focus groups, one in the middle and one at the end of your practicum semester in order to share your experiences while being mentored. Also, you will be asked to answer a pre-study and post-study questionnaire to get your perceptions regarding autonomy, identity and mentoring. If there is any need for clarification of a point or topic, you will be asked to participate in a one-to-one interview. During the semester, you will also be asked to write a reflective diary which you will have to hand in at the

end of the semester, to get a better understanding of your perceptions and you will be observed at least once during your practicum. If you wish to participate during the second phase of the study too (January – June 2016/ August – December 2016), you will be regularly interviewed and occasionally observed to gather similar information but this time from the perspective of a beginning teacher.

**Are there any benefits in my taking part?**

Your observations, comments and experiences will be valuable for the development of this study and possible further studies that seek to understand the role of mentoring in the development of professional identity and autonomy. At the same time, due to your reflective participation in the study you might become more aware of your own teaching practice, which is a way to improve your skills and become a better teacher.

**Are there any risks involved?**

The risks are minimum:

Potential risks: Student teachers may feel uncomfortable, insecure or stressed at the time of sharing their experiences.

**Will my participation be confidential?**

All data will be anonymised. Learner teachers won't be required to refer to their mentors by name and all participants will be assured that everything they say or write will be used for the purpose of this study only and that the comments they make or the information they provide will not affect them in their school or work environment. All the information gathered will be kept in confidence.

**What happens if I change my mind?**

If you do not wish to continue taking part in this pre-study, you will be able to withdraw without any penalty.

**What happens if something goes wrong?**

As this is a low-risk study, there are no circumstances that may have negative consequences on the integrity of the participants. However, if the student teacher has any situation that he or she considers may affect his/her integrity, they may contact the researcher:


M.E.S. Lizette Drusila Flores Delgado

Mobile phone: 6144099828

e-mail address: ldfd1g14@soton.ac.uk

Or an email could be sent to:

Research Governance at the University of Southampton mad4@soton.ac.uk

**Where can I get more information?**

By contacting the researcher at ldfd1g14@soton.ac.uk

# CONSENT FORM *(FACE TO FACE: Version 1*)

**Study title**: Exploration of learner teacher autonomy and professional identity through mentoring: A case study of ESOL learner teachers and beginning teachers

**Researcher name**: Lizette Drusila Flores Delgado

**Staff/Student number**: 27376036

**ERGO reference number**: 16914

**Research supervisor:** Dr. Vicky Wright

**Contact information:** ldfd1g14@soton.ac.uk

*Please initial the box(es) if you agree with the statement(s):*

I have read and understood the information sheet and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

I agree to take part in this research project and agree for my

I understand my participation is voluntary and I may withdraw at

*Data Protection*

*I understand that information collected about me during my participation in this study will be stored on a password protected computer and that this information will only be used for the purpose of this study. All files containing any personal data will be made anonymous.*

Name of participant (print name)…………………………………………………

Signature of participant………………………………………………………..…..

Date……………………………………………………………………………

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