University of Southampton

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

Department of Modern Languages and Linguistics

Investigating the nature and development of teacher-learner autonomy and the presence of creativity amongst student teachers during their practicum in different educational settings in central Mexico

by

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Thesis for the degree of Doctor in Philosophy

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University of Southampton

<u>Abstract</u>

School of Humanities

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Investigating the nature and development of teacher-learner autonomy and the presence of creativity amongst student teachers during their practicum in different educational settings in central Mexico

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Teacher autonomy (TA) is a complex term to research given its multidimensional nature. In this study, TA is examined from two perspectives or dimensions: "situationally, as the freedom granted to teachers to exercise their discretion in teaching, and attributionally, as teachers' internal capacity to exercise this freedom productively" (Benson 2017:20).

This study firstly, analyses the nature and development of teacher-learner autonomy (TLA) during the practicum component of a second language teacher education (SLTE) programme in Mexico. The TLA definition provided by Smith and Erdogan (2008) was considered as a reference point for observing the participants' capacities, knowledge, and attitudes for themselves and with others in the educational setting in which they were teaching. The data in this study provided useful insight regarding the nature of the 13 student teachers who perceive themselves as autonomous teachers. Their teaching development was observed through the semester through their reflections and actions, identified in their capacity for adaptation, improvisation, creative use of technologies, agency, empathy, willingness, and motivation.

Secondly, and given the diverse and often challenging circumstances in each educational setting for the practicum, creativity emerged in the findings as a key capacity or attribute related to autonomy. Jimenez Raya and Vieira (2015) identify TA through the way teachers manage their teaching and solve constraints. Many of the study participants applied creativity to solve constraints in the classroom and in their lessons, situating their teaching, which was planned based on their learners. This creative attitude resulted in empowerment for both teachers and learners

Finally, the interdependence with external factors such as mentors, learners, and the setting was the second dimension identified in this study. Diverse circumstances such as large groups, lack of good conditions for teaching, absence of mentoring in the classroom, and the mandatory application of 'controllers' (McGrath, 2000) such as textbooks and standardised exams, were

aspects that challenged participants to be autonomous in many settings. Creativity was a solution under challenging circumstances and an opportunity in supportive settings.

The findings show that creative teaching combined with teacher agency could result in observable expressions of teacher autonomy. Initial teacher education should consider supporting pedagogies that include opportunities to develop autonomy and creativity. Furthermore, constant observation and reflection can stimulate and motivate future teachers to develop autonomous and a creative teaching practice.

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Research Thesis: Declaration of Authorship

Print name: Marisol Guzman Cova

Title of thesis: Investigating the nature and development of teacher-learner autonomy and the presence of creativity amongst student teachers during their practicum in different educational settings in central Mexico

I declare that this thesis and the work presented in it are my own and has 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

Signature: Date: 29 April, 2021

Acknowledgements

This is maybe the shortest part of my thesis but the most important to me. Thanks, is a powerful word that entails lots of my feelings. I am more than thankful for this achievement in my life that looked challenging and took time, patience, learning and effort but, I finally achieved it.

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Definitions and Abbreviations

To create each entry:

CALL…… Computer Assisted Language Learning

ECFL……. European Common Framework for the Languages

EFL…… English as Foreign Language

ELT ……… English Language Teaching

ERGO……. Ethics and Research Government Online

ICT ……… Information and Communication Technologies

L1…………. First language or mother tongue

L2…………. Second language

SLA………… Second Language Acquisition

SLTE……… Second language teacher education

TA………….. Teacher autonomy

TLA…………. Teacher-learner autonomy

UNESCO…. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation

Chapter 1   Introduction to the thesis

1.1   Introduction

Teacher autonomy (TA) is a complex term to research given its multidimensional nature. In this study, teacher-learner autonomy (TLA) is researched and examined from two perspectives or dimensions: "situationally, as the freedom granted to teachers to exercise their discretion in teaching, and attributionally, as teachers' internal capacity to exercise this freedom productively" (Benson 2017, p.20).

This qualitative multiple case study responds to Benson's (2017) call for further research into the characteristics of TLA, which he claims is still scant. The thirteen participants were student teachers in a BA degree in English Language Teaching (ELT). They studied at a public university in Puebla, which is located in Central Mexico, where the researcher is also employed as an ELT department faculty member. They were observed and interviewed during the practicum component of the second language teacher education (SLTE) programme. It is important to mention that this study was carried out before the COVID 19 pandemic.

The participants are student teachers, in this study referred to as teacher-learners, a term which was adopted from the study where Smith and Erdogan (2008) researched dimensions of TA (see 2.4). The initial process of learning to teach is the moment which the present study focuses on. The participants had the experience of teaching during their practicum and were about to receive their teaching undergraduate degrees. Their programme aims to train teachers with pedagogical skills and disciplinary capacities such as autonomy, taking initiatives, and creativity, as mentioned below (see 1.4.1). This study focuses on the skills of autonomy and creativity during the participants' first teaching opportunity.

Throughout this thesis, the term TLA refers to capacities, knowledge, attitudes, and actions when teaching and resolving constraints (McGrath, 2000; Jimenez Raya & Vieira, 2015). Creativity, understood as thoughts and actions in language education that are novel, valuable and open-ended, and help enrich learning in the students and teachers, is related to the development of autonomy. Agency, identified as the actions observed in the classroom, supports creative teaching and this combination is called observable expressions of TLA in this study.

During their professional practices, student teachers taught English at one of two different educational levels: in state schools (primary or secondary) or at the same university where they

study, teaching English in the target language courses, programmed in the first semesters of the degree (see Appendix B for the current curriculum of this programme).

The conditions in state schools in Puebla are varied. The National English Program in Basic Education (NEPBE) has the purpose of preparing students to demonstrate "multilingual and multicultural competencies to successfully respond to the communication challenges of the global world; build a broad view of linguistic and cultural diversity; and demonstrate appreciation for their own and other peoples' cultures" (Secretaría de Educación Pública, 2011, p. 9). However, the implementation of this programme has been extremely irregular throughout the country. For instance, in Puebla, the English classes are not uniformly included in the official curricula and there are no English teachers on the staff of most primary schools. One reality is that most of the students in state schools come from underprivileged socio-economic conditions in Puebla city due to their backgrounds and their being marginalised (Benson J., 2019).

This chapter presents an overview in TLA and the possible components that reveal the nature and development of autonomy amongst teacher-learners. First, the research background is presented (see 1.2). In this section, creativity is introduced as a construct strongly related to TLA since it emerged as a theme within the data collection in this study. Due to the nature of the investigated themes, a section to clarify the research concepts and the theoretical background is included. The following section (see 1.3) corresponds to the rationale that motivates this thesis. Then, the research context where the study was carried out is explained in detail (see 1.4). The research aims and the research questions that guide this study are then presented (see 1.5). Finally, the importance of this research (see 1.6), as well as a general thesis overview (see 1.7), are included.

1.2 Research background regarding TA, TLA, creativity and the importance of the setting

This section presents relevant literature regarding the aims of this study. First, an overview of TA, and TLA. Then, this section concludes with a brief review of the term creativity and the importance of the setting.

1.2.1 Teacher autonomy

As Allwright (1990, p.12) states, autonomy is '…a constantly changing but at any time an optimal state of equilibrium between maximal self-development and human interdependence'. He introduced the term teacher autonomy (TA) in language teaching literature, emphasising the role of the teacher, that was developed further by others and the mutual dependence with learner

autonomy (Little, 1995; McGrath, 2000; Smith, 2000, 2003,2008; Huang, 2005, 2013; Smith & Erdogan 2008; Lamb, 2008; Benson & Huang, 2008; Benson, 2008, 2013, 2011, 2015, 2017; Jimenez Raya and Vieira, 2015, and others).

In general, TA concerns control and freedom from constraints (Smith, 2000), including external control over teaching. Regarding the promotion of learner autonomy (LA), TA definitions have taken on dimensions such as the capacity to self-direct one's teaching (Smith, 2003; Little, 2000; McGrath, 2000; Vieira, 1999), the freedom to self-direct one's teaching (Benson, 2000) or TLA as a capacity to self-direct one's learning as a teacher (Smith & Erdogan 2008).

1.2.2   Teacher-learner autonomy

Smith and Erdogan (2008) define TLA as the ability to develop appropriate skills, knowledge, and attitudes for oneself as a teacher, in cooperation with others. This definition emphasizes the necessity of learning in society, and is viewed in Vygotskyan terms (1978). This learning includes internalising knowledge, developing interdependence with others, and shortening the proximal development zone (PDZ). Vygotsky underscores the reality of the teacher being also a learner of teaching (see 2.6). This definition is adopted in this study for the participants who have no teaching experience; however, they were considered to be *de facto* teachers in the schools where they taught English during their practicum. They are not hired in a formal institution but the educational settings gave them in most cases all the responsibility of the classroom as the teacher.

Student teachers can develop a sense of critical autonomy during their initial teacher training (Smith, 2003; Smith & Erdogan, 2008; Ok, 2016) to contextualise teaching. Freire (1970) refers to critical thinking as an expression of freedom that let teachers adapt their teaching to the setting. In this study, critical thinking is related with improvisation, adaptation, flexibility, and the criteria the participants used to contextualise their teaching practice. For instance, one manifestation of TLA in this study is identified through contextualised teaching practice according to learners' needs in each educational setting.

This study identifies the 'attributes' (Benson 2017) of TLA observed in teachers who are committed to their audience and develop successful teaching. Rebolledo and Smith (2013, p.9) define successful teaching as when 'students are engaged, participating actively, and when they make progress in their learning'. This reference supports the stance of this study when it describes successful teaching observed through classes with engaged and participative students.

Observing thirteen student teachers also provides the opportunity to identify common characteristics among teacher-learners. TLA is not measurable as a capacity (Benson, 2011).

However, it can be identified by some common teaching characteristics or principles that teachers adopt in their lessons (Huang, 2015), for instance, creativity. Autonomous teacher-learners may include creative actions and decisions with an agentive determination during their lessons, often based on the needs and likes of their students and adapted to the specific setting, as shown in the following section.

1.2.3 Creativity and teacher autonomy

Researchers such as Benson (2011) and Huang (2013) have pointed out the need to identify observable constructs that constitute autonomy to understand its nature and its development. Vieira (2017) emphasises that the components of TLA are under-researched among teacher-learners. The research literature does not directly link creativity with TLA as a construct. Creativity and agency are capacities that teachers can apply to engage their learners in classes and can result in an autonomous initiative in the class.

TLA has been investigated through different components (Huang, 2013; Ollerhead & Burns, 2015). In this study it is hypothesised that creativity might help better understand the nature of TLA. Many aspects of autonomy and creativity are analysed in the literature review. Creativity has been defined in arts, culture, and primary education as stimulating children's learning development. However, creativity has not been deeply researched in applied linguistics.

Creativity has been defined variously (see 2.7). For example, it is considered by the research grouping, the so-called Group C (2015) which is made up of researchers and lectures in the ELT field. This group aims collaboratively to share information, promote reflection and inquiry, and encourage action through more creative and open ELT practices. They consider creativity to be 'an innovative and valuable action or thought'.

It is necessary here to clarify exactly what is meant by creativity in this study, understood as thoughts and actions in language education that are novel, valuable, open-ended and help enrich learning in the students and teachers. Practically, creativity is identified in this study through the participants' original decisions, strategies, flexibility, and techniques used to make their lessons successful and contextualised. Furthermore, creativity is identified in the way participants resolve constraints. When the student teacher supports learner autonomy in a creative way, this is also considered to be an expression of TLA.

As Richards (2013) observes, a creative teacher feeds the lessons with varied activities. However, if creative actions are not monitored, regulated, and stopped at the right moment, they can result in time-consuming actions rather than in effective pedagogical strategies. A certain level of

control or management of the activities (agency) is necessary to achieve a productive lesson. Then, teacher agency is necessary to mediate the applied activities in the classroom practically and productively. This study considers Priestley et al.'s (2015) definition of agency establishing that it focuses on self-conscious decisions and reflective teaching actions. This paper adopts this definition of agency, as a way to identify creative teaching. TA concerns itself with a sense of being in control of the process of teaching.

Therefore, initially it seems that creativity and agency refer to the same teaching actions; however, this study identified that creative thoughts to manage the teaching practice, combined with agency, are expressions of TLA. This combination of creative teaching actions or thoughts through reflective decisions (agency) is called observable expressions or evidence of TLA in this study. As identified in the literature (Xerry & Vassallo, 2016), creativity and agency are context-sensitive; hence the importance of considering the educational setting of the research.

1.2.4 The role of the educational setting

Kumaravadivelu (2012) emphasises the importance of taking into account the educational setting, and specific circumstances for teaching. As every context has its own ethos, Johnson and Golombek (2016) consider the ethos is important when defining the possibilities or freedom for teachers to achieve an autonomous target. Regarding freedom, Benson (2000) claims that an autonomous teacher looks for teaching with a certain freedom and control in an educational setting. However, freedom is an initial requirement but not enough to develop TA.

Regarding the research setting, Davies (2009, p.8) claims that 'unquestionably and unsurprisingly conditions contribute significantly to Mexican public ELT's general failure, especially in lower secondary, and primary schools: low student socioeconomic status, large group size, poor classroom facilities, and low teacher competence'. These characteristics have a clear impact on this study because the educational setting defines the autonomous teaching possibilities a participant can develop. Puebla is a semi-industrialised city but with serious levels of inequality and marginality, especially in state schools (Benson, J. 2019).

The BUAP faculty of languages offers English classes to state schools through the practicum. Some schools are on the periphery of the city, where the conditions are remarkably disadvantageous because of poverty amongst students and substandard school infrastructure (Benson, J. 2019). All the settings visited in this study were state schools; the students attending these schools come from economically underprivileged families (Benson, J. 2019).

Chapter 1

A review of the theoretical framework that underpins the study is included in the following section.

1.2.5   Theoretical framework that underpin this study

This section brings together different aspects and concepts which are addressed throughout the thesis. The multidimensional nature of TA required analysing different models to fully understand the data in this study. The measures of adaptation implied in all the different settings were relevant for developing teaching capacities amongst the participants. These different considerations allowed the researcher to understand better the intentions behind the observed participants' actions. These actions are difficult to interpret without considering the reflections of the participants and the conditions of the context in which they taught. Using different research models regarding TLA allows us to understand teaching actions from many different perspectives. This leads to a richer interpretation of the multidimensionality of TA.

As Benson (2013b) posits, discussions on autonomy are often characterised by misconceptions about the nature of the concept and its implementation. For this reason, it is necessary to specify the aspects and dimensions that are considered when researching TA. This study considers both internal and external factors to describe TLA. These two dimensions suggested by Benson (2017) are the first reference in this study to classify data from the attributes of the participants and external factors.

The second definition, provided by Jimenez Raya and Vieira (2015), is the referent in this study to identify participants' autonomous teaching capacities. The capacity of managing teaching and resolving constraints was especially applied to code data during the coding process and the data analysis.

The third reference for TLA in this study is the definition provided by Smith and Erdogan (2008), which identifies the participants' skills, knowledge and attitudes observed during their practicum teaching. This definition was also a key reference in the initial data coding process based on the analysis of class notes. This data helped recognise the characteristics of the participants, who claimed to be autonomous and creative teachers in the initial interview.

Finally, the organization of the discussion chapter is based on two dimensions of TA that Smith and Erdogan (2008) mention, regarding the type of teaching and the learning to teach process of the participants. These groups of references provide a wider analysis of TA in this study, and they are illustrated in figure 1 below.

Figure 1 Theoretical models of reference in this study
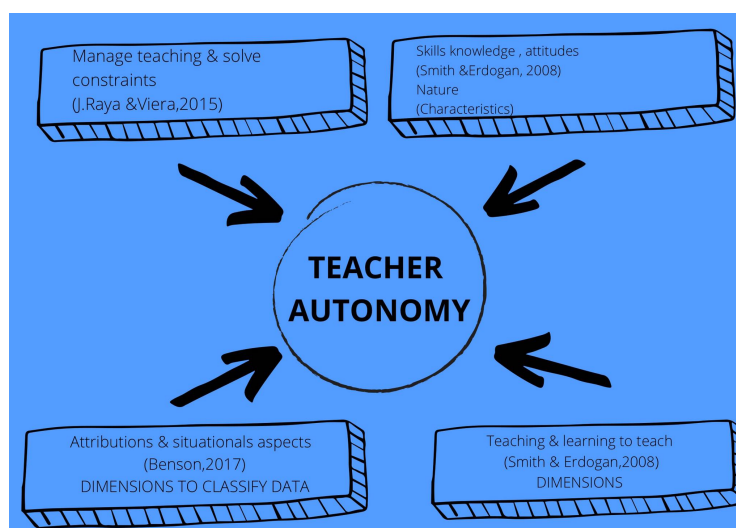
As ELT conditions in state schools in Mexico are varied and not very supportive (Ramirez, 2015), the importance of researching these contexts clearly emerged. This researcher's interest in developing this study is to consider the existing gap characterising TLA. These reasons are explained in the following section.

1.3   Research rationale

My main interest in autonomy has emerged from my personal story of being an autonomous person due to diverse circumstances in my life since I was a child. Having been initially trained in a different field of knowledge (chemistry, biology, and pharmaceutics), I started studying English during my first undergraduate degree, planning to study a master's degree abroad. However, after concluding the degree and studying English, my first job opportunity as an English teacher arrived. Initially, I was an autodidact in the field of Humanities, who discovered that teaching was her vocation. When I started teaching, I needed and developed autonomy to manage to teach and resolve constraints. As a consequence, autonomy has been a constant in my conception of learning-teaching and my professional life.

I also had an autonomous experience taking a master's programme in educational technologies and communication under a distance education programme. Learner autonomy was essential for me because I studied this degree while working as an English teacher at university. The practical experience of understanding the use of technologies enhanced the importance of autonomy behind all types of tools of communication and teaching. Then, I took a personally meaningful

diploma in virtual mentoring with the British Council. During that experience, I discovered the importance of taking responsibility for my own learning, managing time and resolving constraints to achieve learning goals autonomously.

As a result of twenty years of experience in the same university where I have been employed in different areas as a teacher, mentor, teacher educator, and coordinator of the ELT programme in that university, I have realized the importance of understanding and supporting TA in foreign language settings. Awareness regarding autonomy is present in the official documents of this university, including language learning policies and curricula. However, in my experience as a coordinator, autonomy was not always observed among teacher educators and student teachers. As a teacher educator, I noticed how my students were constantly reluctant to become autonomous learners. I wondered what type of teachers they would be in the future. I used to make them reflect on the importance of guiding their teaching-learning by their passion for teaching, which was not always a characteristic among them.

It may be that traditional teacher-centred education from primary education diminishes opportunities to learn for ourselves. These reflections made me recognise the importance of concepts such as lifelong learning, critical thinking, learner autonomy, and student-centred pedagogies in teacher education. Future teachers should have life experience that could be reproduced with their future students (Little, 2005). Reflective and engaging teaching paradigms should be discovered and adopted by ourselves and future teachers working with new generations in this changing world. My queries around these issues led me to acknowledge the relevance of autonomous teaching and the impact on the educational setting.

As a researcher, I have seen the importance of understanding key factors regarding the nature and development of TA. Relevant literature (Vieira, 2017; Jimenez Raya and Vieira, 2015; Smith & Erdogan, 2008; Huang, 2013) reports a research gap in understanding the nature of autonomous teachers and development during their student teachers phase. TA has been addressed mostly during the in-service phase. Teaching experience, labour conditions, educational policies, and continuous professional education impact the possibilities of supporting autonomous development in the workplace. Smith (2019) states that more research is necessary among student teachers to understand their development of TA in the absence of teaching experience.

Novice teachers are defining their basic concept of teaching and their personal stance towards their own teaching. As part of student teachers training, the teaching practicum is a key moment to research the nature of student teachers. In this study, the participants identified themselves as autonomous in the initial interview. It is also important to consider internal capacities that support the development of their autonomy. This was the reason to select participants teaching

in diverse settings at different educational levels. As TA is not an isolated phenomenon, student teachers need to apply their knowledge, capacities, and attitudes to achieve autonomy in diverse settings under specific conditions.

A current debate regarding TA considers autonomy as a personal ability (Smith, 2003), a competence (Jimenez Raya, Lamb, and Vieira, 2007), or a capacity (Vieira, 1999; Little, 2000; McGrath, 2000; Smith, 2000; Benson, 2013) that can be developed. Autonomy is considered in this study to be an interdependent capacity that depends on the socio-cultural environment to produce relevant results in the context. This consideration provides the rationale for observing the participants teaching at three different educational levels:

primary school (teaching students from 3 to 12 years)

secondary school (teaching students from 12 to 18 years)

university (teaching ELT students, older than 18)

These very diverse educational scenarios are offered to student teachers to develop their practicum. The participants had the freedom to select the school of their preference for teaching English. The different schools showed varying conditions which could impact on teaching and thus on the success or not of the practicum. The following section provides information about the research context.

1.4   Research context

As Griffiths and Dikilitas (2017) posit, the research setting should be described to obtain a clear study scenario. This study was carried out in a public university in Central Mexico, the *Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla*, in the Faculty of Languages, where the researcher is employed as a teacher educator. This public autonomous institution is one of the oldest universities in the country (Caruana, 2020). As the institution mission suggests, autonomy, critical thinking, and values in terms of empathy and motivation have been also included as integral concepts and principles, as observed in the following university mission segment:

> *"The Benemerita Universidad Autonoma de Puebla is a public and autonomous institution of national standing, engaged with the core development of professional, reflective and critical citizens in middle, higher education and graduate education, who are able to generate, adapt, create, innovate and apply high quality knowledge and understand social belonging…"* (BUAP, 2021).

Autonomy and concepts related to creativity are emphasized in the educational mission and policy of this university. English has recently been implemented as part of the so-called cross

curricular programme in all the BA programmes called *tronco comun universitario* (BUAP, 2009). Five self-access centres to practice each language skill autonomously are available twelve hours every day of the week and they are offered by the Faculty of Languages, where this study was carried out.

The infrastructure conditions in the Faculty of Languages provide teachers and students with teaching tools to work with in all the classrooms. The classrooms are equipped with technological devices such as computers with internet connection and installed language-teaching software, a screen, an overhead projector, and speakers. Two shifts are offered in this Faculty, morning and afternoon, due to the high number of enrolled students, an average of 1600, clustered in groups of 30 on average. These student teachers' programme contains six areas described below.

1.4.1   ELT curriculum and pedagogical aims in this context

As mentioned before, the BA in ELT programme is the focus of this study; the degree is four years in length, divided into eight semesters (see Appendix A for the BA programme). The six areas that comprise this curriculum are the target language (five English modules and five English skills workshops), pedagogy (eight modules: pedagogy, didactics, teaching skills, teaching methods, teaching materials, learning evaluation, teaching adolescents and adults, and teaching children), linguistics (six modules: academic writing in Spanish, phonetics and phonology, language acquisition, morphology and syntax, pragmatics, and discourse analysis), research (three modules), cross curricular skills (three modules), culture (three modules), elective courses (five mandatory courses in the area the student decides), social service, and the practicum.

English is the target language of the programme in which students have to obtain a B2 certificate according to the European Common Framework for the Languages (ECFL). A mandatory textbook is followed during their first five semesters in the programme. Student teachers must obtain an A2 certificate in another foreign language to graduate from the degree. They have the freedom to decide on the second foreign language to study, and the pace at which to study it and obtain a certificate.

The first four semesters contain basic ELT introductory modules with cross-curricular aims including autonomy, critical thinking, and creativity, as essential elements in the curriculum. The final semesters focus on teaching and optional modules, depending on the personal interest of the student teachers (BUAP, 2009). The suggested teaching methodologies in this degree are student-centred (BUAP, 2009); however, teacher educators have teaching freedom without any supervision or formal report of their work in the classrooms. For this reason, it is important to

verify if these autonomous principles are practiced once student teachers start their teaching practices.

As the documentation of this programme says, the pedagogical input student teachers received was strongly theoretical. For this reason, the programme was modified with the purpose of offering more teaching opportunities. The current curriculum is attached in Appendix B. The main modifications were done with an increase of pedagogical modules to ten with more practical opportunities related to teaching such as the class observation module. As the university established, the practicum and the social service are mandatory parts of the BA in ELT (BUAP, 2009). These modules are coursed at the end of the degree.

1.4.2 The practicum

All participants in this study were taking their TESOL practicum in the ELT programme. In most of the cases, their practicum and the social service are their first formal opportunity for teaching English. In order for these practical modules to be assessed, student teachers create a portfolio of evidence, containing pictures, a reflective diary, and lesson plans in cases where they teach English. Burns and Richards (2009) observe that student teachers have the opportunity to shape their identity as teachers during their teaching practicum. For this reason, this study focuses on student teachers who identify themselves as autonomous and creative and are in the process of defining the type of teacher they want to be. Crookes (2003) posits that student teachers reflect and define their teaching style using skills and knowledge consciously or unconsciously to perform as the teacher they want to (or can) be.

The practicum is an essential component of initial teacher education. According to Flores et al. (2016), the main purpose of the practicum is to develop student teachers' critical ability to understand and transform pedagogies using reflectivity, self-direction, collaboration, creativity and innovation. As Richards (2013) posits, generally, student teachers without much experience or any teaching experience start using their learnt knowledge, skills, and attitudes to conduct their teaching experience and define their own teaching style.

The practicum settings in this university are usually state schools at different educational levels with academic agreements with the university to undertake a collaborative teaching practicum via the Minister of Education (SEP). The offered educational levels to carry out the practicum are kindergarten, primary, secondary, preparatory, and the same university into the ELT programme or other areas. Considering this offer, data collection includes participants developing their practicum in each educational level, from kindergarten to university, divided into three different categories: primary education, secondary education, and university.

In this institution, student teachers have the freedom to choose the school where they carry out their practicum semester, which consists of 60 hours of teaching English over sixteen weeks, and up to 240 hours of preparation time.

1.4.3 Supervisors at university

A supervisor is assigned to support student teachers during their practicum module. The role of the supervisor includes the review of lesson plans before they are applied, providing suggestions about teaching methods, activities, materials, and times, and resolving all the doubts about teaching. Once assigned, the supervisors spend four hours a week from their work schedule to monitor the development of the student teachers. They usually meet once a week at the Faculty in the supervisor's office or in a classroom. When supervisors consider it necessary, they can visit and observe student teachers during their teaching with an evaluative purpose. Supervisors evaluate the practicum with a portfolio of evidences and a reflective diary.

1.4.4 The educational system in Mexico

In Mexico, the Educational System has both private and public fee-paying schools. The education system is divided into basic education, upper-middle education, and higher education (Ramirez-Romero & Sayer, 2016). Basic education includes kindergarten for children aged three to six years old and primary school with children aged six to twelve years old. Secondary or middle education has three grades from twelve to fifteen years old. The preparatory or high school has three levels, from fifteen to eighteen years old. Higher education is divided into undergraduate education, graduate education, and job training. It includes institutions, e.g., universities, technology institutes, *normales* (teacher training), and job or occupational training (Ramirez-Romero & Sayer, 2016).

As Ramirez and Vargas (2019) recognise, Spanish is the official language in Mexico, and 68 indigenous languages with 340 dialectal varieties are also spoken. These languages are recognised in the national institute of indigenous languages in Mexico (INALI). English has been established as a foreign language in the basic educational system since the 1990s (Ramirez, 2015; Lengeling et al., 2017).

The name of the National English Programme, was changed in 2014 to PRONI (Programa Nacional de Inglés [National Program of English]). The aim is that students concluding primary school achieve an A2 level and a B1 level once they finish secondary school, based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). Unfortunately, these policies are not at all supported by real teaching conditions in the schools.

1.4.5   Practicum programmes offered

The Faculty offers an average of 65 programmes every semester. According to the practicum coordination register, an average of 110 student teachers take this module each semester. They teach English or do activities related to this degree such as translation, literacy support, reading English tales to children in a public library, mentoring students from other fields of knowledge in English, amongst others. When they teach English in a school, a mentor is assigned to monitor student teachers and provide them with teaching feedback.

The university offers the teaching practicum to schools that want to offer English courses and require a practitioner. These schools need to establish an academic arrangement to request an English teacher for a semester. Those schools requiring the practicum service have to enrol in an online programme in the Ministry of Education (SEP) website. The aim and the activities assigned to the student teachers during their practicum are specified in the programme they upload.

The settings for carrying out the practicum in this university are varied and include state schools from the three types of educational subsystems in Mexico (see 3.4). The same university has many programmes for the practicum to teach or support different administrative areas with their duties. The three educational levels offered for the practicum are included in this study to understand better the nature of autonomous student teachers in different contexts.

1.4.6   The mentors

The mentors are the English teachers in the schools where student teachers carried out their practicum. Many schools in Mexico do not have English teachers on their staff because English is not part of the formal curricula. Some schools enter the national programme that the Ministry of Education offers to include English lessons. These schools ask universities and *Escuelas normales* (teacher training schools) for support, and receive student teachers to teach English to children. For this reason, some student teachers do not receive any mentoring when teaching English in state schools. EFL has been implemented as a mandatory module at junior high schools, both private and state secondary and preparatory schools. For this reason, English teachers are part of the staff in secondary and preparatory schools and they can mentor student teachers during their practicum. At university, the mentor is the English teacher in charge of the English class where student teachers were teaching.

1.4.7   Conditions in state schools visited in Puebla

Primary and secondary schools visited in Puebla typically had an old infrastructure. Most classrooms did not have more than an old desk, old chairs and an old white board. No technological devices were found in the classrooms. In 2015, 36.9% of the population in Puebla was in a situation of moderate poverty and 3.76% in extreme poverty. The vulnerable population due to social deprivation reached 26.3%, while the vulnerable population by income was 10.5% (datamexico.org).

According to Ramirez and Vargas (2019, p.9), changes in state primary schools have been implemented in a 'simplistic, hasty fashion, and mostly as a consequence of political or economic reasons, and decided by a few'. In some states, English as a Foreign Language (EFL) has been formally included in basic education, especially at private institutions. However, English is not uniformly included in the formal curricula of state schools of basic education in central Mexico, for instance, where this research was developed. As a consequence, the conditions for teaching are not always the best.

The aim of this study and the research questions are explained in the following section.

1.5   Aim of the research and research questions

It is essential to understand personal attributes and external factors that support or hamper TLA. However, there is a gap in understanding the nature of autonomous teachers, for this reason, this study aims to analyse the nature and development of TLA, a positive capacity that empowers both teachers and learners in the classroom. According to Jimenez Raya and Vieira (2015), TLA is constantly identified through willingness and the capacity to teach and resolve unexpected classroom constraints every day.

The second aim is to investigate creativity, which emerged from the exploratory study and data collection as a possible construct that overlaps in definition with autonomy when teaching and resolving issues in the classroom. This study adopts a methodological qualitative strategy of a multiple case study, hypothesising that creativity could be a potential TLA component to understand autonomous behaviours. In many of the thirteen cases, the data show that creativity was a common observed capacity among the participants.

The third aim of this study responds to the discussion regarding the impact of the setting on teaching practice. This study observes reflective student teachers of their own practice. However, the setting also has an impact on the possibility of developing autonomy in the classroom. Johnson and Golombek (2011, 2016) conclude that the setting is considered an important

influence on the autonomous possibilities in each context. As Smith (2003) claims, TA is a recent term in second language education. However, it is not a permanent state that teachers can adopt in all educational settings.

The analysis of common developed capacities or evidence of TLA in diverse settings can help understand the nature of autonomous student teachers. Besides, the reflections of the participants regarding changes during the practicum help analyse autonomy through diverse circumstances. The three research questions that guide and delimit the scope of this study are explained below.

> ***RQ1. What is the nature (e.g., characteristics, willingness, empathy, motivation) of teacher-learner autonomy, and how does it develop during the teaching practicum?***
>
> ***RQ2. To what extent does teacher autonomy development depend upon the parallel development of creativity in their practicum?***
>
> ***RQ 3. How does the setting impact the development of teacher-learner autonomy?***

The first question is more descriptive, while the second and third are more reflective and based to a certain extent upon the first. This study has an impact at different levels in the ELT field, as explained below.

1.6   Importance of the research

Providing an understanding of the nature and the development of TLA in different educational settings will contribute at different levels. First of all, as Smith (2019) and others (Smith & Erdogan, 2008; Little, 2000) recognise, research regarding dimensions of TLA is still scant, so the results and findings of this research will serve to fill in this gap.

Understanding the nature of autonomous student teachers during the phase when they are defining their teaching, probably without teaching experience, provides relevant information to teacher educators. They can support and motivate student teachers to develop their teacher identity better. Besides, it is also essential to recognise factors that can support or hamper TLA development during formal education.

Teacher education is a field that considers autonomy as a valuable capacity amongst teachers (Jimenez Raya & Vieira, 2015). To understand autonomy better, many authors (Huang, 2013; Vieira, 2007; Benson, 2011; Smith,2003) have discussed the elements or constructs that constitute TA. This discussion is desirable because many concepts overlap in some characteristics when defining TA, as in the case of creativity.

Chapter 1

Creativity has been deeply researched in many areas; however, in applied linguistics, creativity has been understood as a sign of resistance against pre-designed top-down curricula, as in Richards and Cotterall's (2015) study. This research analyses creativity as a possible construct that develops parallel to autonomy.

As in the case of autonomy, creativity is not a measured capacity; both capacities positively impacted the participants' teaching development in this study. In combination with agency, teaching creatively was named in this study as an observable expression of TLA (see 5.3.1). This discussion can be a starting point for teacher educators and student teachers to consider the importance of combining creativity and agency in the lessons. These outcomes could be considered an autonomous expression of teaching.

The importance of supporting TLA from the beginning of formal teacher education is fundamental (Ushioda et al, 2011; Smith, 2003). Promoting the development of suitable capacities, knowledge, and attitudes in the ELT curricula could be considered valuable. TLA in language student teachers who are defining their teaching towards the end of their training process could result in the development of this capacity since formal education.

Benson (2011, p.15) emphasises several concerns when training teachers in his review of new aspects to consider regarding autonomy. Benson observes that there is a need to make novice teachers aware of the value of their own autonomy. Teachers can support autonomy in their future teaching settings, which are usually mass education programmes. So, this study contributes with many factors to consider in the formal process of teacher education.

The impact of the educational setting is another factor investigated in this study, resulting from observing the participants teaching at different educational levels. Many factors emerged from the analysis of diverse settings such as the role of the mentor, the ethos in the schools, the response of the students, and the teaching conditions in the context. These aspects could be discussed from the formal education phase to prepare student teachers for future and diverse scenarios. Hence the importance of developing capacities to take advantage of opportunities or cope with constraints.

1.7   Thesis overview

Chapter one has given a general overview of this study, and all these themes will be developed in the following chapters.

Chapter Two contains the literature review and the theoretical framework that underpin this research.

Chapter Three contains the research methodology for this longitudinal research using qualitative methods to analyse the data through a multiple case study.

Chapter Four presents the data analysis regarding the nature and development of TA related to creativity as a proposed construct, and the impact of the setting in developing TLA.

Chapter Five presents a discussion of the nature and development of TLA and relates this to the existing literature. The research questions are answered through this analysis, including the parallel development of creativity and the impact of the setting.

Finally, Chapter Six contains the conclusion, including suggestions for future research, lessons learned, and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2   Theoretical framework: the nature and development of TLA

2.1   Introduction

This chapter presents a review of current theoretical thinking on teacher and TLA and the impact of the educational setting, together with a focus on the concept of creativity in ELT.

In the first section, autonomy and learner autonomy (see 2.2), teacher autonomy (see 2.3), and teacher-learner autonomy (see 2.4) are presented through a number of key concepts; these include core constructs, empirical studies, individual dimensions, domains and a working definition for this study. The relationship these concepts have is commented in the end of the section. The characteristic of autonomous teachers (see 2.5) discuss the interrelationship between professional identity, agency, motivation and empathy as elements that impact TA. Other factors, such as the impact of second language teacher education (SLTE) and pedagogies encountered by novice teachers, are also included in this sub-section.

In the second part of the chapter, the research literature regarding the impact of the setting on autonomy is reviewed (see 2.6). Challenging circumstances in the educational setting are also discussed, being particularly relevant to this study given the characteristics of the researched setting. As a certain level of freedom in the setting is the first condition for TA, this second section covers freedom in the educational setting. Finally, given the hypothesis that sees creativity as a potential component of TA, the research literature regarding creativity in ELT (see 2.7), and the characteristics which overlap in definition with the characteristics of TLA are discussed.

The researcher has chosen to use graphs and tables to help visualize the overlapping aspects in the research literature regarding TLA, its components, and the possible relationship with creativity as a potentially observable construct when combined with agency. Autonomy is the first concept to be reviewed in the following section.

2.2   Autonomy in languages

Autonomy is a concept that serves in many areas of knowledge and debate. Composed of the Greek roots "autos" (self) and "nomos" (law or rule) the word autonomy initially referred to independent Greek cities, guided by their own rules (Kuhler & Jelinek, 2013). Autonomy has recently emerged in education as an important aspect. As Lamb (2008) and others (Jimenez Raya

& Vieira, 2015) observe, the goal of autonomy in education is to re-establish democratic processes in the learning-teaching that entails commitment and empowerment of teachers.

The teachers' internal desire to conduct actions independently requires a certain level of autonomy. Personal autonomy (Benson, 2008) and willingness (Thavenius, 1999) are basic elements which can guide people through autonomous and empowered lives. They also represent an initial stage or pre-requisite for the development of autonomy in learning and teaching. The role of autonomy is essential to consider when education represents meaningful and lifelong opportunities to learn and teachers assume the responsibility to support autonomy. As Jimenez Raya and Vieira (2015) argue, the development of lifelong learning, initiative, and personal creativity, are relevant in occupational life in the current globalized economy. Teachers' autonomous spirits should be investigated, characterised, and supported (Jimenez Raya and Vieira, 2015).

Diverse aspects have been considered when the term autonomy is analysed. As Allwright (1990) states, autonomy is '…a constantly changing but at any time an optimal state of equilibrium between maximal self-development and human interdependence'. He introduced the term TA in the language teaching literature emphasising the role of the teacher which was developed later (Little, 1995; McGrath, 2000; Smith, 2000, 2003; 2011; Huang, 2005, 2013; Smith & Erdogan 2008; Benson & Huang, 2008; Benson, 2008, 2015; 2017, Jimenez Raya and Vieira, 2015, and others) and the mutual dependence with learner autonomy (Thavenius, 1999; McGrath, 2000; Little, 2004; Jimenez Raya & Vieira, 2015).

Since Holec (1981) introduced the term autonomy as 'the ability to take charge of one's own learning' in teaching languages, the interest of autonomy has risen in language education. Regarding autonomous language learners, the Common European Framework of Reference for languages (Council of Europe, 2001) emphasises the importance of the own awareness regarding the current language learning level, personal learning targets, selection of suitable materials to support the learning process, and honest-self-assessment. Sinclair (2008) defines learner autonomy as a capacity for potential individual and group self-directed learning behaviours. The participants in this research are learning to teach, and this is a different dimension into TA, in this case, TLA.

Learner autonomy (LA) is not the focus of this research; however, the literature shows that LA is strongly dependent on the development of TA (Thavenius, 1999; Little 2000,2004; Raya, Lamb and Vieira, 2007; Lamb, 2008; Micallef, 2017). Thavenius (1999) defines an autonomous teacher as one who supports the autonomy of the learners taking their own responsibility for their

learning process. For this reason, an indicative of development of TLA in this study is LA support in the classroom, understood as a capacity to provide learners the opportunity to be autonomous.

This strong interdependence of teacher and learner autonomy was also discussed by Jimenez Raya, Lamb and Vieira (2007), who posit that it is impossible to develop autonomy if not all members of the learning community have a degree of freedom. Here the relevance of autonomous spirits in both teachers and learners in the lessons.

LA has been defined in different ways. As Little (2007) observes, the main interest in the '80s regarding autonomy was referring to adult education and self-access learning systems. Then, in the '90s, LA was more frequently seen in the curricula of language teaching, having as a goal independent learning or critical thinking. Indeed, he also posits that LA is not a constant in all language learners; on the contrary, autonomy is not a common characteristic amongst them. Finally, Little reflects on the importance of supporting autonomous language learning theories that entail the development of learners and the way to evaluate the results.

Different aspects have been considered essential to develop LA such as freedom (Trebbi, 2008), pedagogies supporting LA (Jimenez Raya & Vieira, 2015; Smith & Erdogan, 2008), development of competencies to use the language autonomously (Macaro, 2008), interrelation with TLA (Little, 2000; La Ganza, 2008) among others. Little (2007, p.23) emphasises that the need for innovative structures that consider new teaching approaches has a political implication. The importance to provide innovation in teaching is observed different under every teaching scenario.

LA is understood variously as Sinclair's (1999) survey shows. At that time, she compared many publications regarding the definition of LA. She provides a summary of relevant aspects regarding this term, which was mainly originated from a conference on LA held in Hong Kong in 1994. Sinclair observes that philosophical, political, and social rationales for learning autonomy are present in diverse educational programmes. The conception of LA varies depending on each setting, as well as the considered aspects when defining it. Vieira (2017, 2019) also identifies some context sensitive characteristics of LA. This study considers the participants' support of LA in the classroom as an observed manifestation of TLA. For this reason, the following section moves on to look at the research into TA and TLA. The interdependence between teacher and learner autonomy is identified as well as the difference between TA and TLA.

2.3   Teacher autonomy (TA)

The discussion about the nature and development of TA in each educational setting still has misconceptions. The reason is the number of components when defining the term and the scant

research when defining it (Huang, 2013). For this reason, it is important to have a clear idea of the meaning of TA to identify the aspects that are considered when the term is defined or researched. Diverse definitions have referred to different constructs when defining TA (Wermke & Höstfält 2014), dimensions (Benson, 2011), and domains (McGrath, 2000; Smith & Erdogan, 2008).

Regarding dimensions, TA has been defined as the capacity to self-direct one's teaching (Little, 2000; McGrath, 2000; Vieira, 1999), the freedom to self-direct one's teaching (Benson, 2000) or TLA, an aspect of teacher autonomy, as a capacity to self-direct one's learning as a teacher (Smith 2003; Smith & Erdogan 2008), that is the focus of this study.

This study has adopted Benson's (2017, p.20) stand, conceptualising TA since two perspectives or dimensions: "situationally, as the freedom granted to teachers to exercise their discretion in teaching, and attributionally, as teachers' internal capacity to exercise this freedom productively". This perspective entails the impact that social and institutional structures have on the planned actions of the teachers. So, TA is the result of the teacher attributes or capacities and the possibilities of acting in the setting. Even though participants in this study are student teachers with not teaching experience, they were observed from their teaching capacities demonstrated in their practicum, as well as their awareness of reflections of their teaching capacity considered as TLA.

According to Benson (2013), a capacity specifies what a person can do, or has the potential to do, rather than what they actually do. Specifically, TA refers to that capacity to teach, having a certain freedom in the setting and desire to teach with particular purposes. Figure 2 illustrates this interrelated vision that Benson recognises amongst interdependent factors when learner and TA are defined.

Figure 2 What is a capacity? from Benson 2013
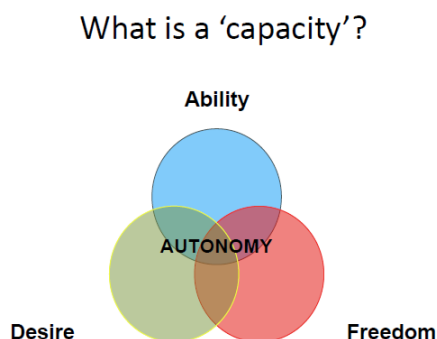
Benson sets autonomy as a capacity that can be supported in the classroom. As learners, teachers have a certain freedom and real desire or willingness to learn, and develop more abilities to achieve autonomy. Autonomy will increase proportionally to the existence of personal aspects

and the influence of the setting. This figure illustrates, that interdependence with internal (ability and desire) and external (freedom) factors that makes autonomy possible in each setting. TA impacts on the learners' type of activities and interaction.

As Jimenez Raya and Vieira (2015) identify, TA empowers teachers and learners, applying critical and contextualised pedagogies that meet the needs and interests of the students. In general, TA concerns with control (Smith, 2000), including external control over its own teaching (McGrath, 2000). Huang (2013) asserts more research regarding TA components is necessary to understand and consider different factors that can impact the development of autonomy amongst teachers. Responding to this suggestion, one observed capacity in this study, creativity, has been proposed as a potential component of TLA

Since Little (1995) reflects on the role of the teacher supporting autonomy in language education, autonomy has been recognised as a positive capacity of teachers, identified as a valuable component in curricula. Little (ibid) also observes that an autonomous teacher can engage in self-directed teaching and is a critical thinker who teaches others to learn autonomously and live with others. Critical thinking appears as another characteristic related to TA.

Freire (1978) refers to critical thinking as an expression of freedom to contextualise teaching, identified in this study through actions and criteria to contextualised teaching. As Giroux (2013) recognises, supporting autonomy and developing critical thinking in education can avoid obedient consumer policies in these globalized times. Nowadays, autonomy in education is deeply related to critical thinking and lifelong learning (Freire, 1978; Little, 1995; Jimenez Raya & Vieira, 2015).

Autonomous teachers are engaged with their management of teaching. They are also considered the starting point for solving school problems (Melennyzer, 1990; Short, 1994, cited in Parker, 2015). In this sense, Little (1995) provides a seminal reflection about the *personal responsibility for their teaching*, and the level of control and freedom they can accomplish *via continuous reflection and analysis*. He highlights the nature of autonomous individuals developing their teaching with awareness and responsibility. However, the teacher is not the only one responsible for the results in the setting. In this sense, Little (2000) affirms that teachers who can enhance autonomy can do so because they are autonomous learners and understand its meaning. He (2004) also highlights that autonomous teachers are engaged with supporting the students' second language acquisition (SLA) process and creating autonomous environments. Even these reflections refer to teacher learners but it is hypothesised that these actions would also be observed in the teacher learners in this study, as the schools in which they are teaching consider them to be *de facto* teachers.

Many conferences have focused on the term TA and have contributed developing a discourse with aspects to consider when defining it (Nottingham, 1998; Hong Kong, 2000; Edinburgh, 2001; Singapore, 2002 among others). Yu-Hong and Ting (2012) identify that the view and the trend of TA have changed considerably over the years and continue to evolve, considering diverse aspects that hamper or support it. More research is necessary to clarify a definition of TA (Little, 2000) and the situated meaning and impact of the application of it in each sociocultural context as Johnson and Golombeck (2016) recognise. This study plans to capture the situated meaning of TLA as well as the nature of autonomous teacher-learners.

Every definition of TA highlights specific capacities and includes different aspects or dimensions that constitute the term. In simple terms, the glossary of education reform (2014) recognises that TA is a relevant and current term, discussed and included in the curricula in many schools in America. TA is defined as 'the professional independence of teachers in schools, especially the degree to which they can make autonomous decisions about what they teach to students and how they teach it'.

Many factors determine the results of that autonomous initiative in teaching. According to Johnson and Golombeck (2016), mediators in every educational setting can conduce to diverse results and impact TA. These mediators are the ethos in the school, the programmes, and the conditions in the setting, amongst others. Educational policies can hamper TA in public schools, especially when limiting the professionalism, creativity, or effectiveness of the teachers. They also claim that teachers with the conviction of being autonomous make the difference in the context, even though autonomy is not an individual act. Autonomy is interdependent with many other factors and actors, especially among teacher learners. The term TLA as presented in the section below.

2.4   Teacher-learner autonomy (TLA)

TLA is a domain of teacher autonomy, as considered in this study, that has not been widely researched, but positive results in many studies have shown its advantages (Smith and Erdogan, 2008; Ok, 2016). TLA considers the relevance of autonomy in that process of learning to teach. TLA is observed in this study as these capacities, knowledge and attitudes of teachers, who are learning to teach, in order to show an autonomous spirit in their classes, considering their students as the centre of the learning-teaching process. According to Richards (2013), student teachers are considered novice teachers without much experience in this practicum phase. Little (2000) posits that TLA is seen as a capacity to self-direct one's learning as a teacher.

Following this debate, considering student teachers' lack of teaching experience, Smith (2003) and others (Smith & Erdogan 2008; Ok, 2016) have emphasised that student teachers can develop a sense of critical autonomy during initial teacher training. On the other hand, Richards (2013) emphasises that student teachers are less likely to be autonomous and creative than experienced teachers because they do not have an appropriate number of techniques and strategies to apply in the classroom. However, this study considers the possibility that committed student teachers can apply creative and engaging teaching strategies in the settings where they teach English.

Kumaravadivelu (2012) establishes that student teachers need to teach new generations facing different world paradigms and different interests in different scenarios. Their nature can be identified through key aspects student teachers apply, reflect, and prioritise in their practice. They learn to adapt their efforts according to their audience; these changes require agency and help understand their teaching development (see 2.5.4).

Smith (2000) posits that TLA refers to that empathy felt when a teacher recognizes the usefulness of their own learning in service of the interests and needs of the learners (see 2.5.3). This entails willingness (see 2.5.1) as a capacity to act independently and in cooperation with others, as a socially responsible person. Smith also observes that this level of awareness highlights the impact of TLA in the setting. Teachers are considered as constant learners, not applying the same definition to themselves as to language learners. In fact, this study analyses teaching-learning development by observing the teaching characteristics of the participants and how their teaching changes over the practicum.

When referring to student teachers, their lack of experience impacts the expressions of TLA. In their study, Smith and Erdogan (2008) mention the interdependence with 'others' when developing TLA. They emphasize the necessity of learning in a society. In Vygotskyan terms (1978), this is the process of internalization of knowledge, developing interdependence with others and shortening the zone of proximal development (ZPD) (see 2.6). Smith (2003) underscores the reality of the teacher being also a learner of teaching. In foreign language education, teachers constantly learn the language they teach and consider their mother tongue.

Nevertheless, Ok (2016) posits that developing a sense of autonomy in future teachers should be integral to their training. Ok also affirms that the expectations of the trainers are important in the process of the student teachers achieving autonomy as teachers and learners. Both domains are considered in this study, identifying the similarities and differences in teacher and student teacher roles.

Jimenez Raya, Lamb and Vieira (2007) define TLA as 'the competence to develop as a self-determined, socially responsible and critically aware participant in (and beyond) educational environments, within a vision of education as (inter) personal empowerments and social transformation'. Both levels, individually and socially identified, give the autonomous teachers the role of agents of change in the educational setting, as McGrath (2000) also recognises. This dual autonomous nature of teaching and learning to teach constitutes a key research point for this study.

2.4.1   Working definition

Analysing all these concepts, this study considers TLA as a dimension of TA. This conceptual review enhance the importance to consider student teachers as potential teachers who behave as engaged teachers. In this study, TLA was classified in two dimensions (Benson, 2017), as a personal attribution observed in the classroom, prioritizing the learners, and considering situational factors when teaching a foreign language. Regarding the personal dimension (Smith and Erdogan, 2008), this study also considers teachers' capacities, knowledge, and attitudes that focus on autonomous results. And it identifies that all these qualities are observed when managing to teach and resolving constraints (Jimenez Raya & Vieira, 2015).

Regarding the setting (Johnson and Golombeck, 2016), the ethos in the context that supports the freedom to implement pedagogies for teaching is also considered. The role of the mentors, the conditions for teaching, and the interdependence with learners are examples of these external factors that impact TLA. It is important to review the characteristics of student teachers who try to be autonomous, especially because this research tries to identify constructs directly related to TLA, as described in the following section.

2.5   Characteristics of autonomous teachers

Teaching capacities and characteristics of autonomous student teachers are considered in this study, based on McGrath's (2000) view, that identifies two domains of TA: as a teacher and a teacher-learner. McGrath defines TA in terms of both self-directed professional development and in terms of professional freedom (see Table 1). The participants in this study, who are seen in both senses of doer and learner in the teaching field, are seen from these two domains: teachers and student teachers.

McGrath (2000) posits that self-directed professional development (based on Benson, 2000) refers to the condition when teachers can self-direct actions to improve their teaching. The teacher is considered a researcher but also as a reflective practitioner. McGrath claims that the

teacher first has to encourage a sense of critical thinking to develop autonomy, autonomous teachers seek self-directed professional actions. He considers professional development as an autonomous expression to learn how to improve in the teaching field. This constant professionalization teachers adopt is a precondition or expression of autonomy they can develop and fulfil constantly. In this study, this view is the first and main reference for recognising autonomy amongst the participants.

In terms of professional freedom, McGrath (based on Breen & Mann, 1997) observes a degree of personal decision-making in preventing curriculum implementation from being controlled by others. He describes *others* as what he calls controllers such as textbooks, prescribed or controlled curricula and standardized exams. McGrath concludes that TA starts when teachers overcome those constraints in the classroom that he considers instruments of control. In that sense, teachers sometimes take on the decisions others take and their classroom practices have a degree of control. This professional development model and awareness support this study: analysing the participants' actions regarding their permitted autonomy in the teaching setting (see 4.2.8). This model was considered a key reference in this study to identify expressions of autonomy among the participants, viewed as teachers and student teachers.

Table 1 (see below) shows McGrath's categorization of autonomous actions to show three levels or dimensions of autonomy observed in teaching. Level 1 refers to the actions imposed in the setting that the teacher has to cope with, for instance, a course book, the established curriculum or predetermined exams. In this level, the absence of autonomy is observed. Level 2 entails the efforts of the teachers, such as designing lessons considering the interests and motivations of the learners regarding their learning process. In this case, the controllers in the course can engage learners in their own learning process. Level 3 refers to the awareness of their teacher development as an influential factor for the student teachers process.

Teacher development is necessary to improve the setting. A teacher who can notice and work on the needs of the setting can support an entire community. These dimensions can be observed through the awareness of the teachers regarding the needs of the educational context, contained in table 1.

Chapter 2

Table 1. The evolution of an evaluative stance. Based on McGrath, 2000.

Level	Self-focused	Other focused
1	Achievement of imposed goal	Head of the department
2	Own role in managing students' learning	Students' needs and wants
3	Own professional development	-

McGrath identifies a research gap in implementing innovative and autonomous ideas necessary to cope with adverse educational contexts and resolve possible constraints. In this study, considering creativity as a component of TA for managing to teach and resolving constraints can generate relevant information regarding this gap McGrath identifies.

Smith and Erdogan (2008) continue with this discussion, emphasising the domains of TA as a teacher and as a learner of teaching. They interviewed ELT master's students doing their practicum, with a programme designed to support their autonomy when learning to teach as an outcome of the course. Smith and Erdogan apply the concept of constructs to emphasise how we interpret those components of a concept or definition. Based on this reference, this study also looks for a construct to understand better TLA. Basically, their definition of TLA refers to developing appropriate skills, knowledge and attitudes for oneself as a teacher, in cooperation with others, where they emphasise these constructs observed in different dimensions.

Smith and Erdogan's framework illustrates the multidimensional nature of TA, differentiating two independent but interrelated domains: TA and TLA. Their model clarifies these domains of TA: the teacher developing professional abilities with actions in the classroom and the teacher learning how to improve teaching or specialize in an area. In line with other studies (Vygotsky, 1978; Johnson & Golombek, 2016), the social environment and the teaching setting also impact teaching development.

Table 2 below illustrates Smith and Erdogan's (2008) model of how a teacher can exhibit three levels of TA to promote learner autonomy (represented by A, B, and C). In this case, TA is considered as a capacity to self-direct one's teaching, based on the research of Thavenius, (1999) and McGrath (2000). The following categories (D, E, F) represent teacher autonomy as the freedom to self-direct one's development (Benson, 2000). This model focuses on student teachers and their possibilities of teaching development and/or teaching-learning.

The first three dimensions, A, B, and C, are classified according to the professional actions of the teachers; how teachers manage their teaching efforts in the classroom. The other three dimensions, D, E, and F, consider professional development, assuming that teachers are continuously learning.

Table 2. Dimensions of TA, in Smith and Erdogan, 2008.

Concerning professional action	Examples
A. Self-directed professional action	Self-directed teaching
B. Capacity for self-directed professional action	Teacher autonomy (capacity to self-direct one's teaching)
C. Freedom from control over professional action	Teacher autonomy (freedom to self-direct one's teaching)
About professional development	Examples
D. Self-directed professional development	Self-directed teacher-learning
E. Capacity for self-directed professional development	Teacher-learner autonomy (capacity to self-direct one's learning as a teacher)
F. Freedom from control over professional development	Teacher-learner autonomy (freedom to self-direct one's learning as a teacher)

Correlating this classification with Huang's (2005) proposal, categories A and D correspond to the motivational dimensions of autonomy. Categories B and E are considered technical and psychological expressions of autonomy. Finally, categories C and F represent the political dimensions of autonomy.

In other words, student teachers develop diverse capacities during their training process to become teachers. Similarly, Huang (2013) researched in his context the nature of autonomous student teachers in longitudinal research during the entire 4 years of the ELT programme where he worked. Huang analyses the nature of autonomous student teachers through two components of TA: identity and teacher agency. Huang observes that autonomy is developed and acquired over time as a long-term process. Having researched both constructs, he reports how the participants developed these characteristics throughout their degree. This study adopts Huang's focus on researching identifiable and observable TA constructs to understand its nature better.

TA has also been associated with reflective work or research. Lieberman (1995) identifies two domains for the teacher in teaching: the teacher is seen as a teacher in the classroom and as a researcher of his own work. As other researchers (Smith & Rebolledo, 2018; Benegas & Smith, 2020) have also noticed, Lieberman observes teachers wondering and reflecting on their own characteristics in their teaching practice and being researchers in the classroom. Once teachers identify their own specific features in the setting and the impact of changing practices within this context, this affects their teaching and curriculum design. Lieberman concludes that this dimension has become popular as action research, to improve the setting with proper interventions and recognising the characteristics of the context.

Finally, as in other studies (Huang, 2013; Smith & Erdogan, 2008; McGrath, 2000), the researcher proposes **a dual dimension of** TLA in this study: the participants performed as language teachers inside the classroom, managing and controlling the class, and as learner of teaching. The data underpin these criteria because once they left the classroom, student teachers analysed and reflected their actions in class to improve their teaching. In this sense, student teachers in this study are seen as teacher-learners.

2.5.1 Development of TLA, awareness and willingness

Different dimensions have been researched and identified to analyse the development of TLA. For instance, Thavenius (1999) points out the importance of a constant supportive attitude and introspection during classroom practices or training. This study considers the importance of the participants' constant introspection.

Student teachers require a sense of awareness regarding the impact and relevance of autonomous behaviours. As Hacker and Barkhuizen (2008) claim, teachers understand their personal approach better when reflecting on and understanding their actions, resulting in better cognitive development. This teacher awareness has an impact on the development of autonomy. Similarly, Parker (2015) emphasises the importance of awareness and application of TA. Student teachers, who represent the future of the profession, value autonomy in diverse senses.

Willingness is another common construct seen as an essential component when defining TA. Littlewood (1999) describes TA considering two different components or constructs. The first component is an independent decision-making capacity, which includes having abilities and skills for action or agency. The second component is willingness, which involves motivation and confidence to carry out choices.

Another stance that emphasises willingness is the research of Huang (2005), who defines TA as willingness with capacities and freedom of the teachers to control their own teaching and learning. Huang also sees language teachers adapting two domains: as teachers and as student teachers. In the latter domain, teachers focus on their own learning. Contrary to this conclusion, this research considers the student teachers priorities to be the core of their efforts apart from their own teaching-learning process.

The researcher illustrates the relationship between the dimensions of these constructs in Table 3 (see below). Willingness is an essential construct in Huang's model of TA and implies motivation regarding diverse actions related to autonomy. Similarly, in the second dimension, having the capacity to be autonomous refers to the technical possibility to act with a degree of freedom. As

Cotteral (1995) claims, besides freedom, the psychological preparedness to perform autonomously implies making necessary decisions in the classroom.

The third dimension regarding freedom includes taking suitable teaching decisions using their agency. Whether a teacher has a certain degree of freedom to be autonomous is due to a flexible policy that permits them to act as they consider necessary. Critical thinking is also related to autonomy because actions are applied in a suitable moment in the classroom. Creativity is undoubtedly related to critical thinking, and is necessary when teachers adapt classes and resolve constraints (see 2.7).

Table 3 Interrelation between constructs and dimensions of TA, based on Huang 2005

TEACHER AUTONOMY		
CONSTRUCTS	DIMENSIONS	
• **Willingness**	Social	Motivational
• **Capacity**	Technical	Psychological
• **Freedom**	Critical	Political

Student teachers in this study construct their identity as Huang (2013) claims, still learning to teach, and probably trying to adapt suitable methodologies and materials for their contexts. Under this view of autonomy, a teacher who desires to act with awareness and can take control in the setting is a good candidate to become an autonomous teacher as considered in this study.

Teaching management is a relevant characteristic of autonomous teachers. As Jimenez Raya and Vieira (2015) define it, TA is teachers' willingness and ability to manage teaching constraints, develop a sense of professional agency, and engage the development of learner agency amongst their students. This definition and its constructs are represented in Figure 3 below. The development of TA entails constructs such as agency amongst teachers and learners and considers factors that impact the development of individual autonomy expressed as willingness and ability to teach and resolve constraints. It also considers their interdependence and how they interact with the setting.

Figure 3 A diagrammatic representation of TA (based on Jimenez Raya and Vieira, 2015)
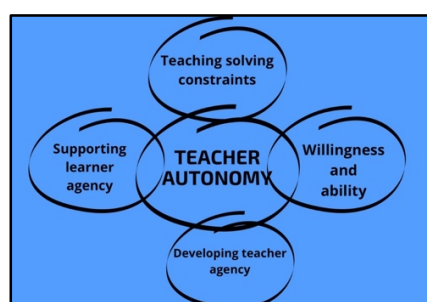
As illustrated in the figure, the proportional agency both teachers and learners develop, together with their willingness and abilities, will let the teacher develop more autonomy when teaching and resolving constraints. It seems that this willingness and agency are factors that develop and construct the individual identity in each teacher, as analysed in the following section.

2.5.2   Teacher professional identity

Identity and autonomy appear to be closely linked regarding activities done in the classroom, gap that requires more research (Richards & Cotteral, 2015; Pennington, 2015; Rodrigues, Sanchez, Kuchah, 2018). Heisey (2011, p. 81) posits that identity is 'situated within the mind' but also exists 'within a social context'. According to Pennington (2015), teacher identity is considered a construct, and a mental image or even a model of what being a teacher means.

This identity guides teachers' practices in enacting being a teacher through specific acts of teacher identity. It is important to identify the construct or model of teacher identity associated with each teaching field. Another aspect is what teachers who work in a specific field need to know and do. Individual teachers have their own internal belief of what it means to be teachers in their chosen field. This internal model of teacher identity should connect individual teachers to the general model of teacher identity within the setting where they work and with other teachers from similar areas.

Teacher identity is integrally related to the practice and professional development of teachers. As Rodrigues, Sanchez and Kuchah, (2018) observe, reflection and adequate teaching approaches complement teacher-learner's previous experiences and values acquired in their formal education system. If the programme provide them with certain teaching tools, student teachers can apply contextualised strategies and develop their own critical identity under diverse settings. This study also considers constant participants' reflections to understand the nature of their actions, even though their identity is not the focus of this research.

As Ballantyne and Zhukov (2017) posit, teacher identity developed early in the teacher's career underpins classroom competence and successful teaching, interaction, and collaboration with colleagues. They analyse the perceptions of novice teachers regarding their professional identities, and factors in their first teaching experiences. Their participants stated that professional and personal skills associated with a positive outlook on life and career were essential to developing a positive professional identity. On the other hand, isolation, heavy

workload, exhaustion, and lack of work-specific skills were aspects that overwhelmed their participants. Regarding their attitude, they succeeded in defining a positive professional identity.

In another empirical study, Lasky (2005) claims that teacher professional identity defines how teachers define themselves and others. Through the study of Lasky using a sociocultural approach, the connection between teacher identity, agency, and vulnerability are analysed. The study was done at the secondary school level in a period of educational reforms in Canada. The participants, teachers with different years of experience, recognised the impact of many factors when defining their identity and developing their agency. Some of these factors were personal beliefs regarding the correct way to teach, their teacher education, a generational perspective of education, more teacher individualized activities in the curricula, personal motivation for teaching, and current political and social changes regarding their subject area.

In her reflection, Lasky (ibid) also reflects on how the impact of an imposed reform made teachers feel that their role was more impersonal, less humanistic. Assessment was generalised with the use of rubrics and not very useful for the learners; consequently, their identity changed. The teachers' sense of purpose also affected their professional identity regarding their willingness to be openly vulnerable with their learners. Vulnerability was identified when participants in that study dared to try innovations in their teaching. Their main motivation to innovate was they felt responsibility for providing a holistic education for their students. They perceived their efforts as an obligation with their learners, showing a constant commitment that shaped their professional identity. Lasky concludes that the participants emphasised the importance of constructing reliable rapport with their students, as part of their teaching process.

As Ballantyne and Zhukov (2017) posit, a productive identity aligns well with the nature of the teachers' work and their own perceptions, is flexible, and allows for teacher agency. Griffiths (2020) posits, what teachers do in their classrooms reflects their conceptions of how others perceive this identity. Identity in this study was not the intended to be the main research focus just the criterion to select participants because they visualised themselves to be autonomous and creative teachers. Indirectly, this autonomous identity participants claimed to have triggered actions (ie. Agency) that they considered to be part of their professional role. Reflective decisions taken in the classroom with an autonomous spirit are main interest in this study.

Teacher identity influences how teachers 'construct their own ideas of how to be, how to act, and how to understand their work and their place in society' (Sachs, 2005, p. 15 cited in Yasan, 2018). Empathy and motivation are also factors that have an impact on teacher engagement as reported below.

2.5.3   Motivation and Empathy

Motivation has been defined in many ways, Ferguson (2009) claims that "the construct of motivation is generally used to refer both to the energy as well as the direction of behaviour, and this direction is often said to be provided by the goal." In this study, the observed engagement of the participants, interested on the process of their learner's language acquisition was the reference to code motivation.

Motivating ways of creative teaching can make the learning process more exciting, engaged, and stimulating. As Constantinides (2015, p. 122) emphasises, there is a need to 'implement renewed lesson planning and design attractive materials to obtain more effective teaching results'. However, the lack of support for teacher education regarding student teachers, taking for a granted that they are already creative people, can affect this motivation.

Ushioda (2006) refers to integrative motivation related to aspects such as self and identity. She observes that motivational issues are related to linguistic diversity, mobility and social integration in this globalised world. She also refers that motivation socially constructed in the process of learning is framed in a theory of autonomy. Autonomy relates both practical and pedagogical motivation. Ushioda also relates identity and human agency with motivation, especially considering the autonomous role of the learner and user of the foreign language.

Recent research regarding teacher motivation has been associated with other factors in education as reported in Han and Yin's (2016) review. As part of continuous professional development, teacher training and teaching-learning, teacher motivation has been researched amongst student teachers. Motivation is considered in this study as the initiative or individual determination to adapt the teaching practice to the learners' need and interests.

Empathy has been identified from diverse angles; in their review of definitions, Aliverti and Carras (2021) cite different perspectives such as when people put themselves in someone else's shoes or understand moods, emotions and experiences. Aspects such as affective or emotional responses to cope with another person's situation are also mentioned. The researchers also notice that pluri-lingual and pluri-cultural competences, critical thinking and agency have recently been identified to increase the level of cultural empathy. In their study, they adopt the three steps model recovered from Aliverti, Chionopoulou and Kantarakis (2018) to develop empathy in the classroom. These steps are:

a) Prepare the conditions
b) Engage the audience
c) Reflect critically and act linking the contents of the course with real life

These steps are understood in this study in the sense of considering and connecting the participant's students with language activities, placing empathy as this teaching component to engage their learners.

Smith (2000) claims that TLA, refers to that empathy felt when a teacher recognizes the usefulness of their own learning in service of the interests and needs of the learners.

Empathy is defined by Deitch and Feshbach (2009 p. 85) as 'communication by the teacher will result in students experiencing greater understanding and acceptance and that they will thus develop more positive attitudes themselves and towards schooling'. In this study, empathetic participants are identified when considering their students' needs and interests to plan their lessons.

Empathy is also suggested in specific language areas (ESP) and the university education as a capacity to understand or feel what another person is experiencing (Stebletsova & Torubarova, 2017). In the field of languages, this empathy represents this opportunity to engage learners and connect them with the real word (Aliverti and Carras, 2021) as well as an agentive response to everyday action in the classroom (Huang, 2013). In the next section, the relationship between the development of agency and TA is analysed.

2.5.4   Agency related to the development of autonomy

Agency has been a widely-discussed term in many areas of knowledge: philosophy, sociology, psychology, anthropology, and politics. Emibayer and Mische (1998, p.962) focus on a wide view of this term, which they consider a 'temporally embedded process of social engagement, informed by the past (in its "iterational" or habitual aspect) but also oriented toward the future (as a "projective" capacity to imagine alternative possibilities) and toward the present (as 'practical-evaluative capacity to contextualize past habits and future projects within the contingencies of the moment'). Using this chordal triad is possible to characterise the specific 'tone' of the engagement of people with events in their contexts at specific times'. Agency has a pivotal role in teacher practice and can play an important role in addressing TA.

In Figure 4, the representation of this framework of teacher agency is illustrated. As Duff (2012) also recognises, this sense of agency also leads people to make choices, take control, self-regulate, and pursue their goals as individuals leading, potentially, to personal or social transformation.

Figure 4 Framework of teacher agency based on Emibayer and Mische (1998).
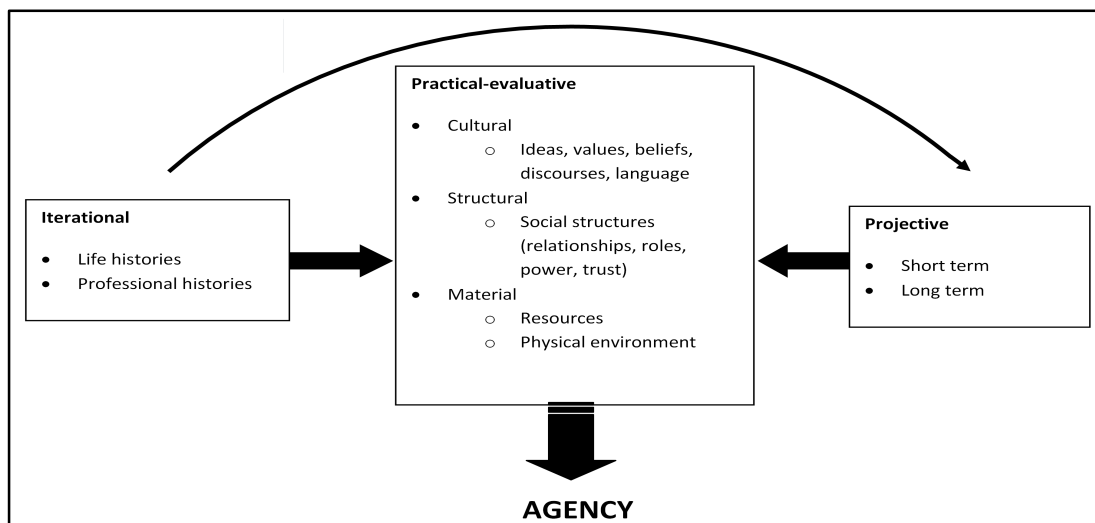
Agency has been defined and analysed since different angles as shown in this section. Some researchers (Benson, 2007; Huang, 2013) claim that agency can be seen as one of the elements that precede or is present in the development of TA in the sense of self-directed behaviour. Benson (2007) concludes in his state of the art review of autonomy that agency can be seen as part of the origin of the development of autonomy. Benson affirms that the development of autonomy entails the establishment of a personal agenda and the conception of personal agency, guided by personal meanings and purposes. This study examines the emerging role of teacher agency (Huang, 2013; Priestley et al., 2015; Emibayer & Mische, 1998 and others) observed when participants managed to teach and resolve constraints. In this study, agency refers to the reflected actions observed in the classroom, considered to be triggered by an autonomous teaching principle.

Van Lier (2010b) defines agency as how, and the extent to which, the person is compelled, motivated, allowed, or coerced to act. Biesta and Teddler (2006, cited in Priestley et al. 2015) describe agency as the capacity for actors to critically shape their responses to problematic situations. McGrath (2000) identifies this capacity of resolving constraints amongst autonomous teachers. Agency supports the teacher in making choices, forming opinions, and reshaping professional identity in their teaching practice (Bille, 2011, cited in Jimenez Raya, 2017). However, Benson also defines as "actions that escape, or go against the grain of social conditioning and constraint" (Benson, 2017 p.21). This study takes this sense of reflective determination to act to manage teaching and solve constraints when identifying agency.

The term agency has been discussed and debated in many areas of knowledge. Sometimes agency refers to individuals, and other times to collectives when making free choices, engaging in autonomous actions, and exercising judgement in the interest of others and oneself (Campbell, 2012). Agency is a human capacity to act and make choices, constrained in a way by the social constructs (Smolcic, 2011; Priestley et al., 2015) inherent to any given time and place. "Agency highlights that actors always act by mean of their environment... the achievement of agency will always result in the interplay of individual efforts, available resources, and contextual and structural factors" (Biesta and Teddler, 2007, p. 137, cited in Priestley et al. 2015). Agency also implies the capacity to make decisions on behalf of others, which are in their interest (Campbell, 2012), as a common practice amongst teachers.

TA and teacher agency both have similar constructs in their nature. To begin with and to mark the difference between both concepts, Huang (2013) emphasises that teacher agency focuses on self-conscious reflective teaching actions while TA is concerned with a sense of control of the teaching. Huang also reports that, as many other researchers have concluded (Chik, 2007; Morita, 2004; McKay & Wong, 1996; all cited in Huang 2013 p. 335), agency development is a factor that develops both identity and autonomy.

TA 'is not an all or nothing concept [but] a continuum in which different degrees of self-management can be exercised at different moments' (Vieira, 2009, p.16). Basically, the differentiation of the idea of teacher agency from autonomy sees the teacher as the only person responsible for the learning-teaching process. Similarly, Priestley et al. (2015) claim that the teacher is the most important factor to consider in individual learning and the development of capacities. It is essential to consider the inter-connectivity with other factors and dimensions present in the teachers' setting.

TA is more than choices, it entails capacity and willingness to manage teaching and to resolve constraints, the development of teacher agency, and learner agency (Jimenez Raya & Vieira, 2015). Other researchers (Ng & Boucher-Yip II, 2017, Priestley et al., 2015) define the teacher as an active agent in a determined context through teacher agency. For instance, Ng and Boucher-Yip (2017) define language teacher agency as a capacity to act within one's variety of activities with professional intentionality and personal choices. This study identifies this characteristic among participants, acting with a reflective intention to contextualise their teaching practice.

Teacher agency has a valuable characteristic: accurate and reflective decisions. Priestley et al. (2015) conclude that teacher agency focuses on self-conscious decisions and reflective teaching actions while TA concerns itself with a sense of being in control of the process of teaching.

Likewise, Priestley et al. (2015) also catalogue teaching as an input, the performance of the students as an output, and the teacher as an important factor in producing certain outcomes.

Huang (2013) associates directly the development of agency of the student teachers with the type of identity they have; however, identity is not the focus of this research. This study pays special attention to student teacher agency. These internal capacities contribute to managing teaching under diverse circumstances. Some participants' agency development seems essential to develop autonomous teaching management. In line with Benson's (2011) conclusion, agency is considered the first step in developing TLA. Visualising teacher agency as suitable and reflective decisions (Priestley et al., 2015; Huang, 2013) teachers make during the classes, agency is essential for a suitable adaptation to the setting. However, under extreme teaching controlled circumstances in some settings, reflective awareness of the role of the teacher could be the only achieved development.

Kumaravadivelu (2003, p.317) argues that promoting 'personal teaching theory requires determination, tolerance, endeavour, expertise, abilities, independence, and confidence when teaching'. These capacities are essential for teachers, as in this research, creativity is an identified capacity related to TLA.

Various studies agree that agency development supports future teachers in defining their personal teaching practices (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; Prestley et al., 2015; Danielewicz 2001). As Prestley et al. (2015) claim, teacher training programs have to be contextualized considering all the factors that impact the process to form learner identity. Similarly, Danielewicz (2001) suggests that the programs have to promote opportunities for teacher learners to develop the process to feel and act as a teacher. All participants were from the same BA in ELT programme, and their education impacted their teaching, as illustrated in the following section.

2.5.5   The impact of second language teacher education on autonomous teachers

> "Consciously, we teach what we know; unconsciously, we teach who we are".

> Hamachek (1999, p. 209).

The quotation above emphasises the impact of teachers in teaching. It reflects on the type of education, background, and tools that teachers acquire and use. To analyse teachers' autonomous behaviours, it is important to reflect on the formal education of future language teachers and the role of autonomy in the programmes they take. In recent times, autonomy has been appearing more constantly in the curricula, and second language teacher education (SLTE) is no exception. Burns and Richards (2009) observe that SLTE is a relatively new field that emerged

in the 1960s. They underline the importance of preparing proficient language teachers in this globalized economy, recognizing that their work has impacted both economic and social dimensions.

As Richards and Nunan (1990) posit, current programmes include knowledge, language, linguistic theoretical components, and the practical section based on language teaching methodologies to develop teaching (see 1.4.1 for the characteristics of the researched programme). From a sociocultural perspective, Burns and Richards (2009) conclude that teaching-learning emerges from social interaction in a community of practice. SLTE has two levels of mandatory responses: internal changes supported by applied linguistics and teacher education. These internal changes can make teachers aware of their role in education and of external needs, such as globalization, impact language teaching control, policies, and teacher education.

Indeed, in the field of SLTE, diverse arguments highlight some desirable features in language student teachers. Burns and Richards (2009 p. 7) argue that 'in second language contexts, language teacher education implies raising teachers' awareness of power relations inside and outside the classroom, encouraging critical self-reflection activities on teacher roles and identities, and seeking critically informed ways to enhance classroom learning opportunities'. To achieve this, Johnson (2009 p. 26) affirms that teacher participation and the educational setting are essential to define teacher education. Practitioner knowledge is a mechanism of change in teaching practice. Richards and Nunan (1990, p.15) posit that teacher education has to 'provide opportunities for the novice to acquire effective teachers' skills and competencies and discover the working rules that effective teachers use'.

As Kumaravadivelu (2012) claims, teacher training must consider current needs and changes in contemporary educational settings. For instance, Richards (2013, p. 20) recognizes many aspects that characterize proficient language teachers: "dedication, good qualifications, proper use of the foreign language, collaborative skills, commitment, and above all, individuals who are good teachers". In his study, Richards focuses on two special skills observed in proficient teachers: a creative disposition and their teaching abilities. This study looks for these possible manifestations of autonomy and creativity in the student teachers' first teaching practices.

Teacher education is not a guarantee of forming a good teacher, as Korthagen (2004) emphasises. The concept of a "good" teacher depends on the context. In the middle of the 20th century, the performance-based or competency-based model spread in teacher education. Korthagen also claims that the target was that 'concrete, observable behavioural criteria could serve as a basis for the training of novices'. (Ibid, p. 79). Johnson (2009) affirms that SLTE should consider three main aspects:

1. the contents of the programmes analysing what student teachers need to know.
2. the pedagogies that are used showing examples of how they should teach.
3. the institutional forms of delivery under which contents and pedagogies are taught.

Johnson also posits that the actions, interactions, and activities included should engage student teachers in developing their professional development effectively. Self-reflective teachers are constantly improving their teaching practices and considering the needs of the learners to implement suitable methodologies, strategies, and techniques. For these reasons, teacher education and pedagogies for autonomy play an influential role in the preparedness of the teachers to be autonomous and adapt these autonomous pedagogies, as illustrated in the following section.

2.5.6   Pedagogies for autonomy

Another dimension of TA is the degree of preparedness to support learner autonomy through the use of pedagogies for autonomy (McGrath, 2000). Jimenez Raya and Vieira (2015) affirm that current teaching language policies have changed to create more autonomous learners, support democracy, and educate learners for life in this globalized economy. They recognize three main trends in current educational reforms: educating people for life, the practice of democracy, and life learning. Jimenez Raya and Vieira (2015, p.20) consider that the target of autonomous pedagogies is 'to consider pivotal actions to enhance interpersonal empowerment'. The participants in this study did not have much teaching experience; however, learning opportunities for their students can provide meaningful classroom experiences and empowerment for all in the classroom.

Jimenez Raya and Vieira (2015) also notice that teachers working reflectively, with a critical awareness of the impact of education on the learners, can support learners with their own autonomy. Jimenez Raya (2017, p.16) emphasises that pedagogy for autonomy is fundamentally about shortening the distance between reality (what is) and ideals (what should be). In this research, the participants' reflections regarding their TA possibilities and experiences after their teaching practices are considered in order to understand their autonomous TLA nature and development.

With a neoliberal trend and a globalized idea of competitiveness, autonomy in the curriculum has become more common in policies and suggested teaching practices, but there are mismatches regarding teaching practices (Freire, 1970; Jimenez & Vieira, 2018). Jimenez Raya (2009, 2015, 2017) states that autonomous teachers are more likely to lead to autonomous learners, so

pedagogies need to contain a sense of transformation and empowerment of teachers and learners.

Benson (2001) distinguishes two kinds of teacher autonomous actions at an individual level: proactive and reactive. Proactive teachers select their methodologies and plan the contents of the lessons according to real needs of the learners. Meanwhile, reactive teachers take actions regarding all components of teaching control.

Pedagogies in teacher education have a direct impact on the development of TA. Smith (2003, p. 130) distinguishes between two levels of impact of pedagogies that enhance autonomous development. Powerful pedagogies are those that place an autonomous environment as the centre of attention when considering autonomy in the entire process. Weak pedagogies assume that learners are already autonomous, behaving autonomously in their everyday work. This assumption causes a growing gap in achieving autonomy. Jimenez Raya and Vieira (2018) suggest that teacher education could enrich professional experience rather than disempower teachers in the classroom to promote pedagogies for autonomy and equality.

Nowadays, constant modifications or reforms in the curricula worldwide support the transformation of teaching practices, including autonomy, agency, and creativity. Ng and Boucher-Yip (2017) claim that macro-level policies have to consider the changing scenarios observed in micro levels, such as culture, society, quality of materials and available resources, values, beliefs, and teaching practices. Kumaravadivelu (2006) also reflects on the relevance of using appropriate teaching efforts in each setting.

The way the environment or ecology takes implemented reforms in curricula is essential to achieve positive results. For instance, Riveros et al. (2012) reflect on the importance of a clear understanding of policy messages by individuals who interpret and apply them to achieve real changes and transform practices. They observe that the common top-down view of education policies normally emphasises TA, considering the teacher to be executing the educational agendas of the learners and directly being responsible for the results of their learners. As Kumaravadivelu (2006) claims, the teacher personal theory is essential when teachers are observed as mediators of classroom policies and results. The practicum in this research is considered an ideal opportunity to investigate how language student teachers develop, identify, and form their own initial teaching theory.

Danielewicz (2001) suggests that ELT programs should be centred on the learners, engaging them to develop a sense of being teachers, considering social interactions to interiorize their teaching process. She includes in her reflection that ethics in teaching is important, and a sense of moral

engagement with teaching. Learning to be a teacher goes beyond the use of methodologies. Furthermore, Danielewicz (ibid) also affirms that good teachers are those who identify themselves as teachers. Finally, she concludes that this identity combined with an agency is necessary to develop autonomous and suitable educational settings. Autonomous teachers can reflect and recognize the needs of their learners and their own role in the learning-teaching process, as this study seeks for.

Basically, the training process is important to support the awareness of autonomy as Johnson and Golombek (2016, p.4) claim, that 'teacher training is an intentional, deliberate and goal-directed process, and teacher education has this challenge through more theoretically and pedagogically instructional practices'. Johnson and Golombek also posit that the cognitive process is inherently social and it is the result of participating and interacting in external events that are mediated, and, as a result, psychologically internalized for the thinking process. Indeed, the researchers use a transformative model of the human mind to explain how SLTE practices entail external social interactions and internalised activities as psychological tools in the thinking of student teachers.

Johnson and Golombek (2016) also consider the teachers are actors in and on social activities defining social cognitive development situations. These psychological processes are both social consequence of culture and their own historical practices, and individual for the unique nature of the actors. Finally, they posit that teachers do not internalise straightforward their learning or experience from outside. Instead, they show their own intentions and voices to apply their instructions gathering their own meaningful objectives.

To define expertise, Johnson (1999) sets the term reasoning teaching, defined as the teacher conceptualization, construction, and explanation to respond to the social interactions and shared meanings within the community of practice, inside and outside the classroom. Teachers need to be aware of the specific characteristics in the settings: the number of students, time, kind of school, possibilities for teaching to develop their reasoning teaching or expertise. Finally, she concludes that awareness can be researched to discover teaching evidence amongst participants, with or without autonomous insights. In this study, the reflections of the participants are the key basis that underpins their awareness of their teaching nature and development, as illustrated in chapter 4.

Similarly, Johnson and Golombek (2016) propose that reasoning teaching is a meaningful stance beyond covering contents or developing skills. It entails constructing teacher agency, empowering the teacher to manage their cultural, linguistic, pedagogical, and interactional resources to support productive students learning. In other words, the teacher managing teaching and resolving constraints in the setting as this study considers regarding TA.

Sayer (2015) recognises that the curricula are another important aspect that considers autonomy in ELT. In these neoliberal times, the trend to select competitive and modern syllabus has usually introduced TSL/TFL into the curricula of both developed and developing countries. However, Giroux (2013) observes that the unequal conditions in state schools in developing countries such as lack of investments and resources provoke undemocratic conditions for the learning-teaching process in these scenarios. Giroux (ibid) calls these spaces *the dead zone of imagination* because critical thinking, among other abilities, is not a priority. Analysing this, creative methodologies can be applied by to contextualise teaching efforts and the development of that support the acquisition of teaching experience.

It is mandatory to strengthen in-service training activities, quantitatively and qualitatively, to sustain the vitality of the profession (OECDE, 1982). As Jiménez Raya (2008) claims, the transition from the industrial to the knowledge society calls for new capacities and competencies typically associated with the notion of autonomy and lifelong learning. These capacities are self-awareness, critical thinking, advanced cognitive and self-regulatory competencies, tolerance of ambiguity, cooperation and dialogic communication. These capacities form a new profile for future teachers in these times.

2.5.7   Use of technologies in ELT

The characteristics that a future teacher needs today might be changing with the arrival of new technologies. International organisations e.g. UNESCO (2015, p. 19) posit that an important aim in education is to form qualified teachers at all levels, 'empowering them with continuous professional development, including the appropriate use of technology, clear career paths that bring professional autonomy', among other benefits. Richards and Pennington (1998) affirm that the central focus of teacher education is balancing contents in teacher education syllabus and real practices of participants. Teaching practices need to be updated, As Jimenez Raya and Vieira (2015) recognize.

Kumaravadivelu (2006) posits that teaching is an activity that requires constant change in a rapidly changing world. Teachers need to renew their approaches constantly, and teacher education can support them in this pedagogical need. Smith (2019) also reflects on the impact of locally appropriate and locally determined methodologies, considering the teacher to recognise the needs in the setting. This study analyses that the degree of preparedness participants has to teach a foreign language and solve constraints in their settings provided with or without teaching tools such as technologies.

The use of technologies can provide a degree of autonomy in the teaching practice. Teacher training programmes should provide these teaching tools to prepare future teachers in the current world. For instance, Jimenez Raya (2017) emphasises that higher education providers need to train teachers to respond flexibly to changing needs in this technological age. Teachers need to promote considerable levels of autonomy, help student teachers develop critical thinking, and make decisions, be better prepared to assume responsibility and develop the capacity to cope with risks.

Indeed, Jimenez Raya (2017) observes that professional development, creativity and renegotiated identity according to the settings are active and constructive processes that contribute to the empowerment of the teachers. Moreover, every setting offers specific conditions that allow the participants to develop their teaching the way the plan. However, these student teachers adapt their lesson to specific conditions, and mediations vary from setting to setting. Thus, Jimenez Raya (ibid) concludes that every sociocultural condition of the context is also a factor to analyse when researching teaching autonomy. For these reasons, the impact of the setting is also considered in this study to analyse factors that impacted the development of autonomy, as shown in the following section.

2.6   Impact of the setting on teacher-learner autonomy

The impact of the setting is important in this study because analysing eight different contexts provide important data regarding similarities and differences that impact the teaching process. This impact of the context on the practices of autonomous teachers has been investigated by many researchers (Jimenez Raya and Vieira, 2015, 2017; Wermke & Höstfält, 2013; Benson, 2011; Lamb, 2008 and others). The teaching context plays an important role in developing TLA. Autonomy can be allowed, supported or hampered, depending on institutional and personal actions.

The ebb and flow that autonomy can reach in every context have been associated with individual capacity and power to act in the setting (Garland, 1997 cited in Parker, 2015). This study analyses commonalities of TLA through its expressions under different settings. The aim is to identify aspects in each setting, supporting or hampering the efforts of student teachers, and impacting TLA. Puebla, the state where this research is developed, is characterised for its inequality of opportunities in public education (Benson, J., 20017). This poverty characteristic of the educational context, according to the national population and dwelling census report (INEGI, 2020), provides circumstances that sometimes result challenging for teachers.

As Jimenez Raya and Vieira (2015) argue, the role of the teacher is essential and multidimensional in each setting. Teachers have to be flexible and plan their lessons carefully considering the educational setting, their engagement in a synergy with autonomy. Jimenez Raya and Vieira observe that the classroom context can disempower learners and make them feel they are not advancing in their learning process. So, teachers have to support the development of a sense of self-responsibility for their learning process.

Several researchers (Lamb 2008; Benson, 2011; Kumaravadivelu, 2006,2012; Jimenez Raya & Vieira, 2015; Kuchah K., 2016; Jimenez Raya, 2017) have noticed that every teaching setting has specific conditions and social environments that have an impact on the development of TA. The teaching skills participants in this study have internalised during their formal education are important for teaching and resolving constraints in diverse settings. This is one of the core aspects of autonomy, being flexible and adaptable in the teaching setting.

Believes regarding autonomy in the classroom have an important impact in every setting. Lamb (2008) posits that in the teaching setting, the beliefs of the teachers regarding the context are one aspect that influences their actions, but the context finally shapes the perceptions of the teachers. On the other hand, Benson (2011, 2001) affirms that given the multidimensional nature of autonomy, it leads to numerous variations in how TA is expressed and interpreted for different people or even for the same person in different settings times.

In this study, the interdependence of the teachers with the setting under diverse circumstances and different educational levels helps understand the impact of the setting supporting or hampering autonomy. To analyse this impact, this study considers two models that classify teacher autonomous behaviours, McGrath, (2000) and Smith and Erdogan, (2008). The observable characteristics of TLA amongst participants under different educational contexts also help analyse the nature of autonomous teacher-learners.

The sociocultural approach (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantof, 2000) is the reference to understand how the setting can impact the development of TA. Instruments of control in the classroom, such as books, controlled syllabus and standardised exams (McGrath, 2000), the supervisors, the adopted policies, and even parents, influence the decisions and actions (agency) of autonomous teachers. As Priestley et al. (2012) posit, the dimension to which student teacher can attain agency varies from setting to a setting. The dimensions are based on specific ambient conditions of opportunities and constraints, beliefs, values, and attributes that teachers can handle under specific situations.

Mediation is a core concept in this theory, represented by activities, symbolic tools, people, signs or circumstances under we live and interact indirectly in the world (Vygotzky, 1978; Lantolf, 2000). Conditions in every setting mediated the internalization of learning. This interaction is represented in Vygotsky's Triadic model in figure 5, considering sign, tool, and the mediated activity. It represents how humans interact through divers tools in specific history and culture. The signs represent the psychological tools that humans use through generations responding to individual and society needs. These signs represented by language, for example, are mediational means and have cultural and social characteristics that make them unique.

Figure 5 Vygotsky's Triadic Model representation.
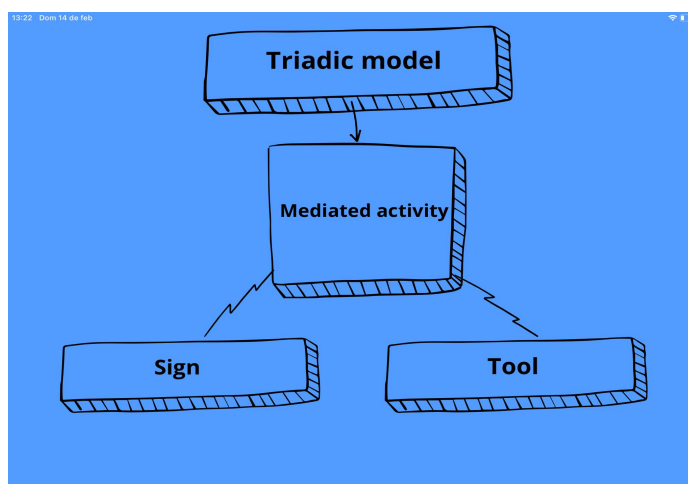
Johnson and Golombek (2016, p.25), affirm that 'specific forms of human mediation used will no doubt differ depending on the goal-directed activities in which teachers and teacher educators are engaged, as well as the institutional settings in which mediation is embedded'. When teaching concepts are internalised, this mental transformation depends strongly on the setting or the development of the social situation (Vygotsky, 1988, p. 198, cited in Johnson & Golombek, 2016). The site where social forms of mediation occur in our minds is called the zone of proximal development.

Vygotsky defined the zone of proximal development (ZPD) as 'the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers' (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86). Lantolf (2000) exemplifies the ZPD as the way to observe and understand the mediational mean in appropriation and internationalization of concepts. The ZPD has been the most researched and adopted construct in this theory (Lantolf, 2000).

Johnson and Golombek (2016, p.26) affirm that experts (teacher educators) observe the supported teaching and talk with student teachers about their potential or ZPD. This is 'the level at which they begin to perform only with considerable help from experts. This ZPD emerges in and through the activity of assisted performance inside the classroom. A characteristic in this study is that student teachers' performance during their practicum can provide relevant information in many senses. The mentor in each setting has an impact on this teaching development and the specific research conditions can contribute with this understanding. The participants in this study taught English under diverse circumstances such as large groups with more than forty students, hard schedules for their lessons, and lack of basic teaching tools in the classrooms. These settings can be considered to be under challenging circumstances (Benson J., 2019), term that is defined in the following section.

2.6.1   Challenging conditions in the setting

Challenging circumstances have been defined by many authors (West, 1960; Maley, 2001, cited in Kuchah, 2016). Kuchah (2016) suggests considering all the characteristics in the setting that affect negatively the learning-teaching process and are not under the teachers' control. Kuchah enhances how elusive and relative the term *difficult circumstances* can result due to diverse factors in the settings that represent an obstacle for teaching. Large groups with different language background, lack of libraries and books, poor proficient and discouraged teachers, students' lack of meaningful English exposures, financial and cultural issues are some examples of difficult circumstances Kuchah (ibid) mentions.

Smith (2019) also identifies large-classes as a difficult condition to teach, where the settings have relatively low-resources but most of teachers face in the world as normal conditions. In this sense, the role of mentors and supervisors is relevant as mediators, guiding their learners inside and outside the classroom and supporting them with feedback.

Johnson and Golombek (2011) observe the importance of goal-directed activities and how human mediation is embedded in the teaching practices. In this sense, Vieira (2017) observes how language teaching is defined by contexts and teacher education empower teachers by approaches. However, a necessary change in teacher training is suggested as an interspace between realities and ideals. Many mismatching factors that teachers cope with in the educational settings determine the eloquent degree of teaching, agency, autonomy or other capacities they can develop.

In this sense, Johnson and Golombek (2016) emphasise that teacher educators need to share external signs and express psychological tools that have been previously internalised in their

minds, to try diverse teaching actions that student teachers could apply in their teaching settings. This mediation can motivate student teachers to engage with their teaching practices and internalize different cultural and suitable activities for their learners, as this study looks for.

Difficult attitudes amongst learners can also represent a problem in the setting. In their study with student teachers during their transition to becoming in-service teachers, Meister and Jenks (2000) observe that novice teachers consider their own beliefs, values, and knowledge to cope with postmodern generations. Their research was developed with 42 beginning teachers working in diverse educational institutions. Understanding the situated learning-teaching process and reflecting on the necessary skills, knowledge and attitudes that teachers need in these times was their more important finding. In their analysis, Meister and Jenks(ibid) observe that novice teachers have to develop skills to face all these new challenges that the new generations imply. Finally, the researchers concluded that now, discipline implies serious concerns for the exercise of teaching. Group management presents new challenges, and the emergence of violence inside and outside the classroom is a major factor to consider when teaching.

Creativity emerged in this study as a capacity to overcome some of the constraints that the literature recognises. Creativity was an identified capacity participants applied to engage their students, and develop TLA. A revision of the term creativity since the linguistic field is included in the following section.

2.7   Creativity as a possible construct of TLA

Creativity has been considered a relevant virtue since Plato's time until modern times among diverse cultures (Shaheen, 2010). For instance, in her documented review, Shaheen highlights the relevance of creativity after the failed launch of the satellite Sputnik 1. The Soviet Union and European and Western countries enhanced the need to support creativity in education because the error was defined as lack of creativity to resolve the constraint.

Creativity is currently recognised by international institutions such as UNESCO, and many researchers as an important and more frequent component in education (Scott, 2015; Constantinides, 2015; Maley & Bolitho, 2015; Ollerhead & Burns, 2015; Richards & Cotterall, 2015; Neelson, 2016). Scott (2015) and others (Shaheen, 2010; Freire, 1970) affirm that education should support and include critical thinking and creativity in the curricula to have a real and observable impact on the society. Neelson (2016) posits that the ubiquity of creativity in education is obvious because all teaching is, in a way, a creative expression.

Creativity has a relevant role in education, and ELT is no exception. Xerri and Vassallo (2016) posit that creativity has a democratic role, individually and collaboratively because interaction is the key to its success in the language classroom. Maley and Bolitho (2015) emphasise that creativity is receiving more attention in ELT, and it can be seen as a counterweight to the common standardization of control over the curricula. In line with other authors (Pugliese, 2016), they observe that the current trend to implement international standardizations, application of inflexible examinations, support of specific competencies, linear syllabuses (Jimenez Raya & Vieira, 2015), course materials (McGrath, 2000) that set micro-objectives are constants aspects that stifle creativity in the ELT classroom.

It is important to analyse the ways creativity has been defined in the field of education. Diverse components have been used to describe creativity in education, since a personal capacity or attribute (Batey, 2012), a habit (Sternberg, 2007), or a learned capacity and necessary element in the curriculum (Priestley et al., 2012). Teachers select activities and adapt creatively their efforts to the setting (Priestley et al., 2012). History has supported creativity as a life skill in the syllabus to cope with current constraints and our changing world. In everyday events, creativity is 'the use of imagination or original ideas to create something; inventiveness' as the Oxford English dictionary defines it.

Based on the literature reviewed, managing teaching is a characteristic of both autonomous and creative teachers (Richards, 2013; Little, 2004). Richards (2013) emphasises the ability of creative teachers to cope with the learning-teaching process. Besides, he states four dimensions of creativity:

1. an original capacity to resolve struggle

2. identifying new significance and interrelations or connections between things

3. expressing innovative concepts and ideas about issues

4. applying imagination to develop innovative learning opportunities.

These observable teaching creative expressions have specific meaning and impact according to each setting under a specific time because every classroom is a new world. This study considers these references to identify creativity as part of an autonomous spirit amongst the participants.

Xerri and Vassallo, (2016, p.3) reflect that 'being creative means daring to do things differently, thus expanding the boundaries of what we know about teaching and learning in order to discover new worlds within the confines of our classroom". In this study, the ability to use creativity to engage learners and manage diverse circumstances or unexpected situations in the classroom will

be a main focus. This study adopts the definition of a group of researchers and academics called the C group, using C for creativity. They have defined creativity as 'thinking and activity in language education that is novel, valuable, and open-ended, and helps to enrich learning in our students and ourselves' (C Group, 2015). Thus, the use of creativity when managing teaching with a contextualised purpose can make a difference in the type of pedagogy applied in the classroom.

Coffey and Leung (2015) observe that creativity has been identified in teacher education since two parameters: creative language, and creative pedagogies. Creative language refers to proficiency to use the language in clever and playfully way. Regarding creative pedagogies, it refers to that innovative teaching that attracts the attention and commitment of the audience. Extrinsic or intrinsic motivation (Runco, 2008; Fasco, 2001) is necessary to support or stimulate creativity amongst teachers. Coffey and Leung (2015) also emphasise the need to increase opportunities to teach creativity and creative thinking in teacher education to help teachers construct innovative conditions in the learning-teaching process and be creative. The student teachers in this study claimed to be creative in the participants selection process. So, it is interesting to research whether they are able to prepare and have the freedom to apply creative teaching practices that engage their learners in different educational contexts during the practicum.

It is challenging to establish what are the aspects that define a creative teacher. In their research, Richards and Cotterall (2015) posit that creative teachers use diverse teaching methods, strategies and techniques when teaching. This diversity of methodologies may be directly related to teaching experience. Creativity is observed in the classroom through 'what the teacher makes possible for the students to do, not just by what the teacher does' (Stevick, 1980, cited in Maley & Bolitho, 2015). Besides, Xerri and Vassallo (2016) recognise that the teacher is the one who needs to design creative activities that let the learners behave and learn creatively.

Even though teacher-learners have not much teaching experience (Richards, 2013), creativity makes the difference to attract the attention of their students and support their language acquisition development. As Xerri and Vassallo (2016) recognise, the first step for teachers to foster creativity in the classroom is to identify themselves as creative practitioners.

In SLTE, the process of language acquisition includes many unexpected events. Fisher (2004) claims that those events can be faced through creative actions. The implementation of variation in the class results in useful learning outputs. Pavon (2017) claims that when people do or think things they have not done before and result effective, they are original and totally creative.

Teacher training has an important impact on developing teacher's creativity. This study will focus on this capacity that the researched context promotes among student teachers and their capacity to pally creative and autonomous teaching practices. Kiliannska-Przybylo (2012) identifies two levels or degree of impact; the teacher is seen as a facilitator in the classroom. The teacher is considered a controller of one's own professional development. In Kiliannska-Przybylo's research, student teachers showed special interest in developing their identity as professionals, recognizing the main characteristics of creative teachers. Their settings provided teachers with technologies and authentic materials. Teachers included meaningful activities, games, and visuals. Similarly, in McGrath's (2000) research, these two identified levels correspond to the dimensions considered in this research or reflective expressions of TA. The first level refers to the teacher's awareness that helps plan a class considering the interests and needs of the learners. The second level entails the needs of learners and the teacher's own professional development.

In Figure 6, the researcher sketches this representation of the impact of teaching creativity since the training phase and the relationship with autonomy development, based on Kiliannska-Przybylo's research. In this representation, the development of creativity in the teacher training phase overlaps with the development of autonomy, according the dimensions that McGrath identifies.

Figure 6 Impact of teacher training supporting creativity, based on Kilianska-Przybylo, 2012, overlapped with domains of TA based on McGrath, 2000.
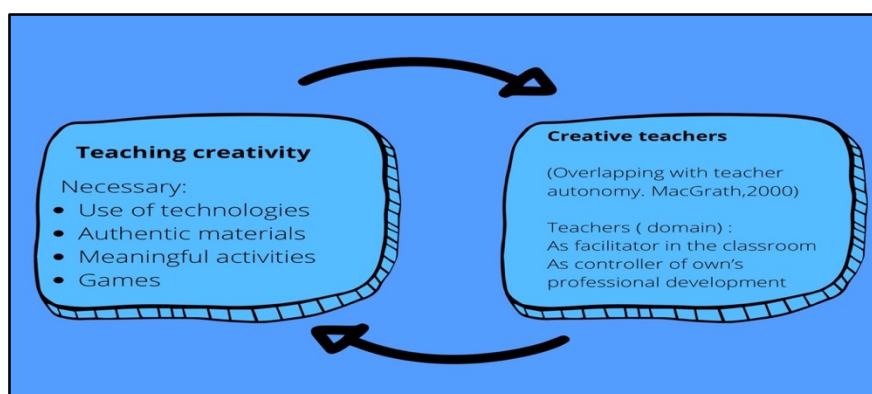
Finally, Kiliannska-Przybylo concludes that some teachers are born with that creative spirit, others can develop this skill to improve their teaching. Similarly, Lehrer (2012) affirms that creativity is a learned skill that people can improve. From these lenses, teachers can learn and develop this skill to manage their teaching, especially in the first phase of their career.

Cachia et al. (2010) observe an existing need for a change in pedagogies towards a more permissive environment that cherishes the ideas of the students, encourages risk-taking and

mistakes, and allows them to assume learning responsibility. Cachia et al. conclude that the traditional school configuration into the furniture distribution in the classrooms, the schedules, and the educational structure also need a shift and re-organisation for creativity to blossom. This study pays special attention to these details in the participants teaching practices.

Creative teachers are motivated and recognized by their constant classroom efforts. Researchers such as Constantinides (2015), Richards (2013), Richards and Cotterall (2015) have enlisted some observed characteristics of creative teachers such as lateral and flexible thinking, high productivity and originality, variety of solutions, independent views and a constant desire to engage their learners. In that study, Cotterall (2015) describes examples of creative lessons and delivery in her academic writing lessons with some case studies in the United Arab Emirates. Her creative practice is supported by academic and pedagogical knowledge, proposing creative outputs.

Richards and Cotterall (2015) analyse that creative teachers shape an individual style, with constant willingness to take risks, showing confidence and willingness. Creative teachers can modify their lesson plans with a degree of flexibility according to the needs during the lesson. They are constantly looking for new ways to do tasks, using technologies to support imagination, problem-solving and divergent thinking. A creative teacher should work in an institution where creativity is recognized and supported. Richards and Cotterall conclude that the institution plays an important role to develop creativity. Proper conditions consider teachers to have enough time, suitable materials, collaboration opportunities, and roles to increase creative teaching. When the setting provides the conditions for creativity so, the development of creative thinking is a positive result. This research has a pivotal impact in this study, guiding the analysis efforts to identify all these characteristic in the settings and the participants.

The impact of creativity in teaching is analysed with innovative teaching methods to support an effective learning process and promote creative thinking among learners to solve problems and be critical. Freire (1970), the Brazilian educator and philosopher who advocated critical pedagogies, recognizes that creativity supports critical pedagogies provoking real reflection and required actions related to inquiry and creative transformation. In his critique of formulaic models of education, he challenges all the learning community members to negotiate critically in a thoughtful manner. Awakening knowledge, creativity, and reflectivity of the oppressed (learners) is a way to unveil the power of relations that result in their marginalization. In brief, Freire posits that creativity is seen to release people from oppression by combining critical reflection and actions.

Creativity helps originate ideas, and critical thinking is used to assess these ideas and practice them. Kiliannska-Przybylo (2012) claim that the impact of creativity increases awareness in both teachers and learners. This interconnection also exists between the degree of autonomy that teachers and learners reach inside and outside the classroom, controlling their actions to improve learning-teaching. Again, these characteristics overlap with the essence of TA.

Kiliannska-Przybylo (2012) observes the deep connection between creativity and teaching languages. He recognizes the importance of creativity in teaching languages with a clear interdisciplinary relationship, observing that language and creativity are mental faculties that form part of the natural skills of the individuals.

Creative thinking is related to critical thinking (Little, 2005; Freire, 1970), a characteristic of autonomous teachers. As Pavon (2017) observes, developing creative thinking is a way to empower members of the teaching-learning process so that schools need to consider it and support critical thinking development when forming teachers.

Sternberg (2007) establishes that creativity is a habit people acquire to cope with thoughtless constraints, an innovation attitude. Resolving constraints is also a valuable characteristic of autonomous teachers (McGrath, 2000). Creativity is not an isolated term, it has to be nurtured by creative thinking (Formosa & Zammit, 2016). Freire (1970) emphasises the relevance of creative thinking for supporting real and meaningful paths for learning.

Ollerheads and Burns (2015) highlight how creative actions are symbol of resistance to restrictive practices prescribed in ESL programs for adults. In their study, they observe that a creative teacher offers learners innovative and novel ways of interacting with the target language. Their research has many similar characteristics to this study; it is a case study regarding an autonomous and engaged teacher who can adapt her efforts to the setting. They recognise the importance of the type of actions for language lessons.

Ollerheads and Burns identify agency as: the socio-culturally mediated capacity to act (Ahern's, 2001, cited in Olleherds & Burns, 2015) and observe that agency is parallel use of creativity in the application of the curricula. Similarly, this study follows that methodology using a case study to investigate the elements or components that support TLA as in the case of creativity. Obstacles and challenges, observed as a result of both socio-political and economic factors and policies, can resulting in concerns and realities of each educational setting. Olleherds and Burns conclude from their empirical study that the agentive and creative behaviour through diverse methodologies and collaboration is the way teachers overcome those limiting conditions in education. Creativity as a suitable way to control teaching or apply autonomy. Olleherds and Burns analyse the capacity to

engage adults in their learning process under difficult conditions in the setting. In the same way, this study considers creative activities and reflective decisions that teachers can take based on the convenience of the setting, considered as expressions of TA.

Constantinides (2015) remarks the disadvantages when a teacher shows lack of creativity, such as a high degree of dependence on elements for instance textbooks, authorities or syllabus, and little flexibility in their thoughts, decisions, teaching methodologies, and resolving problems. Finally, Constantinides concludes that the obstacles that hamper creative teaching are personal attitudes and social context. The ability to overcome those constraints can result in TA expressions in an educational setting.

Similar to autonomy, creativity is context-sensitive and desirable for resolving constraints. Gardner (2006) sets up three autonomous elements in creativity: the development of skills, the influence of the cultural domain surrounding people, and the social field. Gardner concludes that creativity is a contextualised valuable feature in teachers because it is applied when the setting presents some difficulties to overcome. Similarly, Richards and Farrel (2005, p.122) posit that creativity is observed in resolving critical events or 'unplanned incidents that occur during teaching and that serve to trigger insights about teaching'. Likewise, Steers (2013) affirms that teachers need more than commitment to face barriers in the setting such as a standardized curriculum and assessment, constant examination and supervision, initiatives to raise standards, few resources and limited professional development. Creative strategies help overcoming these circumstances and other factors as this study considers.

Currently, creativity and autonomy are common elements in the curricula of second language education and education in general, as in the researched institution. Puji et al. (2018) observe that language teachers play an influential role when planning the curriculum because they have to consider diverse learners' needs. In brief, they conclude that creativity is essential during this task because it entails both language acquisition and the empowerment of language learners when using the language, being considered cultural agents. This study focused on the creative capacity the participants demonstrated that empowered them and their learners.

Cachia et al. (2010) have identified the use of technologies to express creativity in this technological era. They also posit that creativity is seen as a product or process which has a balance between originality and value. Reinders and White (2016) identify a creative use of technologies for teaching languages. Teachers can expand their presence and present innovative teaching materials by incorporating technological tools in their teaching. Batey (2012) defines creativity as a capacity to create conceptions to resolve a problem and take advantage of the chance. All these characteristics of the creative use of technologies resulting in valuable results

will be consider in this research, not as main focus, just as another way to relate creative actions with autonomous results.

Pugley (2016) mentions four characteristics of creative activities: unexpected, simple, unconventional, and compact. In this research, the aspect of creativity that is considered to observe is regarding applying creative pedagogies, valuable, and attractive to the students, to overcome the common controllers in the classroom (McGrath, 2000) such as prescribed curricula or imposed textbooks.

Creativity with appropriate actions can be essential for adapting the planned lessons to specific settings. The same combination results are useful for resolving other unexpected constraints that occur in the context. In this study, some participants showed their creativity through their capacity to adapt their lesson to the context and improvise when it was necessary (see 4.3.2). Nowadays, the teacher is considered as an agent of change in contemporary programmes (Jimenez Raya, 2017; Vieira, 2009) supporting and applying critical thinking in the setting. In this sense, whether the teacher acts conveniently according to the conditions in the setting and has a degree of freedom in the application of the curricula (McGrath, 2000), expressions of autonomy can result from a combination of suitable actions when managing teaching.

Creativity is interpreted, valued, and negotiated differently in every setting. Coffey and Leung (2015) researched classroom voices of the teachers regarding creativity. They observe elements that characterize a creative language teacher, since elaborating creative outputs such as writing, until the application of a pedagogy that engages learners in their language acquisition process. With the use of diverse strategies such as music, role plays, outputs based on personal perspectives and others, the learners identify the effort of the teachers behind these language classes. Coffey and Leung (ibid) conclude that creativity can be a natural resource that teachers can use.

Every setting has specific conditions as Richards (2015) emphasizes in his research about creative teachers. The ethos in schools following national prescribed curricula do not always let teachers implement creative or dynamic practices and be as free as they wish to foster creativity. Another reality is the wide variation in understanding what creativity means. Sometimes creativity is related to problem-solving, imagination or lateral thinking skills. Richards also observes that technologies currently offer varied, practical, and meaningful opportunities for learning in creative ways to develop capacities for original ideas and develop creative thinking. This study investigates these aspects, paying especial attention to the value of applying creativity in diverse settings

Actually, creativity has a positive impact on the lessons when it is properly applied. For instance, Woodward (2015) lists a sequence of classroom activities to provide a creative atmosphere. First of all, creativity is used to attract the attention of the learners, engaging and producing original outputs combining diverse relationships into generative frameworks of reference. It is also important to permit collaborative interaction to share new and visible results to create an interesting and warm environment as a result of innovation. Woodward (ibid) concludes that creativity has a cycle that includes the application of creative activities. Besides, reflection about the achieved learning and the need to relax will naturally let critical thinking flow.

In Figure 7, the researcher represents an illustration of Woodward' cycle of activities in the classroom. This cycle supports creative atmospheres, showing the process of the implementation of creativity. As in many learning models, Woodward considers that reflective moment is when the learner uses critical thinking that supports to internalise the information. After a reflective moment, the personal result prepares the learner to collaborate with others. The result is an output that is considered creative.

Figure 7 Cycle of activities in the classroom to support creative atmospheres, based on Woodward, 2015
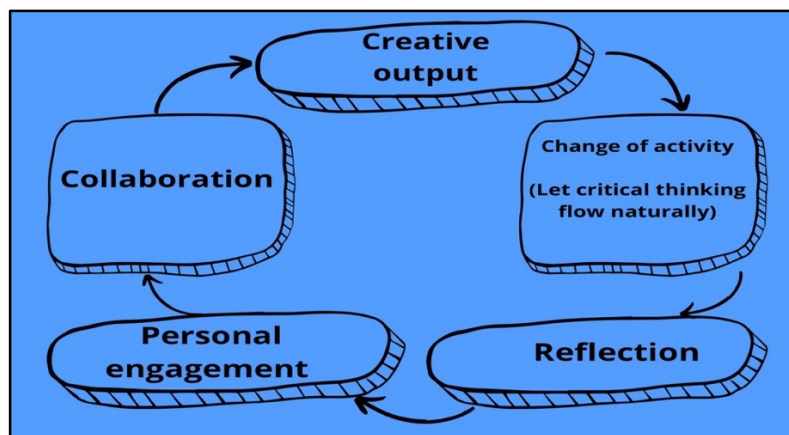
Some teaching aspects can be directly observed and others are implicit in teachers' actions. Korthagen (2004), shows the relationship between outer and inner aspects in the performance of teachers. Figure 8 illustrates the onion model proposed by Korthagen. Just the outer levels, context (institutions, students) and behaviour (the performance of the teacher) can be observed.

The competences (knowledge, attitudes, and skills), the beliefs (the philosophy of the teacher, paradigms), the identity (who am I as a teacher?), and the mission (why do I want to teach?) are unique and personal expressions in the performance and development in each teacher.

Figure 8 The onion model of Korthagen (2004)
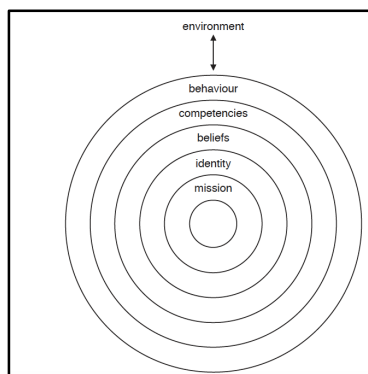
The inner components of the teacher have a direct impact on teacher performance. In the following chapter, the methodology of this study is explained, including the adjustments between the three main phases.

Chapter 3   Methodology

3.1   Introduction

Chapter three details the qualitative interpretative approach (Creswell, 2014) that this study adopted. This multiple case study is a small-scale one which provided data from thirteen student teachers, which was analysed thematically. The autonomous principles observed among the participants orientate this study's aims. The socio constructivist philosophy that underpins the development of autonomy is analysed through the observed actions and interaction during the participants' classes and their oral and written reflections shared with the researcher. Social and cultural features of each context allowed the participants to develop their own practice. As this study focuses on the nature and development of TLA, a sense of teaching control based on the participants' learners was the main premise investigated.

Based on the current discussion regarding TLA, the main researched stands are the teaching capacities, knowledge, attitudes and possible development participants show through their practicum. The other two interests are creativity as an internal teaching capacity that, combined with agency, resulted in observable expressions of TLA. The impact of the educational setting is the third aspect that was researched. Having eight different contexts at different educational levels provided the opportunity to see and compare the impact of the setting on the participants' autonomous intentions during their lessons.

The first section of this chapter presents the research questions that guide this study (see 3.2). A description of qualitative research, specifically through a multiple case study, is given (see 3.3). In the third section, the participants and the research context in the three phases of the study are described (see 3.4). Then, an overview of the research design describes the exploratory phase and the main study (see 0). A description of the research instruments to collect data (see 3.6) and the data collection process (see 3.7) are included.

In the final sections, the data analysis (3.7), the role of the researcher (3.9), and the ethical considerations (3.9) are presented. A summary of the data collected is included (see Table 7). The settings and the number of class observations are also included (see Table 8).

According to Duff (2008, p.103), research aims to collect 'empirical data and insights to bear on timely topics'. Data in this study are collected from student teachers who have almost concluded their BA in ELT formal education. In most of the cases, the TESOL practicum was their first teaching experience. This module is programmed during the seventh semester of their BA (see

1.4). The participants were still learning to teach with little or no teaching experience, and in many cases, were still facing language pitfalls.

This multiple case study uses data gathered between January 2018 and May 2019, in line with Yin's (2014) suggestions regarding data collection length in real scenarios. Student teachers from three practicum cohorts were included due to the complex nature of TA. The participants taught English in state schools at different educational levels. Due to the varied conditions in the settings participants coped with, creativity emerged as an internal capacity most participants developed. As in other empirical studies about creativity (Ollerheads & Burns, 2015), a multiple case study was applied to determine possible components or constructs of TLA. The setting has considerable influence on the possibility and development of TLA. The participants' actions and reflections are analysed to identify their teaching nature and any possible development of TLA under diverse educational settings. Both internal and external factors that contribute to the development of TLA are considered in this study.

Depending on each practicum programme, student teachers attended the school they had chosen to teach English every day. The participants usually taught one or more groups to complete 60 teaching hours, depending on the length of the lessons assigned in each school during the semester. Student teachers usually invested in the paper, colours, glue, photocopies, and all the necessary materials to create their teaching materials. As Ramirez (2015) found, technologies are not a common tool available in state schools, therefore teachers usually bring their personal gadgets to support their lessons. Some schools also require student teacher's support for other types of activities such as civic ceremonies and meetings with parents, among others.

The mentor assigned by the school observes the class, supports student teachers with their teaching or discipline, and provides feedback. They also sign the participants' lesson plans, as evidence of their teaching. Mentors are usually English teachers working in the school who lstudent teachers help them or teach during their lessons. In the case of primary schools, where English teachers are not usually hired, the teacher assigned to the group supported student teachers just with discipline, group control, and organization to apply activities in the class. As mentors are not language teachers, their feedback is more group-control oriented. English is part of the formal curricula in secondary and preparatory schools and at university level.

The selection of the participants, who defined themselves as autonomous and creative teachers in the initial questionnaire, is included in the research design (see 3.5). This selection criterion had the intention to investigate characteristics regarding the nature and teaching methods of teachers who consider themselves autonomous. The data were collected from three practicum cohorts; spring 2018, autumn 2018, and spring 2019. The main reason for researching three cohorts was

the complex nature of TA and the necessary data analysis to understand its development. A range of research instruments is used to collect data such as semi-structured interviews, class observations, audio recordings, field notes, research diary, and the participants' self-reflections.

The presence or absence of a mentor impacted the teaching development of the participants, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively. The reaction and integration of the participants' learners during the lessons are indicators of teaching success. The external factors are considered aspects that influence TA. It is necessary to specify the research boundaries of this study because many other aspects can be considered when researching multi-dimensional and context-dependant terms, in this case, autonomy and creativity. The research questions that guide this study are presented in the following section.

3.2   Research questions

As Duff (2007) posits, the research questions guide the analysis, interpretation, and reporting of results, the type of data collected, the duration, and the study context. This study is completely qualitative; it considers the opinions, behaviours and reflections of the participants from three practicum cohorts, the impact of the educational settings where they taught English, and common observed capacities that characterised TLA.

TLA is not a new term in education, but there is a gap (see 2.4) identified in the literature that suggests more research to understand its characteristics (Benson, 2011; Jimenez Raya & Vieira, 2015; Smith, 2019). The three questions that guide this research are:

> **RQ1.   What is the nature (e.g., characteristics, willingness, empathy, motivation) of teacher-learner autonomy, and how does it develop during the teaching practicum?**

This question is a straightforward way to analyse TLA expressions amongst participants in this study. Their teaching is observed in order to characterise their teaching nature. The data collected from their reflections are compared with their teaching actions and underpinned with the autonomy literature to analyse teaching development amongst participants.

A semi-structured interview was applied initially and concluding their teaching practicum (see Appendix E) to gather data regarding the participants' perception of TLA and creativity. The data collected from class observations, audio recordings, reflective journals, and informal interviews in the corridors contribute to identify autonomous teacher-learners' characteristics.

The model of Smith and Erdogan (2008) is a key reference to underpin a qualitative theme analysis of the data regarding dimensions of TLA. An interpretative view is applied, considering

autonomous teachers' development and nature (see Table 2). Constant informal interviews and analysis of the participants' reflections help understand their autonomous actions and development. A research diary was useful to analyse autonomous aspects in the participants' teaching. The sociocultural perspective adopted in this study considers all the actors involved in the research scenarios.

Following Huang's (2013) research where agency and identity were identified as constructs, this study considers creativity a possible construct of TLA. Both concepts, autonomy and creativity, are adopted from the teaching perspective of managing to teach and resolving constraints.

RQ2. To what extent does teacher autonomy development depend upon the parallel development of creativity in their practicum?

In this study, the participants' ability to adjust planned methodologies and materials based on their learners' needs is considered a sign of creativity. Their flexibility to adapt their lesson plans to the classroom conditions and resolve constraints is also considered evidence of creativity. The innovation element usually implicit in creativity is not necessarily a creation; those practical forms to change the planned lessons require creativity. Flexible decisions, improvisation, and adaptation are observed and analysed to identify autonomy and its interdependence with creativity.

The impact of the setting was another critical factor in this study.

RQ 3 How does the setting impact the development of teacher-learner autonomy?

This question emerged during the fifty-two class observations in all the different educational settings. The conditions found in every context are crucial to have the opportunity or not to develop TLA. The sociocultural impact of every educational setting during the practicum should be emphasised. The research design includes three types of settings: primary and secondary schools and university level. Participants' internal capacities illustrate their autonomous nature; however, the setting had a considerable impact regarding external factors that supported or hampered the application and development of TLA.

The research questions in this study are answered by comparing the participants' reflections, their actions observed during their lessons (see 3.6.2) and the corresponding literature. Qualitative research is designed to research such a problematic term as TLA and gather relevant data that answer these questions.

3.3   Qualitative research

A qualitative analysis was chosen for this study to understand more about the nature and development of TLA. Creswell (2014) claims that in qualitative analysis, the research problem is usually recognised as immature due to the lack of literature and research to define it and its nature is not quantitatively measurable. Research regarding TLA is still scant. (Smith, 2019; Benson, 2011; Smith & Erdogan, 2008). As Benson (2011) remarks, autonomy is not a measured concept, and every context has a different framework and background as a reference to define and value it.

As Atkinson (2005) claims, this qualitative research analyses the forms of social and cultural characteristics of the researched settings. Merriam et al. (2004) affirm that qualitative research is essential to understand the specific meaning in a time that a society constructs due to interaction around a term, in this case, TLA, creativity and the impact of the setting in this educational context.

Another characteristic of qualitative research (Merriam et al., 2004; Richards, 2003) is that the researcher is the primary data collection instrument and data analysis. Qualitative research is inductive; the researcher collects data to construct concepts. The researcher in this study considers shreds of evidence of TLA associated with creativity as a possible construct to manage to teach and resolve constraints. Besides, a work definition of TLA is proposed (see 5.5.1). This definition takes into account the essential abilities and conditions found in this study to describe TLA.

As in this multiple case study, qualitative research (Richards, 2003; Silverman, 2005; Merriam et al., 2004; Seale et al., 2004) is characterised by studying a small group of people in their everyday settings. The use of suitable research methods supports understanding the reason for some actions, analysing specific characteristics of the setting. In this case, as in other empirical studies (Huang, 2013; Ollerhead & Burns, 2015), the nature of TLA is analysed through creativity a proposed construct of autonomy.

The research design (Taylor et al., 2016) is modified according to found circumstances in the setting, as in this study. Qualitative research starts with an overall idea regarding researchable characteristics such as the number of settings or the participants. The final research design depends on the observed progress and specific conditions of each setting.

The initial focus of this study was the relationship between technologies, creativity, and autonomy. However, during the exploratory phase, the participants claimed that state schools did not offer teaching technologies in the classroom. Instead, student teachers were creative to

overcome complex circumstances for teaching a foreign language. Due to these circumstances, the aim of this study changed.

The presence of technologies is important in this century and essential for teaching in these changing times (UNESCO, 2015). Teachers are expected to develop skills in order to implement appropriate technologies in their teaching practices, this is a trend in educational policies worldwide. The literature relates autonomy with the use of technologies in the language classroom (Cachia et al., 2010). However, given the circumstances in these researched settings, this study just identified the creative use of technologies as a teaching tool to prepare lessons and attract the participants' learners with diverse types of activities.

Given the multidimensional nature of TA and creativity, the research design was extended another semester. The intention was to compare TA under diverse educational settings and analyse each influence of autonomous actions.

The inter-dependent terms related to TA depend on every definition; for this reason, the boundaries of the research should be clearly defined. Creswell (2014:239) remarks on the importance of establishing the boundaries of the study, 'collecting information through unstructured or semi-structured observations and interviews, documents, and visual materials, as well as establishing the protocol for recording information'. In this case, the research questions focus on three aspects; the nature and development of TA, creativity, and the impact of the setting. Miles and Huberman (1994, cited in Creswell, 2014) emphasise the importance of focusing on the setting, the actors, the events, and the process.

Merriam et al. (2002) identify the fruitful descriptive data that results as a product of the application of qualitative research. In this study, every setting provided specific characteristics to the collected data. Each social and cultural features of the context allowed the participants to develop a situated teaching. Another philosophical stance to consider all aspects in the construction of reality is the postmodern or post-structural approach. Merriam (2002) claims that qualitative researchers can understand the interpretations that a group of people has in a specific setting through a qualitative interpretative approach. Alternatively, when the researcher includes the social and political aspects that impact the perception of reality, it refers to a critical approach. Depending on the purpose of the research in terms of understanding (interpretive), emancipation (critical), or deconstruction (postmodern), the chosen stance for the research supports the researcher to study the phenomenon.

In this case, the purpose is to understand (interpretative stance) the nature of TA. The research options such as grounded theory, phenomenology, narrative, ethnography or case study were

compared to select the one that provided information about the participants' nature or characteristics. This study has common aspects with grounded theory to have constant analysing of data and correlate it many times with the existing literature to understand the emerging codes. However, the researcher chose a multiple case study to have a closer view and understand autonomous teacher-learners' nature. The characteristics of case studies are listed in the following section.

3.3.1   The case study in qualitative research

The curricula in the researched university considers autonomy an essential part of the courses (BUAP, 2009). However, it is crucial to research empirically if autonomy is a reality in teaching practices. Yin (2014) claims that a multiple case study has the opportunity to provide empirical results about theoretical concepts through analytic generalization. Yin suggests the use of case studies to research a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context.

Following Yin (2014), case studies were chosen to follow the participants' TLA development with a particular focus on creativity in different educational settings. As many authors recognise (Yin, 2014, 2006; van Lier, 2010; Creswell, 2003; Richards, 2003), case studies entail diverse methods to collect data. This study included the review of documents, 52 class observations, research instruments such as interviews, field notes, and audio recordings. In some cases, informal chats before or after the observed classes complemented the data collected.

According to Baxter and Jack (2008), one of the advantages of this approach is the close collaboration between the researcher and the participants. The researcher was constantly enabling participants to tell their stories.

One of the primary reasons to select a case study (Shawn & Plonsky, 2016), is the in-depth description obtained that provides holistic explanations of the context subject. Yin (2014) emphasises that case studies are longitudinal, and the setting can be the classroom. They answer *how* or *why* question and ask about contemporary events over which the researcher has little or no control. In this study, participants' teaching actions and decisions illustrated TLA expressions (see 5.3.1).

A case study seems ideal to research the nature of TLA, considering the practicum as one of the first student teachers' teaching experiences. Cohen et al. (2000, p.181) establish that a case study explores a 'specific instance… designed to illustrate a more general principle'. Duff (2007) highlights that when defining case studies, their bounded singular nature, the impact of the context, the availability of diverse sources of information, the stances through the observation,

and the in-depth nature of analysis are core characteristics of case studies. Considering these premises, case studies were the best option to develop this research.

Creativity is considered in this study a potential construct to understand the nature and development of TA at different educational levels. Merriam et al. (2002) affirm that a case study entails a detailed description and analysis of events with attention to perceptions of those involved. Cohen et al. (2000, p.181) posit that 'case studies investigate and research the complex dynamic and unfolding interaction of events, human relations and other factors in a unique instance'.

Flyvbjerg (2004) observes that special attention must be paid when referring to the theory, reliability, and validity that support case studies as a scientific method. This study had a long process of revisiting the data as many times as necessary to understand the participants' teaching development during their practicum. The exhausted comparison among coded actions registered during the class observation, the participants' reflections, and literature were the most extended processes in this research. At the end of this study, the researcher met all participants to show them the translations, transcriptions, and class notes. The intention was to show them the data and confirm that the interpretation and observations were objective. They all agreed on the interpretation and transcription of the data.

The components of a case study are important when analysing a research problem in a broad sense. According to Yin (2014), five components are identified in a case study research:

-the case study questions

-its propositions

-its units of analysis

-the logic linking of the data to the propositions

-the criteria for interpreting the findings.

In this research, the research questions related to the nature and development of autonomy, identifying constructs of TA and the impact of the setting through the practicum. The proposition of this study or hypothesis refers to the similar effect of creativity to manage to teach and resolve constraints, resulting in autonomous observable expressions. Given the nature of both terms, autonomy and creativity, applying strategies or decisions can help understand the nature and development of TLA.

The analysis units are the field notes, the audio recordings, the oral and written reflections of participants and the semi-structured interviews. A thematic organization was developed for the data analysis; the link between the collected data to the propositions was determined through the relationship between the management of the classes and how each participant resolve constraints. The criteria for interpreting the data is underpinned by Smith and Erdogan (2008) model to identify expressions related to TLA.

Van Lier (2010, p.449) suggests using case study research to achieve a qualitative and interpretative analysis to understand variations in the settings. 'So, case studies focus on context, change over time, and specific learners or groups'. Van Lier emphasises the advantages of using case studies, paying attention to the role of the setting. It is feasible to analyse the participants' changes over time within its natural context. Participants in this study were teaching English in diverse educational contexts that are described in the following section.

3.4   Participants and research context

The number of participants is suggested to be around ten for multiple case studies (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014). Thirteen cases, seventh semester teacher-learners in an ELT programme (see 1.4) participated in this study. The criteria for selecting the participants in this study was their teaching perception and self-identification of being autonomous and creative teachers. This conception can be related to their professional identity (see 2.5.2) as the initial and constant characteristic among the participants.

Ten females and three males, between 22 and 28 are the cases of participants whose identity is protected with pseudonyms. This main study was done from spring 2018 to spring 2019. In the first phase, eight cases from the three educational levels offered for the practicum were selected. Ideal candidates chosen by the questionnaires in phases two and three refused to participate in the study. For that reason, five participants were invited to participate voluntarily, two in the second phase and three in the third phase. With these numbers, the type of cases in each educational level was well balanced; five participants were teaching in the primary schools, four in the secondary schools, and four at the university level.

Four key cases were selected in this study (see below). Two participants taught English at the primary school level (George and Mary), one participant taught in the secondary school (Tom), and one taught English at the university level (Dany). These cases provided broader data related to TLA, creativity and the setting. The data from the rest of the participants are also included.

Eight participants were chosen in the first research phase, as explained below.

3.4.1   Settings and participants in phase one

| 1 | 2 | 3 |

Picture 1 shows George *teaching in a state kindergarten. Picture 2 corresponds to the secondary school where Tom taught English. Picture 3 shows the university setting where Dany was teaching during his practicum.*

In the first phase, from January to May 2018, eight participants, five female and three male student teachers between 22 to 28 years old. They were observed teaching English for their practicum in seven different educational settings; from primary and secondary schools and at the university level. The reason to choose eight participants was to balance the number in each educational level; three teachings in primary school, three teachings in secondary school, and two teachings at the university.

In basic education, English is not part of the formal curricula homogeneously. This was the biggest constraint that impacted on the participants' conditions. For instance, the lack of English teachers in the schools and the absence of teaching tools to support the language class were commonly observed characteristics in this phase.

George developed his practicum in a state kindergarten in the north outer periphery of the city. This kindergarten receives children with not advantaged socio-economic situation. The groups are numerous, more than 30 toddlers in the groups, and the shift for his classes was in the morning. English is not part of the formal curricula for state kindergartens. However, this school participates in a programme that the Minister of Education (SEP) offers to include English as an extra class. The classrooms have enough little chairs and tables for the children and lots of colourful materials available for teaching activities in the classroom. There is a huge central yard with playgrounds for the children. The schedule of the school is from 9 am to 12 pm. In this kindergarten, the English class was programmed in the last hour of the school hours for 30 minutes or during lunchtime before the break.

George was one of the most creative participants in this study. He was so engaged with his first and third grade kindergarten students. According to the literature (Smith, 2019) several situations in this kindergarten can be considered challenging circumstances, such as crowded groups, lack of

resources for teaching a foreign language, challenging schedules for the lessons, lack of English teachers in the school what means not mentoring in the classroom. These conditions represented a teaching challenge; however, they were opportunities for his creativity and autonomous development.

One of the consistent actions George commented during the informal interviews was the research he developed regarding his students. His supervisor also asked him to include literary references when writing his weekly reports for the practicum module. George's profile is outlined in figure 9 below, and it contains his reflections from informal talks with the researcher.

Figure 9 George's profile, key participant one

George, 26 years old, did not have previous teaching experience or extracurricular studies. He was teaching English during his practicum in a state kindergarten. George was one of the participants that seemed to develop TA in many illustrative ways. His creative activities, combined with his flexible attitude to engage his learners, were a constant in his lessons. His students were between 3 to 5 years old, from first and third grades respectively. During informal interviews, he expressed his decision to be a teacher since he was a child. However, his idea when he was a child was to teach other areas, not languages. Once he entered university, he was convinced and motivated to teach languages. He considers himself a dynamic teacher who likes to be part of the group, making his students feel confident, asking their doubts and participating during the lessons. He consistently expressed his engaged position regarding his young students' learning process.

Two participants were teaching English in primary schools, but in these cases, English is not part of the formal curricula. The large number of students in the classrooms was constant.

Lucy, participant 2, was teaching English during her practicum in a state primary school in the north part of the city in a big school which provides primary education to children from not advantaged socio-economic situation. She did not have previous teaching experience. Lucy carried out her teaching practicum with a large group of 38 children, 11 years old. The groups in this school are numerous, between 40 to 48 children. As the school is registered in a programme that includes English as a foreign language lesson, a textbook and an audiobook provided for free by the Ministry of Education supported the classes. This school has an English teacher as part of the staff. Lucy was teaching in the morning shift in grade 4, alternating lessons with another student teacher doing her social service. The classrooms have old benches and chairs, there is lack of teaching equipment, just a whiteboard and old speakers hung on the wall. The school has three buildings and a big playground. The morning schedule in this school is from 8 am to 1 pm.

Chapter 3

Lucy, 28 years old, is married, has a son and works in a family business in the afternoons to support her family. She commented she had not extracurricular studies. Her determination to be a language teacher was since secondary school because she admired an English teacher there. Lucy describes herself as a positive teacher engaged with her students' education, a motivator for them. She expressed her interest in planning activities that make the students understand English in their future life.

Participant 3, Anne, taught in a big state primary school where her practicum schedule was assigned in the morning. The groups in this school have 40 students on average. The classrooms have old benches and chairs as well as old whiteboards for teaching nor any technological tools to support language teaching. There are no English teachers in the school staff. This state primary school consists of three buildings with three floors each and two yards. This school is registered in the federal programme to teach English; however, they did not receive any textbook or materials for the lesson. Anne decided on the contents to follow in the course. The elder children knew that the English module is not considered in their notes, so their lack of interest in the class and engagement was a significant characteristic amongst Anne's students. Her students varied between 6 to 11 years old. Anne, 23 years old, without extracurricular studies, had three years of teaching experience. A prominent disadvantage was that the classes were organised in calendar that was not always respected. Sometimes, teachers used these English hours for other activities such as meetings with parents, civic rehearsals or other activities.

In secondary schools, English is a module included in the formal curricula. The observed common characteristic in these schools was the large groups and the lack of proper teaching conditions. Not all the teachers had a proficient level for teaching English in these settings; thus, the mentors' support was scant.

Tom is the second chosen key participant. He was teaching English to teenagers between 13 and 14 years old in a secondary school in the southern of the city. His profile is outlined in figure 10 below.

Figure 10 Tom's profile, key participant two

Tom, 24 years old, was the second key participant chosen. He taught English to three groups of second grade in a secondary school without previous teaching experience and not extracurricular studies. He was a participant facing challenging circumstances at the beginning of the practicum. Tom was teaching English in a technical secondary school with more than 30 teenagers whose behaviour was challenging. The classrooms were small without proper infrastructure for teaching a foreign language. Large groups and lack of teaching conditions were his initial barriers to be an autonomous teacher. They followed a textbook that was decontextualized with the knowledge and interest of the audience (teenagers). Besides, the schedule for the English class was programmed during the last hour of school time. Those circumstances were a real challenge

to overcome for any teacher. At the end of his practicum, Tom had observed the audience, planned suitable lessons, taught according to the audience's interests, and managed his teaching when discipline represented a real constraint in that setting. The freedom that the mentor gave him for teaching was important for this development. He decided to be a teacher because he had terrible English teachers in junior and junior high school. He wants to contribute to the professional field with suitable lessons, motivating his students to learn a foreign language.

This secondary receives adolescents from a not privileged socio-economic situation. The groups in this school are big, about 35 students per group, and his classes were in the morning shift. They have a yard and three buildings with two floors for their classes. The classrooms are not equipped with technological tools; individual old benches and an old whiteboard were in the classroom. They have a computing room with 16 computers, not enough for all the adolescents in each group.

Liz, 22 years old, taught English during her practicum in a secondary school in the north outer periphery of the city. The groups are numerous in this school, with around 45 adolescents per group. Her classes were in the morning shift. The school has three buildings with two floors and a medium yard. The classrooms are not equipped with any technological equipment. They have a whiteboard and old individual benches.

She was motivated to learn English and become a teacher since she was in secondary school. One of her aunts taught her English and engaged her to teach the foreign language. She considers herself a funny teacher without much experience, but she thinks she had a good development during the practicum. Liz's case of is an example when the setting represents a real barrier to the development of TA.

In preparatory school, Kate, participant 6, 21 years old, taught English in a junior high school without previous teaching experience. English is part of the formal curricula, but they do not follow a textbook. They have a self-access centre to practice the language and a library with language books. Large groups with an average of 37 students per group were a constant in that setting. Kate taught English in the afternoon shift. The school has three buildings with two floors for their classes and one huge yard with many soccer and basketball fields.

Kate recognizes she loves teaching and her motivation is to engage her students with their learning process. She looks for interesting materials in order to gather meaningful learning among her students. Kate noticed that even though the difference in age with her students is not of many years, they respected her as a teacher.

At the university level, two participants were teaching English in the ELT BA programme. They had good conditions for teaching a foreign language. The classrooms are equipped with Internet

connection, screen, overhead projector, computer, best schedules in the curricula, and motivated students to learn the language, most of them older than 18 years. Dany, participant 7, and Laura, participant 8, were teaching English in the ELT programme (see 1.4). Both participants were teaching English in the target language module in the morning shift.

Dany, the third chosen key participant's profile is included in figure 11 below.

Figure 11 Dany's profile, key participant three

Dany, 22 years old, without previous teaching experience, was teaching intermediate English at university, in the same BA programme he was concluding. He gathers a diploma in teaching with technologies. He loves teaching and languages, as well as travelling. Since he was a child, he used to play to be a teacher. He considers teaching more than deliver materials; "the teacher must be a development model and motivation for the students". He expressed the importance of observing the setting, looking for attractive and innovative materials that engage his students. During the class observations, Dany prepared diverse types of activities related to the course contents. His ability to manage the lesson increased with a natural and personal way he applied to interact with his students. He used technologies such as videos, songs, and documentaries to illustrate the topics, listening comprehension and reference for role plays. The different types of interaction amongst learners were another characteristic of his teaching. Even though the short difference of age with his learners, Dany managed discipline with a natural type of strategies he applied when it was necessary.

At the university level, Laura, 22 years old, with previous teaching experience and one extracurricular diploma, developed her practicum in the BA programme she was concluding. She describes herself as a disciplined and demanding teacher. She learned English since she was a child in a bilingual school. Laura loves teaching, and she hopes to motivate her students to improve their abilities in the language.

For these reasons, the researcher considered unfair to analyse all these setting with the same criteria. The inconsistent conditions the settings offered to the participants were considerable. So, for the following phase, and even though a large and fruitful amount of data collected for all the educational levels, it seemed that focusing on the university level was more favourable to research TLA development. The researcher decided to focus on the university level for the following phase. The main reason was that participants had acceptable conditions for teaching.

3.4.2   Settings in phase two

4   5

Pictures 5 and 6 show the participants in phase two at the university. Technologies, proper conditions, and enough space in the rooms are observed.

For the second phase, from August-December 2018, the educational level chosen was the same university as in the first phase in the ELT programme (see 1.4). It was not possible to apply the questionnaire for the previous selection of participants for this cohort. For that reason, the researcher asked some practicum supervisors to invite participants. Two supervisors selected three of their most engaged students, and the researcher invited them to participate voluntarily in the study. In this university, the conditions are more optimal for the development of autonomy, and their role of as a teacher was better supported and recognised. Participant 9, Christina, was teaching in English level 1, and Ellen, participant 10, was also teaching English level 1. Both participants were teaching in the morning shift, with an average of 28 students per group. The third participant quit the study.

Christina, 24 years old, did not have previous teaching experience. She describes herself as an authentic teacher who is engaged with her students. Christina expressed that her teaching experience was in small groups. Sometimes she covered classes when teachers were absented as her social service duties in a languages school. Cristina loves English since she was a child; the methods her teachers applied were terrific.

Ellen, 23 years old, without previous teaching experience, was teaching at university. She learnt English in preparatory school. She has taken courses and workshops related to teaching at the same university. She decided to become a teacher because she loves languages. She describes herself as a strict teacher, but at the same time, she is friendly and supportive with her students.

However, after the meagre data collected, the decision to include the other settings was considered again. The first phase of data collection was rich and varied, with far more scope than this second phase. In this sense, it was fruitful to focus on a range of teaching settings to identify commonalities in how participants manage their teaching in various settings. Besides, the researcher's viva confirmation examiners suggested continuing with the analysis of the three educational levels to acquire a more expansive view of TA. For these reasons, the researcher decided to include the third phase, now observing participants teaching in primary and secondary settings. This decision was taken in order to have a balance between the type of researched contexts.

3.4.3 Settings in phase three

| 6 | 7 | 8 |

-Pictures 6 and 7 show the kindergarten with good didactic conditions where Vicky and Mary developed their practicum in phase three. Picture 8 shows the classrooms where Celia taught English in a preparatory.

The third phase was developed from January to April 2019. Three female student teachers were observed during their practicum in this final phase of the study. Two of them were teaching English in the same kindergarten, teaching English in first and second grades. One of the most favourable aspects of this kindergarten is the lack of a rigid programme. Instead, the teacher pays close attention to the objects, examples, or concerns that the children mention. They prepare the following lesson based on those topics to make the lesson meaningful for the children. This sequence of topics requires preparing diverse types of materials, and it is an opportunity to have autonomy during the lessons. An average of 18 kids was in the groups in the morning shift. The school has a big building in a circular form and a central yard. Lunch service is offered every day. There is one teacher per every six children in the classroom. When a child is diagnosed with strange conduct or psychological problem, an assigned teacher works as *the shape* (name given to the designed teacher) to support the child during the entire shift.

Mary, participant 11, worked with first and second levels, and Vicky, participant 12, taught English to first and third levels. The context represented considerable support for the participants regarding the creation of materials and feedback. Paper, glue, markers, glitter, and more stuff are available for student teachers to create their materials. As this kindergarten follows a dynamic teaching method (High Scope), the English teachers are constantly counselling the participants about strategies and teaching techniques that this method includes.

The third student teacher taught English in a preparatory school. Celia, participant 13, was teaching English in the same preparatory school as Kate, participant 6. She was teaching a second grade in the preparatory school with 37 students in the afternoon shift. The mentor in this preparatory is an English teacher with disposition and collaborative attitude.

Table 4 shows the educational level where they developed their practicum, the number of participants at each level, the learners' ages, and the average number of students per group.

Table 4 Settings included and some of their characteristics regarding EFL

Educational level	Number of participants	Range of their learners' ages	Average of students in their groups	EFL as part of the curricula	Textbook
Primary	5	3 to 12 years	33	No	1 yes, 4 No
Secondary	4	12 to 18 years	38	Yes	2 Yes 1 No
University	4	18 and older	30	Yes	Yes

An overview of the research design is presented in the following section.

3.5   Overview of the Research design

Taylor et al. (2016) define the research design in a qualitative study as followed plans and flexible procedures. Even though the researcher has a particular research interest, it is difficult to be specific before knowing the researched details of the setting. Flexibility was necessary to shape this study because the focus and rationale behind the initially planned methodology were different. The complex nature of autonomy and creativity required a long process of research, reflection and analysis.

As Yin (2014) posits, the research design is the logic that links the collected data to the initial research questions of the study. The use of technologies related to autonomy was the initial proposal for this study. According to Ramirez (2015), the available technologies for English teachers in the classrooms in state schools in Mexico are too limited. Initially, an exploratory study was applied amongst twelve teacher-learners concluding their practicum in fall 2017. The

aim was to identify whether TA, creativity, and technologies were researchable topics in the settings where the practicum is commonly done or not.

Participants in the focus groups reflected on the need to be creative in their lessons to achieve a certain autonomy. They mentioned that some schools were restrictive with their actions without offering ideal teaching conditions. After analysing the results, the research design of this study was modified and the research questions were refined to identify whether TLA could be observable in the classroom, associating it with creativity as a potential construct.

Regarding the length, the initial research design comprises an exploratory phase in November 2017, followed by the main research phase, which took place over two semesters in 2018. However, after data collected in both phases and the examiners' suggestions in the researcher viva confirmation regarding the value of researching diverse settings, another phase was planned in spring 2019. As Creswell (2014) suggests, the initial number of participants is around ten for case studies. In the third phase, three more participants were included (see Table 5).

In line with Creswell (2014), this inquiry aims to describe common characteristics of the term TLA, its nature and development. The participants, who considered themselves autonomous and creative, taught English in their TESOL practicum at different educational levels (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). The analysis focused on the participants' capacities, knowledge, and attitudes observed during their lessons, resulting in a work definition for TLA (see 5.5.1).

The first step of the analysis was to select participants who considered themselves autonomous and creative teachers (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). A questionnaire (see Appendix D) was applied in November 2017 to fifty-one student teachers from the spring 2018 practicum cohort. Another factor in the selection of the participants was the educational setting where they developed their practicum. At least one participant was chosen from every setting, from kindergarten to university. Even though case studies are suggested to lie with four or six participants, eight participants, three males and five females between 21 and 28 were chosen for this first phase, from January to April 2018.

A semi-structured interview (see Appendix E) was applied at the beginning of the practicum to know participants' perceptions regarding TA and creativity. The same interview was applied at the end of the practicum to analyse their final autonomy perceptions. Initially, three class observations per participant were designed, including audio recordings and field notes.

A research diary was also written with both participants' and each settings' characteristics. The researcher had informal corridor talks with the participants, usually after the class observation to reflect on relevant actions during the lesson. The researcher also asked them to access their

written reflections that are a requirement for their practicum module assessment. The intention was to verify whether their actions and reflections corresponded to the capacities, knowledge, or attitudes related to TLA.

First, the observed actions in the classroom were coded using Nvivo to identify aspects related to TLA. An exhaustive review of literature, concepts and models help the researcher to structure this coding. The result of structuring the first coding is presented in a figure (see Figure 12). Creativity emerged as a capacity that overlapped in definition with TLA and was analysed as a possible construct of autonomy. Data regarding participants' reflections were coded according to the emerging themes from class observations (see Figure 13). The discussion in chapter five compares the reflections and actions of the participants with the correspondent literature by theme. The research diary was helpful in analyse conditions in the settings. Detailed examples describe the circumstances in the settings in chapter four. The source was the research diary and the field notes. Other 29 detailed examples are in the Appendixes from .

The research design is illustrated in Table 5. The length of the phases and the number of participants are in parenthesis, the educational settings where participants taught English is included. The first column shows details regarding the exploratory phase. The second column comprises the main study, describing the number of participants in each educational setting. Finally, the third column describes the summary of participants teaching English in eight different educational settings. Two participants teaching English in junior high education taught in the same preparatory school. Four participants taught at the same university.

Table 5. Phases in the research design of this study

| Exploratory phase | Main study | | | Total of participants |
	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	
June 2017 **To see how researchable the topic was**	Cohort 1 (January-May 2018)	Cohort 2 (August-November 2018)	Cohort 3 (January-April 2019)	
2 focus groups with 12 ELT student teachers (7 in the first+5 in the second group) who had completed their practicum in order to explore teaching conditions and researchable aspects in their practicum setting	8 student teachers doing their practicum at three different educational levels: Primary (3) Secondary (3) University (2)	2 student teachers doing their practicum at 1 educational level: University (2)	3 student teachers doing their practicum at 2 different educational levels: Primary (2) Secondary (1)	A total of 13 participants divided into **3 categories:** Primary (5) Secondary (4) University (4) Overall there are 8 individual educational settings

The exploratory phase and the main study are explained in the following section.

3.5.1 Focus groups in the exploratory phase: how researchable the topic is

The exploratory phase aimed to identify researchable elements in practicum settings. Specifically, the intention was to explore whether the topic of TA was researchable amongst student teachers developing the practicum. The second reason was to identify aspects to consider for future selection of the participants, such as claiming to be autonomous teachers. The third reason was to consider the research method that would provide pertinent data regarding the nature and development of TLA during the practicum. Two focus groups were applied to explore how researchable the initial research proposal was, relating TA, technologies and creativity for teaching. The conditions in state schools where student teachers develop their practicum are not always the best (Ramirez-Romero & Sayer, 2016).

Macnaghten and Myers (2004) affirm that focus groups 'are often used in an exploratory way when researchers are not entirely sure what categories, links and perspectives are relevant' (p.65). In this case, the focus groups were organised to refine researchable aspects of this proposal, noticing that technologies are not always present in the teaching contexts where the practicum can be done. Macnaghten and Myers also posit the relevance to see through focus groups the nature of complex or contradictory phenomena and various senses of agency.

Stewards and Shamdasani (2014) and others (Wilkinson, 2004) describe focus groups as depth interviews widely used in social sciences as part of qualitative research. They observe that focus groups have had varied acceptance amongst diverse fields of knowledge through time. The questions in this study for a group of twelve teacher-learners concluding their practicum provided a general view of the teaching dynamics and some characteristics of the schools where they taught English during their practicum.

The literature (Stewards & Shamdasani 2014; Macnaghten & Myers, 2004) highlights that participants agree or disagree with others' ideas during the interaction in the focus group, which can originate more information than an individual survey. In this study, the participants brought diverse types of themes regarding their freedom when teaching during the practicum.

The focus groups allowed the researcher to narrow the focus of the research. Creswell (2014, p.240) catalogue the focus groups as qualitative interviews where the researcher 'conducts face-to-face interviews with participants with six to eight interviewees in each group'.

The first focus group was developed with five student teachers in an adjacent classroom of their module meeting evaluation and lasted about an hour. Seven student teachers participated voluntarily in the second focus group that was the same day and the same length. The researcher applied a reduced number of unstructured and usually open-ended questions during the

interviews to elicit opinions and perceptions from the participants. The questionnaire applied in both focus groups is in Appendix C. These results were decisive when designing the core aspects of the research.

In this exploratory phase, the questions were centred on TLA, creativity, and the use of technologies during the practicum (see 3.2). Twelve participants shared their teaching experiences where they taught English, sometimes without support or under not the best conditions.

Wilkinson (2004) suggest that focus groups are typically recorded, data transcribed, and the analysis is done under conventional techniques used in qualitative research analysing contents or topics. Many methods to analyse the data collected from a focus group are suggested. In this case, as Wilkinson (2016) claims, content analysis helps to examine types of instances related to TLA. Those instances are systematically organised and catalogued using a code system. The researcher set the codes as units of analysis. This analysis in this study was coded with the software Nvivo. This content analysis helped identify the common codes that resulted from the focus groups.

3.5.1.1 Looking for researchable elements in the focus groups

The focus groups were recorded and transcribed. Qualitative content analysis of their reflections was analysed. An overview of their opinion and small quotations of the participants' reflections are presented in this section to understand the reasons for changing the aim of the research. Regarding TLA, participants affirmed they were seen as teachers in the schools where they taught English. They were able to change and improvise the class during their practicum. They said they used innovative and attractive materials according to the needs of their students.

Participants described how they were flexible in adapting their lesson plans according to the necessities of their learners in every context. However, not all the settings provided the same conditions. Participant 1 commented:

> 'You cannot do the activities you want; the infrastructure does not help teachers. It's small, lots of students, sometimes they don't (the institution) let you do activities you want'.

The participants also mentioned that an autonomous teacher resolves a problem with the available things they already have. Advice from supervisors and mentors mediated their intentions to be autonomous and improved their teaching development. Sometimes, this support hampered their autonomy as participant 2 mentions:

> 'During the practicum, the mentor tells you what to do, suggest about your classes, lesson plans and when you are autonomous you decide what to do, maybe your ideas are wrong but making them really let you discover if

> *you are right or wrong, observing if your application of knowledge works or not. In the practicum, I cannot be so*
> *autonomous'.*

The participants described creativity as the ability to change their materials or activities according to what is needed in the classroom. They could change their planning:

> 'if the students were distracted or tired'.

The participants (1, 3, 4, 9) recognised that, as a teacher:

> *'you don't follow the exact lesson plan, there are alternatives: plan A or plan B'.*

However, they also noticed that creative teachers are not necessarily autonomous as participant 4 said:

> *'Creativity helps, but not necessarily to develop autonomy. Creativity is usually applied to improve the class, to*
> *have successful results in the classes. It is an adaptation to the conditions, depending on the students, if you*
> *have to improvise'.*

They also identified these actions as creativity:

> *'to give solutions that you didn't plan before, to be dynamic and react according to the situation. Creativity is*
> *imagining, giving spontaneous solutions'.* Finally, participant 3 concluded that *"To be creative you have to be*
> *autonomous'.*

As observed through these reflections, the participants described autonomous teaching considering the freedom to manage their teaching and their capacity to resolve constraints. They also noticed the impact the context has on their teaching development. However, the mismatch was observed, especially in recognition of theoretical concepts regarding TLA.

Based on these results, there was a necessity to refine the research perspective because of the lack of technologies in most state schools where student teachers can develop their practicum. Dörnyei (2007, p.307) suggests adopting a pragmatic approach to 'keep an open view and flexible mind' when selecting the research method and collecting and analysing data to answer the research queries. Analysing the participants' experiences related to the setting, a lack of technologies in the different educational contexts may define a more specific research scope. In that sense, and especially at the beginning of the data collection, the researcher decided to focus on aspects that can conduce to TLA during the practicum. The lack of optimal conditions for teaching in state schools and large groups are relevant factors that impact autonomy. Having decided that technologies were not the research focus, the following subsection describes the main study.

The participants in the focus groups indicated their efforts to engage their learners with various teaching tools, including technologies with their devices and social media (WhatsApp and Facebook). The focus groups were helpful in identifying common aspects such as the dynamic lessons they implemented to engage their young learners. The participants shared their experiences spontaneously, illustrating the researchable possibilities of TA in diverse settings. So, a refined view of the researcher helped define the main study, explained below.

3.5.2 Main study

A multiple case study (Creswell, 2014; Yin, 2014) (see 3.3.1) is a suitable research method to analyse evidence of autonomy by identifying creativity as a potential construct. Some participants implemented creativity to overcome constraints or engage their learners. The participants were still not certified to teach English; their professional practices are their first opportunities to shape their teaching.

The systematic application of instruments to collect data in this study consisted of an initial semi-structured interview, class observations, audio recordings during the observed class, and field notes. In some cases, reflections after the observed lesson, written personal reflections, and a final semi-structured interview were also included. However, every time the researcher applied these instruments, a more profound observation was developed. The diverse settings provided different conditions; optimal or difficult circumstances impacted the participants' teaching, supporting or hampering their autonomy.

 According to Creswell (2014), an interpretative vision helps understand the nature of a problem in a particular setting. Creswell also lists major characteristics of qualitative research to answer these queries with a degree of validity and reliability, for instance, the observations are natural.

In this research, all the educational levels were considered and the number of participants teaching in each level was balanced. This factor helped analyse the participants' reflections in their final formal education phase and identify TLA observable expressions. In all phases, some sociocultural factors were analysed to observe the impact of each setting on TA.

The data from all the participants fed the themes that emerged for TA. Each case was analysed and coded using Nvivo, as observed in picture 9 below.

Picture 9. Individual cases classified and coded using Nvivo
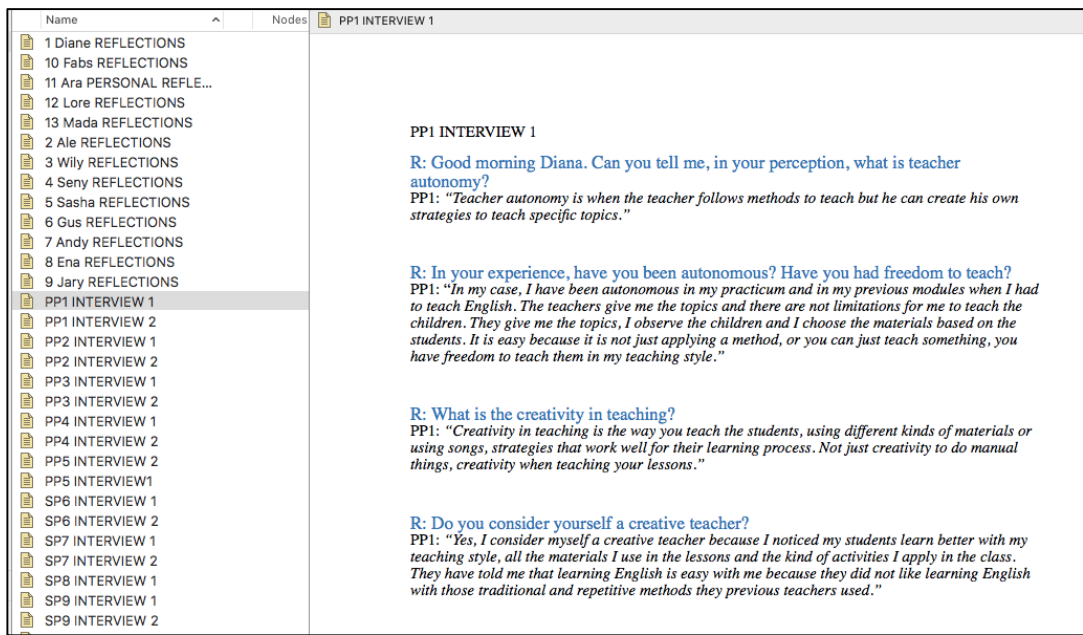
The research instruments used in this study are detailed in the following section.

3.6   Research instruments

As many authors mention (Yin, 2014; van Liar, 2010; Creswell, 2003; Richards, 2003), case studies produce worthy data through many research instruments to collect data such as interviews, documents, class observations, field notes, and audio recordings. All these instruments were included in this study. In some cases, informal chats after the observed classes and personal reflections complemented the data. Some participants felt confident to speak after the session, and their comments were longer than the observed classes. These sudden comments or reactions provided vital information to understand more their teaching nature.

Yin (2014) also claims that a multiple case study has the opportunity to provide empirical results about theoretical concepts, in this case, the theory of autonomy, through analytic generalization. Yin suggests the use of case studies to research a contemporary phenomenon within their real-life context. In this case, the curricula considering autonomy as an essential part of the courses in this university is present. However, in practice, the lack of research regarding autonomy persists, and it is necessary to observe whether autonomy is a reality in the teaching practice.

This data collection process was carried out over seventeen months, observing thirteen ELT student teachers from three practicum cohorts: spring 2018, fall 2018, and spring 2019. As listed by Yin (2014), multiple sources of information were chosen to complement the research from a broader view, not just from a singular angle. In this study, five participants developed their

practicum in primary education (with students from 3 to 12 years), four in secondary education (with students from 12 to 18 years), and four at university level (with students older than 18 years).

In Table 6, the instruments used to collect data to answer the research question are listed. The qualitative analysis of the transcriptions, field notes, and reflections helped identify commonalities regarding TA, despite the different settings where student teachers were teaching during their practicum.

Table 6 Instruments to collect data to answer the research questions.

RQ 1. What is nature (e.g., characteristics, willingness, empathy, motivation) of teacher-learner autonomy, and how does it develop during the teaching practicum?	RQ 2. To what extent does teacher autonomy development depend upon the parallel development of creativity in their practicum?	RQ 3. How does the setting impact the development of teacher-learner autonomy?
*Initial interview regarding teacher autonomy and creativity *Class observations, research diary, and field notes * Informal interviews to participants in the corridors after or before the observed lesson *Participants' reflective journals for marking their module (shared with the researcher) *Informal participants' comments and WhatsApp messages *End course interview regarding teacher autonomy and creativity	*Initial interview regarding teacher autonomy and creativity *Class observations, research diary, and field notes *Informal interviews to participants in the corridors after or before the observed lesson *Participants' reflective journals for marking their module (shared with the researcher) *Informal participants' comments and WhatsApp messages *End course interview regarding teacher autonomy and creativity	*Class observations, research diary, and field notes * Informal interviews to participants in the corridors after or before the observed lesson *Participants' reflective journals for marking their module (shared with the researcher) *Informal participants' comments and WhatsApp messages *End course interview regarding teacher autonomy and creativity

As informed above, an exploratory phase (see 3.5.1) was included to know how researchable the proposal was and to acquire a vision of the educational settings for the practicum. For that phase, two focus groups were used to explore characteristics and general conditions of available settings for the practicum. The focus groups did not intend to select the participants in the study.

The first instrument applied was a questionnaire for selecting the participants in the main study, as explained below.

3.6.1   Questionnaire to select the participants in this study

The researcher designed the questionnaire in this study (see Appendix B) to select the participants of the main study. The core part was to identify candidates who considered themselves with an autonomous and creative profile. Bradburn et al. (2015) claim that the questionnaire format implies how easy it is for interviewers, interviewees, and the processing of

the data when reading and understanding the question and the type of answer required. Direct and semi-structured questions were included in the process of selection of the participants.

Dörnyei (2007:101) claims that questionnaire survey research 'aims at describing the characteristics of a population by examining a sample of that group'. Dörnyei emphasises that the questionnaire results are usually quantitative, but the instrument can also include some open-ended questions that will require quantitative analysis. Bradburn et al. (2015) also emphasise the importance of focusing on precisely the information the researcher wants to gather, avoiding ambiguities of language and considering the possible interpretation of the question in each context.

In the questionnaire developed for this study, question one intended to know if the participants had teaching experience or not. Question two located the setting for doing the practicum. Questions three and four had the aim to see how manoeuvrable their teaching was regarding the teaching materials. Question five intended to know whether they were familiar with the use of technologies for teaching. From questions six to eight, the intention was to know what they do to manage their teaching and resolve constraints. In this sense, creativity was involved with these TA criteria to see whether they related both concepts when referring to the teaching they plan and how to cope with constraints in the classroom.

The researcher decided to apply the questionnaires the day when student teachers enrol the module in the practicum coordination. All of them are programmed to attend the university for a couple of days under a specific schedule. In November 2017, the questionnaire was applied to 51 students to select candidates for phase one. Some student teachers refused to answer it because they were in a hurry. The researcher invited them to answer it, providing a pen and a portable table; it took a few minutes to answer it. After identifying the learners who described themselves as autonomous and creative teachers, the selection was made equitably, including participants from the three educational levels available for the practicum. In that first phase, three participants were teaching at the primary level, three at the secondary level, and two were teaching at the university level (see **Error! Reference source not found.**) to have a balanced number of participants per educational level.

The selection criteria were twofold: first, the student teachers recognizing themselves as autonomous teachers, using a diversity of materials for teaching, and considering creativity a helpful skill in their teaching. The second aspect for their selection was the educational setting where the student teachers developed their practicum. Once the questionnaires were collected, the key questions to consider for the initial selection were number six and seven; open questions that let them express how autonomous and creative they defined themselves.

The candidates who agreed to collaborate wrote their personal information in the questionnaire to be contacted. Then, the researcher contacted them, and they agreed to collaborate in the main study. Just one participant from phase one quitted the project because of her lack of opportunities to teach regularly in that secondary school and personal health reasons.

In phase two, it was not possible to apply the questionnaire. Two participants were directly invited to participate, identified as responsible and dynamic teachers by their practicum supervisors (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

In phase three, 70 student teachers responded to the questionnaire in November 2018, from the 89 who applied for the practicum cohort in spring 2019. However, the response of the candidates to participate was null. The fact that the teacher-learners were not familiar with the researcher originated a total lack of response of the chosen candidates. The invitation was via the practicum supervisor for the participants to accept to collaborate in this research (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

The instruments that provided the data for the main study are presented in the following section.

3.6.2 Research instruments to collect data to answer the research questions

The main study entails data interviews, class observation, field notes, reflective journals and the researcher's diary. The instruments used in this study are detailed in this section below.

3.6.2.1 Interviews

The interview is one of the most common techniques in applied linguistics (Mann, 2016; Miller & Glassner, 2016; Qu & Dumay, 2011; Dörnyei, 2007) interpreted as reflective practice when giving opinions or recalling experiences. The interview in this study aimed to analyse the possible development of the participants regarding TA and creativity. This tool helped corroborate changes in their view and teaching practices. After selecting the participants of the main study (see **Error! Reference source not found.**), interviews were applied to analyse participant's initial view regarding TA and creativity. Atkinson (2005, p.6) claims that 'interviews are instances of social action- speech acts or events with common properties, recurrent structures, cultural conventions, and recognizable genres'.

The researcher designed the interview in this study (see Appendix E). Questions one to three were focused on TA, identifying the familiarity of participants with the term and their self-conception of being an autonomous teacher. Questions four to six request their impression regarding creativity and their perception of being a creative teacher. Questions seven to ten value their opinion

regarding the use of technologies in teaching and the advantages and disadvantages in using technologies when teaching. The same interview was applied at the end of the practicum. Technologies were not the main focus anymore, but the direct relationship between autonomy, creativity, and technologies prevailed in the interview. The appointment for applying the questionnaire was generally set before the class observations started.

Richards (2003) emphasises the idea to interview teachers in TESOL naturally, similar to having a conversation where the purpose is identified. Richards (2003, p.78) posits the interviewer needs a level of interaction and sensitivity to be open to the answer and self-critical to the analysis. He also distinguishes between formal and informal interviews; the firsts are arranged in advance with knowledge of the purpose, but informal interviews 'arise in the context of the type of observation'. Short informal interviews were applied in this study before or after the observed class, depending on the possibilities in each setting. These informal interviews provided valuable information because participants explained their decisions or reflected on their teaching practices. As Miller and Glassner (2016) claim, interviews provide a meaningful possibility to study and theorize regarding the social world.

Relevant data were collected during these short corridor talks with the participants after the class observation. Creswell (2014) describes the qualitative interviews containing unstructured and generally open-ended questions and the relevance of eliciting views and opinions from the participants. After concluding their lessons, some participants had an emotional burden that sometimes finished in a catharsis; others provided direct perceptions and reflections of their teaching. These reflections illustrated their constant self-evaluation, recognizing some necessary skills to improve their management of the class.

Richards (2003) observes that when negotiating the access to the researched settings, the researcher sometimes offers something in return for the cooperation; to the institution, the authorities, or the participants. In this case, all the participants asked for feedback regarding their teaching. During these feedback minutes, many participants also expressed important facts that contributed to understanding the nature of their actions in their classes.

3.6.2.2   Class observations

In this study, the class observation aimed to observe any autonomous teaching of participants. As this proposal focuses on observable evidence of TA analysed through creativity, there was no observation protocol because both creativity and autonomy are not under measures. That observable autonomy was identified when participants made decisions to manage their teaching or resolve sudden constraints. After the class observation, the researcher corroborated with the

participants the reasons for their decisions. The initially planned number of class observation was three. The first observation was planned in the first month of the practicum, the second observation one month later, and the third observation during the last month of teaching.

This decision had the intention to observe meaningful differences in their teaching. For instance, George, teaching English in kindergarten, had two lessons, 30 minutes in length each one. I observed both lessons in my one hour visit. Analysing that six visits were more productive to observe any teaching development. The design was modified in the third phase where six classes were observed.

There are many strategies to observe classes from a qualitative approach. Wolcott (1994, p.161, cited in Richards 2003), for instance, proposes strategies for observing classes. Observing and recording the lesson is one strategy because the researcher cannot observe everything, and recordings can help recover details. In this case, the researcher was not familiar with all the variety of researched settings except the university. This strategy was used to capture general actions that could be interpreted as evidence related to TLA. Initially, it was not easy to identify vital autonomous characteristics during the lessons. It was necessary to compare with the literature and related research to match the actions with autonomous behaviours.

According to Richards (2003), the TESOL teachers' keen observational skills should develop through their duties are an overriding need. He proposes a model that includes observation levels in the classroom, emphasising the importance of fundamental aspects to consider when observing. These aspects are; learning to see objectively, considering the characteristics of the setting, the kind of participants and a suitable way to take notes.

Level 1 includes the skills of observation and suggestions for taking notes. Level 2 highlights the importance of how the fieldwork is observed and the ethical stand to describe and represent the setting. The observer is considered a participant who is 'part of the complexity of the setting and the connections, correlations, and causes can be witnessed as and how they unfold' (Adler & Adler, 1994: 378 cited in Richards 2003). Level 3 develops a structured observation, applying a material selection based on the observation schedule and potential problems that emerge during the observation.

Under any of these levels, Richards (ibid) suggests that independently from the kind of negotiation for observing the class, the researcher's relationship with the inhabitants of the researched setting should not be a factor that impacts the research process focus. This research adopted level two, gathering data from the participant, observing and registering expressions of

autonomy as above described, and being part of the setting that is aware of the participants' development with an ethical stance.

Another strategy is to observe and look for nothing in particular, especially when the observer is not familiar with the setting, and many things are happening around. Creswell (2014, p.240) emphasises the benefits of being a 'qualitative observer, varying from being a nonparticipant to a complete participant. Typically, those observations are open-ended in that the researcher asks general questions of the participants allowing the participants to freely provide their views'. This happened to the researcher in various educational levels, asking participants their insights regarding the context.

Richards (2003) claims that field notes are the researcher's version of her experience with the world with no rules, containing shape and substance. Especial attention was paid to sudden events that disturbed the class while taking field notes. Those events (random questions, behaviours, or changes from the setting) were considered an input to TA characteristics when managing to teach and resolving constraints. After the class, the researcher usually asked questions specifically regarding the decisions of participants. These reflections were the key information to compare the actions observed with the participants' reflections regarding their actions.

3.6.2.3 Qualitative audio and visual materials

The observed classes were audio-recorded to transcribe some segments of the lesson and support the field notes analysis. Creswell (2014) enlists an important category into qualitative data that entails audio and diverse materials such as photographs, videotapes, e-mails, text messages, and social media texts. This study gathered a systematic audio recording of the observed classes. The researcher could take photographs with the prior permission of the visited institutions during all observed classes. In the case of young students, their identity and privacy were carefully managed.

First of all, the researcher introduced herself to the school authorities and asked for permission to audio record the lessons. Once obtained permission, the researcher asked participants an appointment to visit their classroom and observe their lessons. Participants indicated the date and the hour for the class observation. The researcher arrived some minutes earlier to introduce herself to the mentors in the classroom. She sat in the back of the classrooms to audio record the lesson and take notes without any other intervention.

Unfortunately, the recordings contain much noise because a foreign language is not a lesson where learners are generally quiet. Participants commonly used their mother tongue due to their

students' lack of familiarity with the foreign language. The researcher stayed until the end of the lessons. She had the opportunity to comment with participants about observed aspects that seemed related to autonomy.

Audiotapes are useful when transcribed, as Dörnyei (2007) claims, and the analysis of those transcriptions are usually conversation analysis and discourse analysis. This study was looking for evidence of autonomy that could be corroborated by conversation analysis. The field notes were useful to complement the informal interviews regarding sudden actions, negotiations, or adaptations observed and in the classroom. The researcher had the opportunity to listen to the recordings as often as necessary to obtain transcriptions of key parts of the lessons and details to remember when participants showed any TA signal.

3.6.2.4   Reflections

This study entails the participants' reflections during their practicum obtained from their reflective journals. These journals are mandatory in the module as part of their assessment. They are part of their portfolios of evidence. Reflective practice is the 'process of learning through and from experience towards greater insights of self or practice' (Finlay, 2008, p.1 cited in Meierdirk, 2017). The practicum is evaluated through lesson plans and reflections regarding the lessons; student teachers have to reflect on their practice each week.

According to each personal style, some participants delivered daily reports, resulting in a lack of critical reflection of their teaching result. Others wrote their reports each week, including references to underpin their teaching methods and teaching strategies used.

Not all the participants shared their reflections for this study, but those who let analyse their reflections contributed in a significant way to the data analysis. The researcher usually asked informal questions after the class observation regarding the decisions of participants and actions. These spontaneous reflections also contributed to an objective way to analyse the data.

3.6.2.5   Research diary

Silverman (2000) recognises that keeping a careful record of events in a research diary implies an open-minded and critical approach to the research that has reflection as a constant. Silverman summarises the uses of a research diary; to show the reader the development of thinking, as a tool for reflection, to support time management, to visualise ideas for future directions of the work, and to be used in the methodology chapter as a reference (p. 193, adapted in part from Ciper, 1996:73).

In this study, the research diary helped the researcher recall essential moments and events surrounding data. After the class observations, the diary reflections were fundamental to understanding and remembering key moments of the lessons or important aspects in the class. As participants do not have teaching experience, they omitted to mention important characteristics in the settings that impacted their teaching results, such as the lack of mentoring, teaching conditions or also some of them did not mention the high number of learners in the classroom.

As Dörnyei (2007) posits, diaries allow research of social, psychological, and physiological processes through everyday reflections and records of events. This study analyses socio-cultural aspects that influence on the teaching of participants. Richards (2003, p.165) claims that an essential part of fieldwork is a research diary, that 'more than the mere record of daily activities, is an opportunity to reflect on all aspects of the research process and the researcher's place within it'. The insights from the diary are a great support to remind the progress achieved during the research. In this study, the researcher kept a diary where the reflections included details from the diverse types of settings, mentors, and students of each participant.

According to Bolger et al. (2003), there is a classification of diaries depending on the type of entries they register; interval contingent contains systematic entries that follow an ordered report of events. Signal interval that registers chunks of information to report, such as phone calls. Event contingent that contains a personal detailed report of occurred events during the process of research. In this study, and considering Bolger et al. classification, the diary was event contingent, reporting details of the conversations or events that provided information about the nature of teaching amongst participants.

The applied instruments were the same through the three phases. The participants' personal reflections provided important information regarding their thoughts, the teaching context and their learnings. The following section contains an overview of the data collected in this study.

3.7   Data collection

As explained in the research design (see 3.5), diverse instruments were administered to collect diverse sources of data. The data collected in this study from phase one, phase two, and phase three of the main study, are summarised in Table 7. The exploratory phase just informed if the initial research proposal was researchable or not.

Table 7 Data collected from the exploratory phase and the main study

Data collected in the exploratory phase	Data collected in the main study
*2 X 1-hour focus groups to identify researchable aspects *110 questionnaires	*13 x 15-minute pre-study interviews * Field notes from 51 observed lessons *5 x reflective portfolios *32 descriptive examples containing 29 excerpts, illustrating themes from the field notes and the research diary (3 examples in chapter 4 and 29 examples in the Appendixes from D to J) *Photos of observed classes (29 shown in the thesis) *12 x 15-minute end of study interviews * Research diary *150 WhatsApp messages from the 13 participants *ELT programme, BUAP, 2009 *Practicum regulations

Initially, three class observations were programmed for each participant. The number of observations was increased to six observations in phase three in order to have a closer view of their teaching and gather more data. Table 8 shows the educational setting where participants taught English and the number of observed classes. This number appears in parenthesis.

Table 8 Number of class observations per participant and educational settings

Primary	Secondary	University
Kindergarten: **George (6), Mary (6), Vicky (6)**	**Secondary school:** Tom (3), Liz (3)	Dany (3), Laura (3), Christina (3), Ellen (2)
Primary school: **Lucy (3), Anne (3)**	**Preparatory school:** Kate (3), Celia (6),	

In the following section, an overview of the data analysis is presented.

3.8   Data analysis

The data from the thirteen individual cases were thematically analysed (Braun and Clarke, 2006). The first stage of the analysis was familiarisation with the data registered in the field notes through the class observations and extracts from the research diary. Manual coding and the use of the software N-vivo helped differentiate and code the data to identify possible expressions of TA. Internal capacities of the participants and external factors in the settings were the two dimensions of TLA distinguished (see Figure 12).

After this stage, these two dimensions helped generating codes. The second stage of the data analysis consisted on constructing themes based on the participants' opinions, reflections and

comments after their classes. In this stage, themes such as the teaching capacities of the participants, positive attitudes, actions taken to manage their lesson, and components of learning to teach such as reflection and self-evaluation were coded as expressions of autonomy. The initial analysis is reported in this chapter as the first step of the TLA analysis in this study.

The following phase took several months of revisiting data and the correspondent literature due to the multidimensional nature of TA. This exhaustive comparison of the data with existing literature conducted to an objective analysis and define the potential themes. Once identified, defined and named themes helped the process produce the data report (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke and Braun, 2017).

In order to maintain trustworthiness, English was the language used in the initial interviews, but in the case of some participants who commented and wrote their diaries in Spanish, translations to English are provided in the data analysis section. All the participants verified the translations and observation reports to agree on the interpretations before the data analysis.

The findings are presented in chapter four, based on the participants' oral and written reflections about their practice. The organization of findings is based on Benson's (2017) identification of attributional and situational TA dimensions. In this study, creativity was considered a potential construct of autonomy because apart from being observed in the participants' teaching, it shares characteristics and principles related to TA. Music, games, songs, role plays, attractive materials, creative use of technologies, and improvised clever solutions to solve constraints during the lesson were coded as an internal teaching capacity and a manifestation of creativity, (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). In a strenuous thinking process, data and literature were revisited and reanalysed over several months, identifying and associating common characteristics between both terms, creativity and autonomy. Finally, the data discussion is developed in chapter five, contrasting participants' reflections with the literature regarding TLA.

3.8.1   Criteria to code essences of autonomy and creativity

The term TA is conceptualized and understood differently in every setting. Based on Smith's definition (2003), this study considered capacities, knowledge and attitudes in the participants' process of learning to teach inside and outside the classroom. If the participants managed their teaching with positive attitudes or teaching skills, obtaining an enthusiastic response from their students, these actions were coded as expressions of TA. This coding helped find the evidence of each theme according to the definition of TLA. This deductive analysis is considered top-down (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke and Braun, 2017), based on existing concepts. Their reflections, observations, and self-evaluation indicated awareness of developing teaching. Here, an inductive

analysis, considered bottom-up was done based on the data. After transcribing and sometimes translating all data from each individual case, coding was done manually and using Nvivo. An example of coding regarding George's constant reflections and evaluations of his teaching is shown in picture 10. Sometimes he reflected in Spanish; he also commented on his strategies and reflections in Spanish after the observed lesson.

Picture 10. Example of coding Georges' data, identifying his learning to teach process.

Reference 1: 3.20% coverage

Regarding my teaching, I feel I still miss teaching aspects to learn. 60 mandatory hours were not enough to prepare myself for this changing world that you see in the school, for the constant interaction you have with the kids, and the individual personality they already have. Every student is unique and they all have very different sorts of living this life outside the classroom. Facing the day-to-day activities require new knowledge, new challenges, and the constant link between the learner and the teacher

Reference 2: 1.64% coverage

He mentions the case of a boy who is ignored in the classroom for the assumption he has deficit of attention. He comments that the kid dances, sings and follows all his activities, the problem is that the teachers and his parents don't pay enough attention to this boy.

Reference 3: 1.43% coverage

Willy also mentioned the case of a boy who is considered with serious problems of deficit of attention, he concludes the problem is the lack of attention he receives at home because the boy participated satisfactorily in his class

Reference 4: 2.30% coverage

Los alumnos demuestran una mayor necesidad de significado en cuanto a lo que están aprendiendo, la transición entre etapas de pensamiento es cada vez más tangible conforme las clases avanzan. En este punto es importante no solo aportar vocabulario, sino también, modelos de comunicación y al igual que los más pequeños una mayor cantidad de elementos audiovisuales.

Reference 5: 2.70% coverage

Los alumnos continúan respondiendo favorablemente a los estímulos audiovisuales. En cada clase se ha tratado siempre de entrelazar los contenidos siguiendo una secuencia que facilite la asimilación y acomodación del nuevo conocimiento; es notable la retención que han tenido los niños con respecto al vocabulario, además de que reaccionan y responden rápidamente a los comandos que se han dictado desde el inicio de las clases.

The participants in this study were mediators between their students, the foreign language and the aspects in the setting that impacted the learning-teaching process, observed from the socio-constructivist lens. Following the definition provided by Group C (2015), creativity was identified and coded under innovative actions with a learning purpose. When the participants' students responded enthusiastically and were engaged during innovative or dynamic activities, these actions were considered as successful lessons. Picture 11 shows an example of coding creative materials and classes from Mary's reflections.

Picture 11. Examples of coding Mary's data regarding creative materials and lessons

Files\\Personal reflections\\PP1 REFLECTIONS
43 references coded, 26.98% coverage

Reference 1: 0.67% coverage

The previous class I decorated the classroom like a jungle, I brought binoculars and tickets, we simulated to be in a safari. Some said they have been in the zoo, others not. Since this activity, it was an introduction for them to practice the vocabulary.

Reference 2: 0.74% coverage

Yesterday they were a mean of transportation: a bus, a car, a train, a light stop. So, they were giving instructions. They recalled the mean of transportation they were. Today it was easier the association because they recalled the means of transportation they represented."

Reference 3: 0.77% coverage

Outside the classroom, Diana comments that her creativity has helped her to catch her students' attention. She comments her students in her previous practices told her they still miss her classes because they enjoyed the kind of creative and attractive activities she designed for them.

Reference 4: 0.33% coverage

She says she learnt a lot from this setting because creativity can be applied with these young kids but also in any other age

Appendixes F to K contain 29 descriptive and interpretative examples result of field notes, the research diary, some of the participants' reflections, photos, and related literature. This first stage of code analysis was done according to the researcher's criteria, interpreting the type of teaching the participants applied during the practicum. Picture 12 shows an example of the field notes taken during class observations.

Picture 12 Example of the field notes
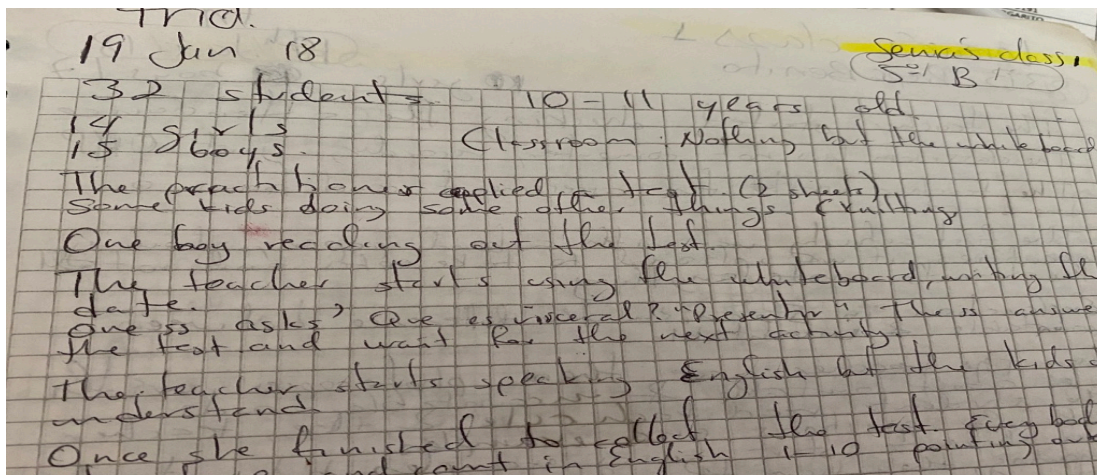
In the first phase of data analysis, field notes and comments in the research diary were organized by participant, describing each teaching style, including specific conditions in the settings, and moments when the participants actions were related to TA. Nvivo helped organize the information according to constant characteristics regarding autonomy; the identification of diverse themes was a key factor for the analysis.

Some coding was analysed manually, highlighting the identified teaching characteristics to digest the classifications and dimensions of TA that emerged. The research diary also helped when recalling details regarding the setting and the interactions that occurred there, as illustrated in picture 13.

Picture 13. Research diary notes.

12th October, 2018

Lore's class observation
The class started 20 minutes later. My participant told me that the attendance was not so good on Fridays. Fortunately, almost all the students arrived (late but arrived).
She started introducing the topic: the family tree & vocabulary about the family, using possessives. The students received a copy with exercises to answer regarding the topic. Finally, she asked them to work in pairs to prepare a role play. The role play consisted on an interview of a famous person. One of them will be the character they decided and the interviewer will ask about his or her personal life, including some members of the family. She was working closely with all the students. They feel very confident with her and constantly asked her questions about vocabulary. As she looks very young, they call her by her name. it looks like a real scaffolding in both levels: regarding the language acquisition process and learning to teach. When she had doubts, she opened a dictionary on line or asked me. The head teacher entered in the end of the first hour and asked her to stay the entire class (another hour) with the group. This happens before, Lore had to improvise to continue with the class. She extended the exercises!

The impact of the eight settings was evident because the participants showed common actions regarding autonomy in both supportive and difficult scenarios. Revising data for months helped to understand these differences objectively regarding internal and external aspects that supported and hampered their teaching.

The observed actions were classified in chunks according to the participants' intention. Picture 14 shows an example of these codes, gathered from the 51 field notes from class observations.

Picture 14. Codes from class observations
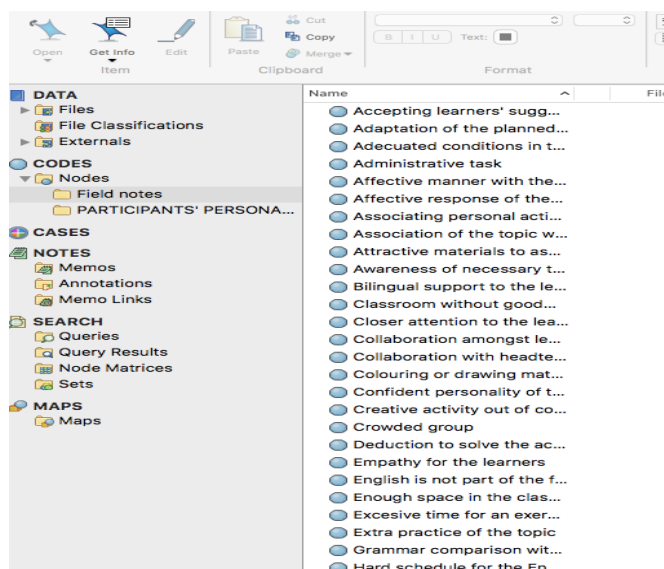
Every setting provided diverse teaching conditions, and after the data were coded, new aspects to consider in this study emerged. The literature provided vital information, but there are still some gaps in understanding data and interpreting actions that were impacted by the conditions in the setting. Some participants taught under supportive conditions and mentoring. However, large groups of students, lack of suitable teaching conditions, and an absence of mentors during the lesson were observed in most of the cases.

Figure 12 below shows a summary of the codes resulting from class observations, divided into observed internal capacities of student teachers and external factors identified in the settings. Data provided information regarding how they learnt to teach, their personal attitudes that made the difference in their teaching and their creativity during the lessons. Regarding the settings, the mentors, the learners, and the ethos in the school were key identified aspects that impacted the results. This data-structure resulted from months of revisiting the data, the research diary, understanding their actions through matching them with related literature.

Figure 12 First stage of code analysis. Codes result of the class observations regarding TLA.
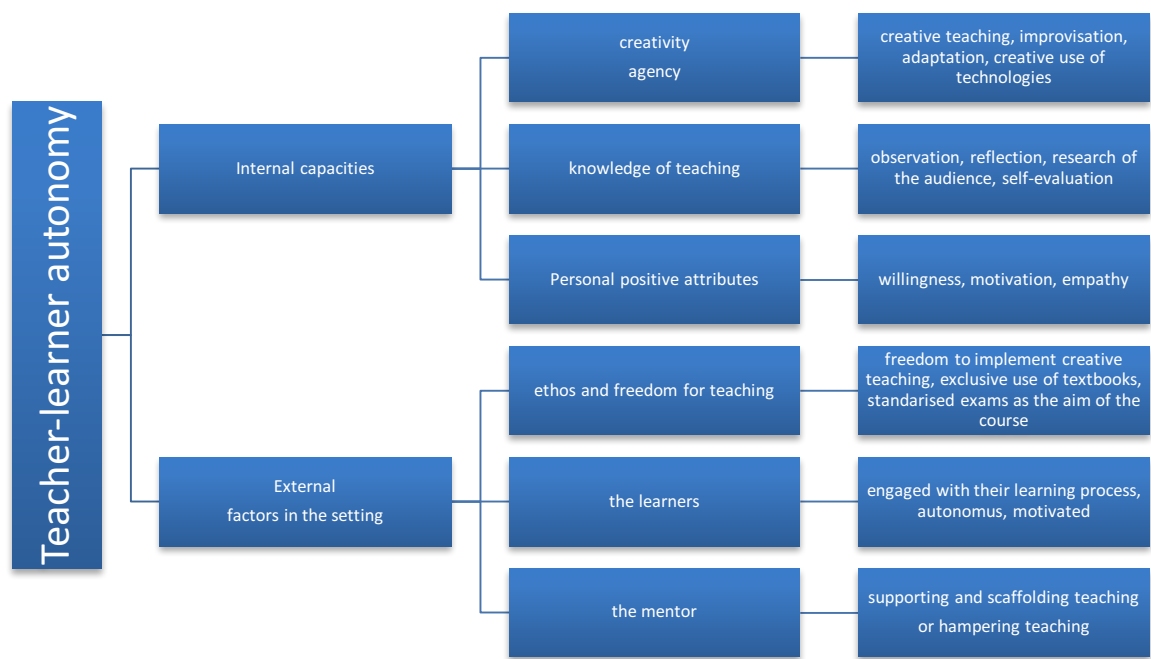
After coding internal capacities and external factors observed by the researcher, the main data analysis consisted of the participants' reflections. Their reflections were analysed to contrast their action with their teaching reflections (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

Benson (2011) posits that due to the multidimensional nature of autonomy, both teacher and learner autonomy have had varied components and dimensions in their definitions. Due to the multifaceted nature of autonomy, the contexts where they were teaching are considered. This fact shows a need to be explicit about exactly what is meant by the concept of autonomy, in this case, the participants' willingness and motivation to control and contextualise their teaching based on their learners' needs. The dimension(s) that is/are analysed under all possibilities seem

to illustrate a philosophy supporting autonomy. These dimensions are considered when referring to autonomy in education.

The main data analysis consisted of analysing the coding regarding the participants' interviews and reflections. These data were compared with their actions in the classroom. Internal capacities that guided their teaching actions were identified (see Figure 13). These spontaneous comments or reactions provided key information to understand the nature of the participants. Some participants felt confident to reflect on their teaching after the class. Sometimes, their comments were long and they even shared their reflections on WhatsApp.

The first analysis referred to the type of teaching methods participants used and reflected about the nature of autonomous teachers. They constantly visualised themselves as autonomous teachers. Maybe they were not so aware of the pedagogies they applied. However, their efforts and reflective practice placed their students at the core of their efforts, as illustrated in picture 15.

Picture 15. Type of teaching participants reflected about after their classes.
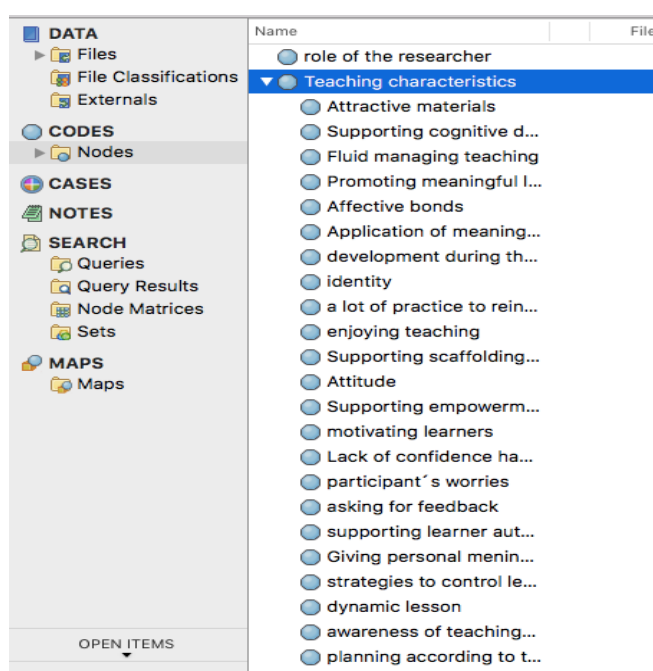
Thirdly, the internal capacities the participants reflected about through formal and informal interviews were analysed. In this sense, the definition of TLA provided by Smith and Erdogan (2008) was considered as a reference. The knowledge, capacities and attitudes that participants recognised were analysed to compare with the literature and enlighten each emerging themes or category. Creativity was considered one of the most crucial developed teaching capacities related to TA. This association between creativity and autonomy was called creative teaching. Picture 16 shows this section of the coding using Nvivo.

Picture 16. Internal capacities, knowledge, and attitudes of autonomous teacher-learners.
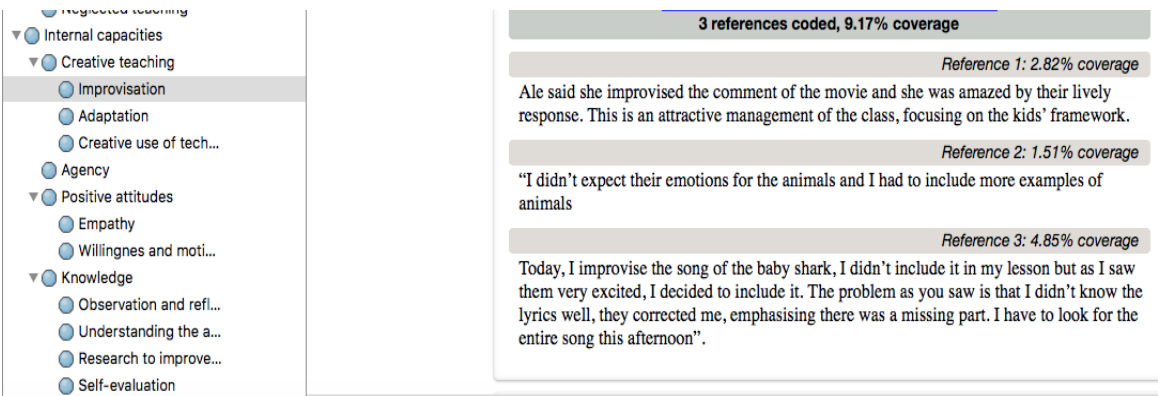
Finally, the last analysis corresponded to external factors in the setting impacted, supporting or hampering their TA development. Participants mentioned and reflected on the important factors they saw or cope with during each session. These aspects were mainly due to the impact of mentors, the ethos in the school, and the response of the students. Picture 17 shows an example of the coding done in this study using Nvivo regarding external factors.

Picture 17. Coding of the reflections of the participants regarding external factors that impacted their teaching.
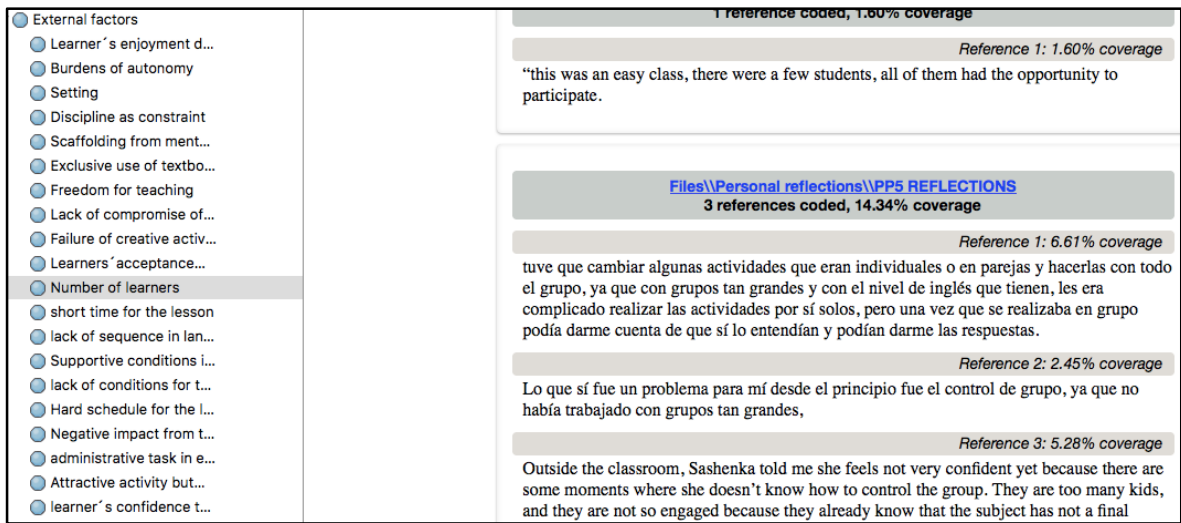
Richards (2003) claims that the first step to achieving a basis for a suitable analysis of formal and informal interviews must be transcription. In chapter four, segments of both formal and informal interviews after the observed lessons and shared written reflections from some participants' diaries from their practicum module are presented. Data is presented in these two dimensions that Benson (2017) claims, attributes and situational aspects that affected the autonomy participants expressed in their reflections.

The diaries are a requirement for grading the practicum module. Diverse sources of data permitted comparisons in the first instance between the participants' actions, with their reflections to identify teaching autonomous development. For instance, picture 18 shows some reflections shared by WhatsApp as informal ways of data collection.

Picture 18. A WhatsApp message from a participant in Spanish (her mother tongue).
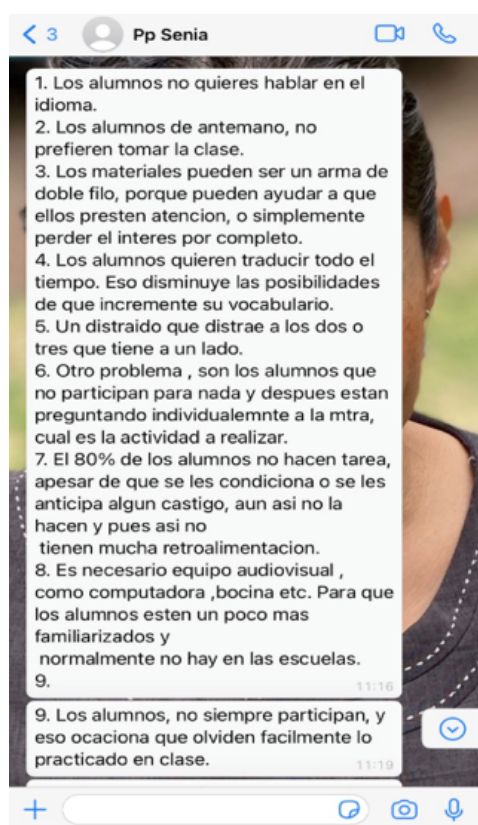
In some cases, it was possible to compare their actions with their lesson plans during the class to analyse when they had to adapt, restructure or improvise in a flexible way to have a successful result.

Huang (2013) analyses Smith and Erdogan's (2008) model that considers teachers' capacity to manage freedom in the setting and TLA, including skills, knowledge, and attitudes. Three levels or degrees of autonomy in each dimension are distinguished. The first is having the freedom and motivation to act autonomously in the classroom. Motivation was a common internal capacity

observed among many participants in this study (see 4.2.11). Internal capacities such as willingness, motivation and empathy (see 4.2.10) made the difference observed in the participants outputs, even under difficult situations.

The second level identified by Huang (ibid) is a technical and psychological capacity to be an autonomous teacher. Some participants in this study had a certain freedom to work under autonomous principles (see 4.3). Creativity (see 4.3.1) is the capacity this study focuses on, related to the second research question. Creativity has been related to critical thinking (Freire, 1970), and the participants in this study showed this ability to manage their lessons (see 4.3.2). Reflection and observation (see 4.2.7), self-evaluation of their teaching (see 4.2.8) were also essential in every case to develop TA.

The third level is a capacity to control the freedom of action, considering political characteristics in the setting. Supportive settings provided the participants in this study with acceptable conditions or external factors (see 4.4.5). In line with Huang (2005), the participants' awareness regarding the importance of their role as teachers in this study was identified. Another characteristic was the reflective practices of participants based on their students. Both characteristics were key factors that helped the researcher identify their teaching development.

On the one hand, the determination that teacher-learners showed to be autonomous seemed to start with their self-perception or identity to be an autonomous teacher. In line with Rebolledo and Smith (2015), an autonomous teacher is not just the one with freedom for teaching but a teacher whose capacities are observed for a personal and context benefit. Most of the participants in this study illustrated with their actions that an autonomous teacher develops diverse capacities to cope with different factors in each setting. The willingness to provide real learning opportunities and engagement with their audience was essential (see 4.2.11).

The participants were student teacher without much teaching experience, maybe some previous teaching modules in the BA programme. However, their willingness conduced most of them to develop suitable knowledge for teaching. Their teaching development was observed in most of the cases. As Benson (2013) claims, one aspect that denotes TA is the willingness to support learner autonomy (see 4.2.1) by applying pedagogical strategies that engage learners with their learning process.

3.8.2   Identified internal capacity: creative teaching

Creativity began to emerge in the exploratory phase when the participants expressed the need to be creative to teach under difficult circumstances. They also mentioned their successful results

when implementing creative ways to teach their students in their practice. The term creativity also emerged as an identified capacity during class observations, especially under difficult circumstances. In supportive contexts, some participants demonstrated their teaching potential and took advantage of those conditions to develop TLA. After a long data-reading process, comparing key teaching moments with the literature, and revisiting data to analyse common types of actions carefully, four key cases were chosen because of their TLA development. This capacity was illustrated in many of their observed lessons and reflections.

The general identification of overlaps between the concepts autonomy and creativity led to a detailed theoretical revision of the connection between them. The interpretation of the themes and the overlaps in the observed actions supported the proposed correlation of terms: TLA and creativity. There were expressions of creative teaching that helped participants to manage to teach and resolve constraints. However, after many revisions and comparisons with the literature, the analysis turned out to be a better interpretation of autonomy philosophy.

The impact of the setting was considered a relevant factor, as shown in the section below.

3.8.3   The impact of the setting on TLA

In each setting, TA is valued and defined differently according to the socio-cultural circumstances. Creswell (2014) emphasises that case studies should include detailed descriptions regarding the setting. In this study, different state schools at different educational levels were described.

Acceptable teaching conditions and the benefit of the teaching scaffolding provided by a mentor in the classroom were conditions some participants enjoyed. In other cases, the conditions were not ideal, and the learners had scant foreign language background. The literature is not always specific as to the proper response of teachers when facing such difficult conditions. The most extreme situation was when the mentors forbade them to implement any teaching strategy other than following the textbook. Appendix M shows these external aspects that influenced TA.

The data analysis process is similar to grounded theory. Creswell (2014) observes that grounded theory for analysis has a systematic development that generates categories of information called open coding. Then, one of the categories to position it with a theoretical model, called axial coding, is chosen. Finally, Creswell explains the interconnection of these categories and how to select coding to analyse the correspondence. This analysis was made of both data obtained and coded results to differentiate the features of each category. The presence of the researcher also had an impact on the results that is explained in the following section.

3.9   Role of the researcher

My research journey during this experience was extremely fruitful and meaningful to me as a researcher. Being a teacher educator working under acceptable conditions meant that I was not familiar with the diverse realities in our educational contexts. The visits to the different teaching settings and the interaction with novice and experienced teachers from different schools gave me a deep insight into different educational contexts. I learnt to be an objective researcher, and little by little, my preconceptions and opinions were put aside. In the beginning, it was difficult to prevent my teacher educator side from evaluating teaching and analysing settings under both difficult and privileged circumstances. However, my researcher side remained objective and reflective, especially when I had to analyse a situation or describe observed facts.

Yin (2014) and others (Creswell, 2014; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003) claim that the researcher is seen first as an instrument of data collection in qualitative studies. In this study, I was an outsider participant because none of the participants had taken classes with me, except one of them. Being the BA programme coordinator at this university before this study kept me out of the classroom for four years. This was a positive factor because I was not seen as a teacher who evaluated the participants' teaching. I tried to be neutral and separate my personal background as a teacher educator when collecting and analysing data. Besides, the participants decided voluntarily to participate with a sense of confidence because I did not represent an evaluative figure of their teaching in any sense.

Dörnyei (2007:7) considers the following as essential characteristics in a researcher to carry out proper research: genuine curiosity, interest, and passion for researching a topic. In this case, I have been passionate about TA in my career. I suddenly discovered that autonomy had been my passion since I started educating teachers. Common sense is the second characteristic that Dörnyei mentions, referring to researching real problems with viable proposals. In my experience, TA is not a common characteristic of teacher-learners during the degree, and possibly in their future jobs autonomy will be a challenge. Autonomy represents a real challenge for teachers who usually follow instructions instead of being proactive.

Good ideas are the third characteristic Dörnyei (2007) mentions, involving creative thinking grounded in reality. In this case, I believe I am a creative teacher, educator, and researcher who wanted to investigate the type of creativity and autonomy teacher-learners show in their practicum teaching.

The fourth component Dörnyei describes is the systematic nature of research, a result of the combination of discipline, reliability, and social responsibility. In this study, I provided a honest

and ethical introduction of the research to the participants from the beginning. Some participants asked for further explanations about TA. Another important characteristic was the lack of relationship with the participants. They did not see me as a supervisor or an evaluator of their teaching during the practicum. This situation permitted a neutral or more confident attitude from the participants.

As an initial point, the aim of the study was explained to all the participants, providing a general view of the core capacities researched in them as novice teachers. This honest explanation and initial procedure covered the ethical requirement of having explicit and voluntary participation in the research. However, it was observed that all of them felt that TA was necessary to achieve in their classroom when they agreed to collaborate. The participants asked for different support in return of their collaboratio: feedback for their teaching, innovative ideas to manage their lessons, opinions regarding their group control, or possible materials to illustrate diverse topics. This mutual benefit or collaboration contributed to improving their teaching experience. The researcher's presence impacted on the participants' teaching, which resulted in reflective teaching.

Objective data interpretation is a factor that provides a transparent view of the findings. Creswell (2014) claims that the researcher also plays a role as an instrument to interpret the data, considering her experience and background and the intensive experience with the participants. He mentions some aspects to consider when the researcher is managing the entire process. The diverse sources of information collected, such as interviews, class observations, written reflections, and audio-visual sources, contribute to a better understanding of the aim, in this case, TLA.

The initial affirmation of being an autonomous and creative teacher was a factor that could have an impact on the participants' practice. They tried to be creative and dynamic during their lessons, maintaining a type of autonomous professional identity. Creswell (2014) claims that the researcher has to be objective to connect all the collected data properly; the data analysis is not just inductive but also deductive, coherently contrasting the diverse sources in a sense. In this study, I separated the data observed from class observation following the literature that describes TLA. Intense comparison with the literature helped me divide the data into the internal characteristics of autonomous teachers and external factors that influence TA. Then, to prepare the data analysis regarding participants' opinions and reflections, the coded data were illustrated in a diagram (see Figure 13) to analyse participants' reflections.

I organized and selected the participants' opinions consistently and systematically to avoid missing key information. Creswell (2014) claims that clear and organised data is essential to

provide an objective analysis that, combined with reflexivity, keeps personal background apart with a degree of objectivity. Chapter four shows all this analysis, where data from the participants are presented. Finally, Creswell observes that a holistic account is important to consider multiple perspectives when analysing the big picture of the problem. In this case, the researcher was just the observer in the classroom, but a certain influence on the participants' teaching was undeniable.

In my journey as a researcher, I recognise that in the beginning, I had different expectations for this investigation. I thought the use of technologies would be one initial or triggering aspect to find autonomous teaching expressions. However, diverse conditions in the settings for the teaching practicum showed that technologies are not still available in all schools and were not essential for autonomous processes. With time and after data analysis, revisiting data as many times as necessary, I could see certain principles of autonomy behind participants' actions and reflections. I recognise the role I had as a researcher, commenting on autonomy with the participants before or after their class observations. The participants were motivated to see and recognise themselves as autonomous teachers, trying to take each lesson as an opportunity to reflect and perform autonomously in the setting in which they were teaching.

Ethical considerations were followed from the beginning to avoid or diminish the influence of a mixture of beliefs or misconceptions when interpreting data.

3.10   Ethical considerations

Ethics is an essential aspect of research that provides objectivity and reliability. As Ryen (2004, p. 231) affirms, "There is no international agreement or regulations of ethical standards in research– still, three main issues frequently raised in the Western ethical research discourse persist: codes and consent, confidentiality, and trust". A consent for the participants was prepared bearing in mind the above principles and the participants signed it before the study was conducted. After the participants gave written consent, they were also informed orally about the study by the researcher assuring an intimate and genuine, and, most important of all, a nonthreatening relationship and making sure the participants did not feel judged or evaluate by the researcher.

As Ryen (2016) suggests, I obtained the Ethics Research Governance Online project (ERGO) to provide all participants with information regarding their confidentiality, voluntary participation, and information about the research project. I asked the participants their decision to appear with pseudonyms, collaborate voluntarily in each phase of the research, and include their reflections during their practicum. Ryen (ibid) claims that the researcher and the participants need to be open and trustworthy to avoid invading the participants in their spaces. I must admit that our

relationship was transparent, and participants had the confidence to comment on their practice and ask for feedback at the end of the observations. The participants did not pay specific attention to the details of the research they provided data for. Throughout the observation process, they paid special attention to their own teaching skills. Sometimes, they asked for remedial help and feedback from the researcher on their teaching methodology techniques.

Complete information regarding the study was provided to principals, teachers, or mentors in the schools where the participants taught English. Just one kindergarten, where Diane and Ale taught, requested an introduction letter permitting the young children classes observation, signed by the Faculty principal where I am adscript. The rest of the settings permitted me to observe the lessons after a meeting with the principals to explain the aim of my research project. The instruments administered were registered with the following codes:

- 27334: Exploratory study. The role of ICTs in the development of teacher autonomy in ELT student teachers.
- 30528: Main study. Exploring the development of teacher autonomy in 21st century ELT student teachers: the use of ICT and creativity during the practicum.
- 31345: Main study. Exploring the development of teacher autonomy in 21st century ELT student teachers: the use of ICT and creativity during the practicum.

Following the observations, each participant went over the data collected by the researcher through field notes and reflection notes. The researcher programmed a personal meeting with each participant to check if they approved the content of the data and translations the researcher presented from their reflections in Spanish. The participants, without any exception, gave full consents on having checked the notes of the researcher and agreed with them or asked for amendments in the data collected.

In their final comments and reflections after the meeting, some of them expressed a feeling of satisfaction with their participation in this study and the methodology of the research. Some mentioned they felt privileged to have been included in the present research since the benefits of the intervention were clear to them and made sense to them. There was not a reference to a negative influence on their teaching mentioned by any of the participants in their comments.

As TA is a multidimensional term, this capacity is analysed through teachers who consider themselves autonomous and teach under an autonomous philosophy. In the following chapter, data analysis is presented. The data analysed in this chapter regarding the

participants' actions in the classroom are compared with the participants' reflections in the following chapter.

Chapter 4   Autonomy and creativity as teacher attributes and external factors that impact on TLA from the participants' perspective

4.1   Introduction

Following the first stage analysis which was presented in the methodology section (see 3.9), the main findings are presented in this chapter. A careful selection of coding gathered through informal talks in the corridors, written reflections from their diaries (from those who shared their reflective journals), and their initial and final interviews is included in this section by theme and sub-theme to illustrate their perspectives regarding TLA. Extracts from the individual cases are used as examples for each theme and demonstrate other associations, for instance, TLA and creativity.

In order to present any development of TLA over time, data referring to individual participants which demonstrated their capacities, knowledge and attitudes are presented chronologically. The week when the reflections of the participants were collected appears in brackets next to the data source.

This presentation of findings within this chapter is organised according to the research questions that guide this study. In section 1, the teacher's attributes or internal capacities are presented (4.2). Section **Error! Reference source not found.** includes finding regarding creativity. It is not easy to separate creativity from aspects such as motivation or the use of technologies when analysing the participants' opinions. However, all these aspects are analysed separately to follow the order of the themes. In some of the examples below, comments from the researcher's diary are used to further contextualise classroom actions and describe the setting.

The external factors, according to Benson's (2017) dimensions of TA, show that impact of the settings on TLA. Mentors, learners, the teaching conditions, and the ethos of the school are classified here as external factors, taking into account the freedom for teaching in both supportive and difficult settings (see 4.4).

4.2 What is the nature (e.g., characteristics, willingness, empathy, motivation) of TLA, and how does it develop during the teaching practicum?

Based on the TLA literature, many aspects that characterise autonomous teacher learners are presented to answer this first research question. These aspects are: supporting learner autonomy and empowerment, promoting meaningful learning and scaffolding during the activities, dynamic lessons with varied types of teaching strategies, providing extra materials to complement the contents, supporting cognitive development of their students, development of teacher agency, observation and reflection during the class, self-evaluation of their teaching, research about characteristics of their students, positive attitudes, willingness and motivation, and teacher empathy, as showed below.

4.2.1 Supporting learner autonomy and empowerment

Some participants reflected on the empowerment of their students through their freedom to act during the class. These actions were usually observed once they had identified characteristics of their students. In the case of George, he observed how his young learners had developed a certain empowerment in his class (see Appendix F for further examples).

Reference 1. George. Reflections after class observation 6. 15th February (week 5).

> *"A pesar de que los niños se han estado distrayendo en las clases, el proceso de empoderamiento se afianza día a día".*
>
> *Translation*
>
> *"Even though the children have been distracted these days, their empowerment process strengthens every day."*

Mary consistently gave her students certain freedom to decide during the lesson. She used activities in a meaningful way using objects or activities the children already recognised (see Appendix G for further examples).

Reference 1. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 21st January (week 2). Shapes.

> *"Then I showed the shapes and students already knew some shapes, so it was easier, I taught the shapes and their names in English, then I asked that they find 5 objects with the same shape that I showed. They looked around and find more than five, pointing them in English".*

Reference 2. Mary. Diary, personal reflections. 21st January 2018 (week 2). Topic: spring season and clothes

> "Then students **could choose** what clothes Susy, the doll, could use and I taught the vocabulary and some students were saying me that some they had been listening those words in their houses, for me it was because I could notice that **parents also help** that children learn easier. Then I chose some students and said a season and one by one put the clothes that corresponded to Susy, when they finished they saw how Susy looked and they were excited because they told me that his clothes were so nice, and they love them. At the end, I gave students a worksheet where they decorated each season".

Mary consistently supported the young children using their imagination with certain freedom. She created an environment where the children could ask questions and responded to the activities.

Reference 3. Mary. Diary personal reflections.28th January (week 3). Topic: the weather

> "In 1°D students were quiet because they were listening to a story and they were asking: what else etc. So, when I asked them that they **create** an end for the story, all students imagined a lot of things, then I told them the real end and some students had a close idea"

The bilingual method that Mary used helped the children participate in a confident way and collaborate in the group. However, they also could identify the theme in English, and connect with the idea of the class, as shown in the example below.

Mary reference 4. Mary. Diary personal reflections. 30th January (week 3). Topic: the weather

> "Today I asked how is the weather today? And some students were confused with how are you today? And said to me: fine thank you, but I asked again, and a girl said the weather but in Spanish and a boy said it in English, it was surprising because they payed attention to know what I was asking".

Mary's consistent efforts gave her surprises such as in the class when the toddlers sang a song without her guidance.

Reference 5. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 1st February (week 3).

> "This class was astonishing for me because I played the weather song and I just show the bottles to students and they sang all the song without me singing, I could not believe it, but it was real".

Dany, who was teaching at university, noticed that apart from empowering learners, his consistent support helped them enjoy their language learning process and develop a friendly relationship in the classroom, as shown below.

Reference 1. Dany. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 9th February (week 5).

> "In that moment, I felt comfortable with the group, our relationship was very good. It was like a kind of support. I tried to motivate them. I tried to take them to another level. They enjoyed these kinds of challenges".

Dany gave his students freedom and tools in their presentations in order to participate. He also provided them with enough information for developing their learning outputs.

Chapter 4

Reference 2. Dany. Personal reflections after class observation 3. 24th March (week 11).

> *"When they had to do the activity, they already knew the way to start a conversation, similarly to the video they had already seen. In the class one, they saw the video as a reference and in this class, they already knew the video and the examples. This class was just for their own production. They adapted it and did the activity well".*

For Anne, teaching in a primary school, to maintain the purpose of the class clear was the first step to give her students freedom during their learning process.

Reference 1. Anne. Personal reflections in her diary. (Week 2).

> *"Esta semana se entendió que los alumnos necesitan de constante recordatorio de indicaciones, así como en todo momento tener presente el propósito de la clase. Y lo que se pretende que conozcan, aprendan y desarrollen en el idioma.*
>
> *Translation*
>
> *"This week it was clear that the students need constant directions as well as keep the purpose of the lesson clear. The intention is that they identify, learn, and develop the language".*

Anne invited her young learners to look for information online regarding some exercises to practice the topic of the day. I observed how the children were so excited to use internet as a source of information. They shouted and jumped with emotion after Anne explained them the homework. They asked if they could bring their tablet to the classroom the following class. Anne reflected in her diary about the impact of this activity.

Reference 2. Anne. Personal reflections in her diary. (Week 7).

> *"La practicante pidió a los alumnos de 6º buscar una página en internet y resolver algunos ejercicios y mostrar los resultados de su prueba en la clase siguiente. Durante la clase comentaron los alumnos que, cuando terminaron el ejercicio, permanecieron en internet y encontraron ejercicios extras para resolver.*
>
> *Translation*
>
> *"The teacher asked the students from 6th grade look for a website and solve some exercises, showing their results in the following class. During the lesson, the students said that once they finished the exercises, they found extra exercises".*

At the end of her practicum, Anne also recognised the importance of her own motivation to transmit a positive attitude and motivation to her students.

Reference 3. Anne. Personal reflections in her diary. (Week 8).

> *"La practicante se mantuvo motivada en su estancia de práctica profesional, demostró interés profesional de aprendizaje en la institución para despertar en los alumnos el interés por el idioma".*

Translation

The practitioner kept motivated during her practicum, she demonstrated professional interest for learning in the institution to support the students' interests for the language.

Kate, teaching in a preparatory school, made her students aware of their own decisions and engagement in their language learning process, more than just looking for a mark (see Appendix K for further data).

Reference 1. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary. 15th January (week 2).

"I talked with the teacher and he told me about the requirements to pass the subject. Then I provide the requirements and the percentages to the students in order to let them decide to take the class by their own interest and decision.

Kate helped her students understand and practice the course contents. She consistently gave them diverse extra exercises to support their learning process. She noticed some students felt tired but others improved their learning outputs in the end of the lesson.

Reference 2. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary. 9th February (week 5).

"That action helped me to noticed different grammar misspellings at the moment they tried to write examples on the board so, I encouraged them to participate more by writing more examples on their notebooks and on the board to review their sentences. I guess that for some students it was a tiring and boring activity, but for others it was worthy, since the students with the most errors reduced their mistakes a lot".

Kate was interested in the fact that her students were aware of the need to improve in the language acquisition process. She invited them to be reflective and gave them a degree of autonomy. She commented they were able to identify mistakes in the anthology they followed in the end of the course.

Reference 3. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary. 2nd March (week 8).

"Even so, some students noticed some grammar mistakes on the first exercise of the anthology. Then, I let them correct those mistakes and the result was good since they were able to identify some errors on the instructions or the activities; there were not more than three mistakes, but most of the students were able to identify them".

Celia, also teaching in that preparatory school, used strategies to support learner autonomy and more agency among her learners. The individual work avoided that some students just repeated what their teammates said. She paid attention on shy students who did not participate in the class.

Reference 1. Celia. Personal reflections after class observation 4. 11th February (week 8).

> *"But I also noticed this group work so close together. They are usually following a leader, they weren't as autonomous as I imagine so, I implemented less activities in teams. I also separated them during the activities because they are usually waiting for the leader to start working. They claim they have great union among them, but I told them it is very different to work together and to be dependent of some students. Many worked in a passive way and my intention was to make participate those who never speak."*

Christina also provided her students with tools for participating with a degree of freedom and collaboration to create their own exercises in the class.

Reference 1. Christina. Personal reflections in her diary. 14th September (week 3).

> *"This week we worked with the topic* asking for meal. *I gave them vocabulary that they can use if they went to a restaurant, they got in teams and prepared a conversation, finally they made a role play, and it was a funny play".*

Christina reflected on the type of practices that motivated her students to use the foreign language and, at the same time, they enjoyed the activities.

Reference 2. Christina. Personal reflection after class observation 3. 26th October (week 8).

> *"I like to apply role plays because the students use the language in a funny and meaningful way for them.*

Christina gave her students the responsibility to collaborate in pair revision exercises. They reviewed their classmate's sentences and provided feedback. During this activity, the students had certain scaffolding process during these activities.

Reference 3. Christina. Personal reflection after class observation 3. 29th October (week 9).

> *They like the activities that we made. This time I asked them to write sentences and their classmates had to correct them if there were mistakes. They liked to give feedback*

Ellen supported the empowerment of her students through additional language teaching support. This was an extra effort to invite her learners to be autonomous.

Reference 1. Ellen. Personal reflections in her diary. 27th August (week 5).

> *"I talked to my students and they accepted to take the academic advise and some of them were excited because they want to improve their language level and some of them think that they need to study harder in order to pass this level. Finally, I started working with my students and now I think they are improving their skills and I am so happy because some of them are improving."*

4.2.2   Promoting meaningful learning and scaffolding during the activities

Some participants included activities that supported scaffolding among their students. This scaffolding resulted in successful learning results and in general, autonomy was possible for

teacher and learners. For example, George used a puppet to interact with the young learners. He observed the impact this activity had on the interaction and negotiation among the children.

Reference 1. George. Personal reflections. 19th January (week 1).

> *"Durante este tiempo he utilizado también una marioneta, la cual se ha convertido un apoyo excelente apoyo no solo para captar la atención de los niños, sino también, en una herramienta vital para representar los elementos comunicativos del inglés. De este modo, puedo dialogar con la marioneta facilitando una vez más la representación de la interacción verbal y la negociación de significados con los chicos".*
>
> *Translation*
>
> *I have used a puppet during this time, it has been a great support not just to attract students' attention but a great tool to represent communicative elements in English. Thus, I can model the talk with the puppet representing the oral interaction and negotiation of meaning with the kids.*

George maintained his objectives present to guide the activities in his class. Social and psychomotor abilities were considered to be developed by his young learners through the activities.

Reference 2. George. Personal reflections. 25th January (week 2).

> *"mis objetivos se mantienen claros en cuanto a qué es lo que mis estudiantes alcancen, primero que identifiquen el inglés como un medio de comunicación y segundo que desarrollen sus características psicomotrices de acuerdo a su etapa pre operacional. Por esto, esta semana los estudiantes realizaron actividades que buscan desarrollar su interacción social y habilidades motrices".*
>
> *Translation*
>
> *My objectives keep clear regarding what my students achieve, first they need to identify English as a mean of communication and second they have to develop their psychomotor characteristics according their pre-operational level. That is why the students did activities this week to develop their social and mobility abilities.*

After three months of observing his students and after a two-weeks holiday period, George recognised the improvements of his students and collaborative spirit.

Reference 3. George. Personal reflections. 10th April (week 13).

> *"Los alumnos se muestran receptivos y atentos, colaborativos y alegres, los alumnos vuelven del periodo vacacional y demuestran que el contenido visto a lo largo de las sesiones de la lengua objetivo sigue presente en su memoria, demostrando no solo capacidad para identificar el vocabulario sino también una mejora considerable en su habilidad de producción verbal".*
>
> *Translation*

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> *"The students look receptive and alert, collaborative and joyful, they come from the holiday break and show that the previous contents learnt they still have the contents in their minds, demonstrating not just their capacity to identify the vocabulary but a considerable improvement of their oral production".*

It is important to read some other descriptions and reflections from George's case study (see Appendix F) to understand his teaching efforts to meet his students' needs and characteristics.

At the beginning of the practicum, Mary identified the importance of personalised attention to her students. An interest to share new information was also promoted amongst her students.

Reference 1. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 17th January (week 1).

> *"Firstly, I asked about their **favourite** number and the majority said me the day of their birthdays and it was very interesting because two children said me: teacher how do you say 24 and 18 in English? we do not know! and I said to them the numbers and they were **repeating** during the class saying to their classmates that they **already knew more** numbers"*

Collaboration was included in many activities. Mary consistently considered collaboration in her teaching practices. Her students learnt to share materials and work together.

Reference 2. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 29th January (week 3).

> *"Then they finished the puzzle and they **exchange** it with the team next to them, at the end I asked about the different weathers and they described them easier and they matched together with the images from yesterday".*

Mary also tried to follow a sequence of topics in her lessons, looking for materials that helped her students associate new vocabulary in a meaningful way in English.

Reference 3. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 1st March (week 7).

> *"when I showed the images of insects the students remembered some vocabulary of insects in English and they said me if they were dangerous or no, then we made a spider web, some students made it easy but for some of them It was difficult. All finished it and decorated it wonderful, repeating the insect name. In 1°B group, students were very excited because they love the clown that I brought, so I taught the face parts and they learned easily, then we played to touch our face according to the instructions that I said to them".*

Mary observed her students and identified that teaching conditions always change. Students were tired during the class, but collaboration was a factor that helped them carry on working.

Reference 4. Mary. Personal reflections after class observation 6. 27th March 2019 (week 11).

> *"today was a difficult class because they were tired, noticing that the holidays have finished. The advantage is that they collaborated, as one girl answered that she wasn't here in the last class, the others helped her to say the vocabulary. Today in the 1°D group, students were playing memory of vegetables to review the vocabulary, some students forgot the vegetables and their classmates were helping them to recall vocabulary"*

Collaboration was useful, especially for young learners, as participants provoked these moments when having the opportunity to work together. Maybe they could scaffold when doing their activities in teams.

Reference 5. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 2nd April 2019 (week 12).

> *"Today in the 1°B group we completed some faces, students **worked in teams** and at the beginning it was a little difficult because some of them do not like sharing the material but in the end all students understood that it was the objective and they **made a good job together**, their faces looked so funny"*

Almost in the end of her practicum, Mary showed her satisfaction when reviewing the learned vocabulary and her students' constant collaboration. They were able to understand and play the games she used in the class.

Reference 6. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 3rd April (week 12).

> *"Today in the 2°A group, we played memory, in the beginning some students forgot the antonym and they got confused as they told me the name of the image, but I asked about the action that some images were representing and they **helped each other** and understood the game.*

Another aspect that Mary consistently promoted amongst her learners was enjoying the language acquisition process through games.

Reference 7. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 9th April (week 13).

> *"Today in the 1°D group we played Jenga, all students loved it and all students were participating, sometimes they forgot some words but **the others helped**, they were practicing during the game".*

Dany also promoted these meaningful opportunities for his students at university, relating the activities with collaborative work.

Reference 1. Dany. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 16th January (week 2).

> *"I planned this class with a video that was a good introduction. I planned my class this way because it was about conversation strategies. In this video, they developed conversation strategies. I wanted them to pay attention and see the way they could achieve this conversation".*

Meaningful practices were an observed characteristic in Dany' lessons. He was aware of the need to engage his students with relevant materials.

Reference 2. Dany. Personal reflections after class observation 3. 24th March (week 11).

> *"We considered the contents of the syllabus but I was constantly looking for materials related to it. I tried to make the activities relevant, going further than the book, more meaningful".*

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Vicky also noticed that her learners could consistently scaffold during some activities, supporting each other or imitating the ones who performed well.

Reference 1. Vicky. Personal reflections after class observation 3. 11th February (week 5).

> *"Sometimes the vocabulary was difficult for them but the others helped and I supported them in the team.*

Reference 2. Vicky. Personal reflections after class observation 4. 4th March (week 8).

> *"this week was complex because the kids usually learn just words. In this week, they learnt sentences: wash your hands, brush your teeth. Some kids could repeat the sentences and then, the others imitate them".*

Anne supported more collaborative work to let her learners help each other, as shown in this reference, after observing her students, almost concluding her practicum.

Reference 1. Anne. Personal reflections in her diary. Week 3.

> *"Durante la semana de práctica se pudieron observar algunas formas simples pero interesantes para que el grupo preste más atención a la clase y puedan trabajar con más entusiasmo. Por ejemplo, en los alumnos de los primeros grados que son más audiovisuales les llama la atención cuando, escuchan un audio y al mismo tiempo la maestra les muestra la imagen o dibujo de algún objeto, y así ellos empiezan a encontrar relación entre las palabras y las cosas. Siempre se procura hacer repeticiones corales de la pronunciación".*
>
> *Translation*
>
> *During this week, many simple and interesting ways to attract students' attention and work with more enthusiasm were present. For instance, in the first levels, students who are more audio-visuals are attracted when have a listening exercise and the teacher shows them a photo or drawing of an object, and the students find the relationship between words and things. Drills are always included for the pronunciation exercises.*

Anne organised different collaborative interactions for her students to let them scaffold and improve their learning processes with the help of others.

Reference 2. Anne. Personal reflections in her diary. Week 9.

> *"Los alumnos de 4º mostraron que tenían algunos errores en el deletreo de palabras, para ayudar a corregir, la maestra decidió formar tríos y dictar palabras de vocabulario que se había utilizado en clase. Después de la actividad la practicante pudo constatar que las deficiencias de los alumnos eran menos.*
>
> *Translation*
>
> *The students in 4th level had some spelling mistakes, in order to help, the teacher grouped students in teams of three and dictate the previously reviewed vocabulary. After the activity, the teacher observed that the students diminished their mistakes.*

Anne was aware of the importance of her role as a teacher and she noticed the connections between her students and the language at the end of her practicum.

Reference 3. Anne. Personal reflections in an informal text message in the end of her practicum

I'm worried and I prepare activities for the learning process of my students. Maybe, I am not very creative designing materials but I use audio-visuals to engage my students. I like to apply kinaesthetic activities for maintaining them interested. I want to have an impact on their academic life but also in their social life.

Kate included collaborative games where students had the opportunity to help each other. This scaffolding amongst learners was a consistent strategy in Kate's lessons.

Reference 1 Kate. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 9th February (week 5).

"Regarding the dynamic activities like this one of today, the students enjoy them a lot; more than just having fun, the students practiced the structures writing or correcting each other during the game.

At university level, Christina reflected on the process of learning that also included her own learning process. Collaboration was a characteristic in the activities, the students had the opportunity to support each other and maybe scaffold in their interaction.

Reference 1. Christina. Personal reflections in her diary. 24th September (week 5).

"This week the students learnt to make invitations, they worked in teams and made role play, another topic was countable and uncountable, it was a difficult topic to them and also for me, I studied the topic like two times we practiced a lot, I gave them a lot of exercises".

Christina tried the peer revision strategy because she observed they liked to give feedback to each other.

Reference 2. Christina. Personal reflections in her diary. 29th September (week 6).

"This week we worked with present continuous, vocabulary of clothes, comparatives and superlatives, and more connectors. They liked the activities that we made. This time I asked them to write sentences and their classmates had to correct them if there were mistakes. They liked to give feedback.

Christina consistently organised team work to make her students interact and show the others the results of their collaboration in the team.

Reference 3. Christina. Personal reflections after class observation 3. 21st October (week 8).

"We worked with adverbs of frequency, homophones and have/has got. Students worked together and passed in front of the class. They also worked in writing a paragraph describing their best friend routine. It was a really nice activity, and more importantly they learnt through others in their team".

4.2.3 Dynamic lessons with varied type of strategies

Mary is a dynamic teacher who illustrated the topics with varied activities and attractive materials. Her innovative teaching maintained her students motivated to participate in the class, as shown in the reference below.

Reference 1. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 27th February (week 7).

> *"Today, students **loved** the activities in both classes and they were participating, in 2°A students played a ship race and the teams were supporting their teams and some students said me that they would like to know a submarine and see the fish. While in the classroom of 1°D it was the first time that they played Snakes and ladders, so they were focused on the game".*

Dany realised the benefits of his freedom for teaching, having the opportunity to include attractive and useful activities (see Appendix I for further examples). He combined interaction and adaptation as abilities of his teaching experience as he reflected in the reference below.

Reference 1. Dany. Personal reflections in the interview 2 in the end of his practicum.

> *"Pude decidir sobre el método de enseñanza que quisiera, pero también pude adaptarlo de acuerdo a lo que iba viviendo día con día. Yo elegía mis actividades, la mayoría de ellas, grupales y dinámicas. Usaba juegos que llegaba a ver en mis programas favoritos y los adaptaba. Recordaba algunos tips sobre manejo de grupo, otros los tomé del camp al que fui el verano pasado para tranquilizar a los campistas.*
>
> *Translation*
>
> *"I was able to decide on the teaching method I wanted, but also, I was able to adapt it according to the day-today activities. I chose my activities, most of them in groups and dynamic. I usied games I saw in my favourite programmes, I adapted them to the class. I also remembered some tips about group management, I also used strategies I used with the children in the summer camp I attended last summer".*

Celia and Kate were two teachers in preparatory school characterised by their constant efforts to support their learners with many activities in their lessons. Both English classes were programmed almost at the end of the day (7 pm). The adolescents and their challenging attitudes usually came from their lunch time in both cases (see Appendix K for further examples).

Kate guided her teaching based on her observation of her successful teaching events, in this case group games and activities as she mentioned in her reflection.

Reference 1. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary. 22nd January (week 3).

> *"Then, this week I tried to do more grouped games and activities. It seems that these kinds of activities are working very well despite that there are some occasions in which students do not follow my directions or just do not pay attention to the activity.*

Kate observed the success that grouped students achieved during the activities.

Reference 2. Kate. Personal reflections I her diary. 26th January (week 3).

> *"Then, this week I also organised more grouped games and activities. It seems that these activities are working very well with the students".*

Even though Celia recognised that dynamic lessons are tiring because of the number of activities and the discipline issue, she felt satisfied with her teaching results during her practicum.

Reference 1. Celia. Personal reflections. Interview 2. 25th April (week 15).

> *"I am satisfied with my results but I finish very tired, the teenagers are naughty so, I spend a lot of energy with them. I have to look for many activities to constantly catch their attention. They like the dynamic classes I teach them"*

4.2.4   Providing extra materials to complement the contents

In preparatory, Kate and Celia provided their students with extra materials to practice the topics that were complex for them. This is a common teacher initiative but the participants did not have teaching experience so, their interest for their students and determination for further support was clear. For instance, Kate noticed her students' necessity to practice some topics.

Reference 1. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary. 19th January (week 2).

> *"Regarding my lessons and activities, I think that I put a lot of activities in one hour, and the students felt a bit pressed, there were lot of activities but they needed practice them.*

Kate combined the grammar practice with attractive ways for teenagers, such as games.

Reference 2. Kate Personal reflections in her diary. 6th February (week 4).

> *"I included some games in order to let them practice grammar while playing for a bit".*

Kate focused on the difficulties her students had and provided them with extra practice to help them.

Reference 3. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary. 19th February (week 6).

> *"During this week, I tried to give them different exercises to practice the conditionals topic, as I noticed some problems on the tenses, but this time they did it better".*

Extra practice of difficult topics for her students was consistently observed in Kate's lessons, she also commented this aspect in her reflections.

Reference 4. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary. 23rd February (week 7).

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> *"On this week, I tried to bring them some exercises that could allow students to practice the topic reviewed during the week because I notice that it was not very clear for them at the beginning when I introduce the topic".*

Kate combined materials and games to support her students in their language acquisition process, observing the impact her efforts on them.

Reference 5. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary. 2nd March (week 8).

> *"In order to let them practice the topic, I bring them different exercises that could let them practice what we review and also, I included some games that were well received maybe because during them, some students could get and understand vocabulary as well as the topic".*

Celia was aware of her support to her students with these extra materials she included in her lessons, she felt more confident in her practice.

Reference 1. Celia. Personal reflections after class observation 3. 3rd February (week 4).

> *"I find easier to flow with the topics I had to review, implementing extra materials I can choose for providing the students more support".*

Celia recognised the positive impact of her varied activities with many exercises that not just provided more language practice but let her students enjoy this process. She was aware of the difficulties her students had and selected the right amount of practice they needed in a topic. Her autonomy let her practice longer with an activity she observed was useful for her learners, as reference 2 shows below.

Reference 2. Celia. Personal reflections after class observation 4. 11th February (week 5).

> *I notice the need my students have to clarify key differences between the use of the future tenses. It does not matter to spend more time or examples; the important thing is that the students can learn the differences well. For example, the last activity was planned for the lesson, but we didn't have enough time to do it in the classroom. The class was of one hour and even though they worked very fast, they enjoyed the competences a lot. I spent more time for these exercises they enjoyed. I noticed that after those practices, they understood better the lesson so, I decided to practice more and then, I decided that the last activity was for homework. I noticed it was complex for them to be in a class where they had to work hard. I brought them a variety of exercises such as listening exercises, songs, readings, games, work sheets".*

The use of worksheets was a consistently observed in Celia's lessons. She tried to provide attractive and useful materials for her students.

Reference 3. Celia. Personal interview 2. 25th April (week 15).

> *"The programme contains the topics and I used a lot of work sheets for them to practice the topics. I try to bring them interesting exercises for their practice. I also consider homework important for them because they practice the topic at home and with my feedback, they discover where are they wrong and their mistakes".*

At university, Christina recognised that there were difficult topics even for her, but she worked harder in these weak aspects she identified.

Reference 1. Christina. Personal reflections in her diary. 24th September (week 5).

> *"This week the students learnt to make invitations, they worked in teams and made role plays, another topic was countable and uncountable, it was a difficult topic to them and also for me, I studied the topic like twice, we practiced a lot, I gave them a lot of exercises.*

4.2.5   Supporting students' cognitive development

During the practicum, some participants were aware of their students' cognitive needs and they included strategies to support them. In the following example, Mary supported her students with more information.

Reference 1. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 23rd January (week 2).

> *"Today I showed the shapes but now I asked students that they counted the sides of every shape and a girl said to me: teacher I think that a circle has a lot of sides and I asked why? and she told me: because it does not have starting and ending and I explained to her that this shape is irregular and she started to find more irregular shapes in the classroom".*

Patience and diverse types of explanations were observed during Mary's practice, giving as a result a real cognitive support for her young learners.

Reference 2. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 31st January (week 3).

> *"I explained this many times with examples. They were confused between the rain and a rainy day. Little by little, they understood the difference. Today they also mixed the words sun with sunny day, also with Sunday. But they distinguish the difference with practice little by little."*

Constant relationships between the class topics and the experiences of the learners characterised Mary's activities and reflections with her learners, providing a meaningful association between their scant experience and their process of the foreign language acquisition.

Reference 3. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 5th March (week 8).

> *"In 1°B I brought a box and students took an image and I taught the vocabulary of the insects, some students made the relation between some movies and the insects".*

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Meaningful comparisons and associations helped the students identify new vocabulary during Mary's lesson.

Reference 4. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 8th April (week 13).

> *"Today in the 2°A group, I brought some plastic vegetables and I showed to students to teach them the vocabulary and I asked **what are their favourite vegetables**? Some students already knew some words".*

Classification of objects, even though in their mother tongue and then in the foreign language, helped the students associate new vocabulary.

Reference 5. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 12th April (week 13).

> *"In 2°A, I also brought a worksheet with a chart and some images of fruits and vegetables and students classified them".*

Dany reflected on the responsibility he felt as a facilitator in his students learning process.

Reference 1. Dany. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 9th February (week 5).

> *"I felt a great responsibility because I am who knows the purpose and I am supporting them to construct their learning"...*

Dany coped with situations in the classroom such as lack of attention. To manage this, he was consistently looking for attractive strategies to make his students use the language with a purpose and obtain a productive result as shown in the example below.

Reference 2. Dany. Personal reflections after class observation 3. 24th March (week 11).

> *"They had to simulate they were specialist on the topic so, I had to introduce the topic first. I looked for a video with technical content, with real information, and even though we saw it many times for them to understand it well. They didn't know what we will do but I told them: We have to pay attention because it is important for the class".*

Anne was a good observer since the beginning of her practicum and these examples show the way she was developing teaching strategies based on her observations:

Reference 1. Anne. Personal reflections in her diary. (week 1).

> *"La maestra notó que la pronunciación no era precisa, que los alumnos repetían incorrectamente; la practicante decidió repetir con un tono de voz más claro y lento. Pero sin dejar de practicar ya que: Ur, Penny (1996) sugiere que la producción oral de inicio requiere práctica constante, sobre todo guiada por el docente con el fin de conseguir resultados favorables en la adquisición de habilidad oral y auditiva".*
>
> *Translation*

The teacher noticed that the pronunciation was not accurate, that the students repeated wrongly, so she decided to repeat the exercise in a slower and clearer way. Ur Penny (1996) suggests that the oral production needs constant practice, over all a practice guided by the teacher in order to achieve positive results in the oral and listening skills

Writing about routines was a topic that supported learners to write or look for meaningful ideas of their common activities. Anne took advantage of this and worked with a routine model too.

Reference 2. Anne. Personal reflections in her diary. (week 2).

"También notó que a los alumnos de 4º grado se les facilito escribir su rutina semanal, viendo en una cartulina una rutina semanal que se presentó como ejemplo. Posteriormente, la practicante expuso oralmente el contenido de su rutina, como muestra para explicar los alumnos lo que debían realizar y exponer con sus rutinas. La práctica no resultó eficiente, así que se tuvieron que repetir los datos y verbos en la misma clase, ayudando a los alumnos a recordar lo visto en clases anteriores".

Translation

It was noticed that for the students from 4th level was easy to write their week routine, they saw a week routine in a chart that was presented as a model. Then, the practitioner presented the routine orally, as a model to follow the exercise that the students needed to develop and explain their own routines. This practice was not efficient so they had to repeat the data and verbs in the same class, helping the students to recall previous contents of the course.

Anne continued modelling activities in order to help the students conclude their exercises. Presenting a model was a way to scaffold and support the learners in their cognitive process.

Reference 3. Anne. Personal reflections in her diary. (week 4).

"En la semana anterior las actividades o productos eran terminados en el grupo, pero la maestra notó que los alumnos demoraban más en terminar dichas actividades, puesto que les surgían dudas, entonces se optó por llevar a la clase el ejemplo terminado, y así mostrar a los alumnos algo terminado, de esa forma ellos pudieran trabajar con más seguridad y orientación. Esto funcionó aún más con los grupos de primer grado".

Translation

"Last week, the activities or outputs were finished during the lesson, but the teacher noticed that the students took a lot of time to conclude the activities because some doubts emerged, the she decided to take a completed exercise to the class and the students could see the final product so, they could work with more confidence and orientation. This strategy was useful, more with the students from 1st grade".

Identifying characteristics in her students helped Kate feel more confident and recognise the cognitive aspects that they missed. She also noticed that her relationship with her students improved because her learners were confident to ask specific doubts and help.

Reference 1. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary. 15th January (week 2).

> *"I felt more confident with the group as I am learning their names and they share comments about the topics, even there are some students who asked me to clarify some vocabulary; within those students, there was one that asked me to make a review of a certain topic in order to help them understand the lessons. I felt better as I think my relationship with the students is improving".*

External motivation was an aspect that Kate bared in mind since the beginning of her practicum because her students were near to present their university admission exam. She was aware of their language needs and provided a lot of practice to support her students with their future exam.

Reference 2. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary, 26th January (week 3).

> *"Even so, I think it is a challenge to help them on their learning since they are more nervous about the admission exam to enter the university. Taking this into account, I tried to give them some grammar tips within the classes but, they did not seem very interested. However, I will try to give some advises from time to time for all those students that actually want to learn them".*

Celia included numerous exercises to support her students cognitive process. Indeed, these aspects are related with the previous point, having the learners in the centre of the learning-teaching process.

Reference 1. Celia. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 28th January (week 3).

> *"The programme contains the topics and I used a lot of work sheets for them to practice the topics. I try to bring them interesting exercises for their practice. I also consider homework important for them because they practice the topic at home and with my feedback, they discover where are they wrong and their mistakes".*

Celia considered reinforcing the cognitive process of her students more important than time it could consume. She used attractive activities for practising the topics.

Reference 2. Celia. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 28th January (week 3).

> *"I notice the need my students have to clarify key differences between the use of the future tenses. It does not matter to spend more time or examples; the important thing is that the students can learn the differences well. For example, the last activity was planned for the lesson, but we didn't have enough time to do it in the classroom. The class was of one hour and even though they worked very fast, they enjoyed the competences a lot. I spent more time for these exercises they enjoyed. I noticed that after those practices, they understood better the lesson so, I decided to practice more and then, I decided that the last activity was for homework".*

Christina identified and used teaching strategies to make the reviewed themes more attractive for her learners.

Reference 1. Christina. Personal reflections in her diary. 13th September (week 3).

> *"The other topic was present simple, a grammatical topic a bit tedious but the students learnt a lot, we use a song and a ball to make the learning more active".*

Christina included many activities where her students collaborated and contributed with their cognitive development.

Reference 2. Christina. Personal reflections in her diary. 25th September (week 5).

> *"We worked with adverbs of frequency, homophones and have/has got. Students worked together rand passed in front of the class. They also wrote a paragraph describing their best friend routine. It was a really nice activity, and more importantly they learnt through others".*

Observing that most of her students are visual, Christina consistently tried to present the themes in an attractive way, complementing the experience with practice and focusing on the target of the lesson.

Reference 3. Christina. Personal reflections in her diary. 1st October (week 6).

> *"I introduced the topic with a PowerPoint presentation most of the students learn by watching images and the presentation catch their attention and they can take notes, they also worked with a worksheet, and I take objects from them an I mixed, they have to guess who that object belongs to. They learnt to give and ask for directions to arrive to a place. They learnt furniture vocabulary".*

Ellen frequently observed her students and identified their needs. She provided extra help to support them in their cognitive process.

Reference 1. Ellen. Personal reflections in her diary. 23rd September (week 3).

> *"This was my third week with the students and I have been working with a lot of topics related to the unit one. During this week, I understood that each student has different needs and all of them learn in many ways. As a teacher, I have to back them up because the process of learning English is difficult for some of them. That is why I decided to give them academic advising. I thought that if I helped them maybe they would understand the topics better. First, I talked to my mentor and he decided that it was a good idea because the teacher considered that some students have problems with the language".*

Curiosity was an element Ellen identified in her students as part of their cognitive development.

Reference 2. Ellen. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 11th October (week 7).

> *"In addition, I gave my class and the results were successful because my students understand the class and they are more curious about the English teaching".*

4.2.6   Development of teacher agency

While a variety of definitions of the term agency have been suggested, this paper will use the definition of teacher agency suggested by Priestley et al (2015) as the purposeful decisions and actions of the teacher. Diverse conditions were faced in the settings that permitted the development of agency. For instance, in Appendix F we see how George's agency helped him to adapt his teaching in the kindergarten where his class was placed in the end of the day. Another illustrative case of agency development is the case of Tom in Appendix H, showing his determination to cope with the teenagers' indifference at the beginning of his practicum. So, the actions the participants had regarding benefits of their audience learning are presented in this section. For example, Mary reflected on the fact that her students were confused with the differences between an elephant and a mammoth so she decided to invite the children to reflect on the characteristics of both animals and see the differences between them.

Reference 1. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 6th February (week 4).

> *"In 2°A when I finished to say the animal vocabulary, a boy told me that a classmate had a t-shirt with an elephant and that boy said that it was wrong because it was a mammoth so I **asked students to see the characteristics** of them and **we concluded** that they were different and a girl gave a wonderful conclusion".*

Kate developed the capacity of observing her learners and her development of agency helped her to complement the class with extra activities, as illustrated in the reference below.

Reference 1. Kate. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 9th February (week 5).

> *"I notice when the students don't understand the topic, for this reason I decided to be more explicit giving more and different examples".*

Christina expressed she had an experience during her practicum that supported her agency development, for instance, deciding on actions to solve constraints in the classroom as showed below.

Reference 1. Christina. Personal reflections after class observation 4. 4th November (week 8).

> *"my professional practice was an amazing experience, at the beginning of the degree I had my mind full of doubts and questions about if I have chosen the correct major. Time passed by and I realized that being a teacher requires a lot of responsibility with these professional practices I realized that I am able to take that responsibility. I can say that I am not the same person that I was 4 months ago, teaching to young adults has been an experience that made me grow up as a person, as a teacher. I learnt to face situations that I thought were difficult to me".*

4.2.7   Observation and reflection during the class

In primary schools, participants expressed twofold sides of their development in their reflection. First, as teachers in charge or with the responsibility to create meaningful learning experiences for their learners. Second, reflection with regard to their teaching development, considering the aspects that changed through the time spent in their practicum. For instance, George kept observing and reflecting on his students advances and needs, that guided his efforts during the practicum.

Reference 1. George. Personal reflections after the third-class observation. 15th February (week 5).

> *"Regarding my teaching, I feel I still miss teaching aspects to learn. 60 mandatory hours were not enough to prepare myself for this changing world that you see in the school, for the constant interaction you have with the kids, and the individual personality they already have. Every student is unique and they all have very different types of living this life outside the classroom. Facing the day-to-day activities require new knowledge, new challenges, and the constant link between the learner and the teacher".*

In his reflective diary, George also recognised the needs of the students according to their cognitive process, focusing on aspects that contribute to their development. George read and agreed on these translations.

Reference 2. George. Diary personal reflections. 20th February (week 6).

> *"Los alumnos demuestran una mayor necesidad de significado en cuanto a lo que están aprendiendo, la transición entre etapas de pensamiento es cada vez más tangible conforme las clases avanzan. En este punto es importante no solo aportar vocabulario, sino también, modelos de comunicación y al igual que los más pequeños una mayor cantidad de elementos audiovisuales".*
>
> *Translation*
>
> *The students show a bigger need of meaning regarding the contents they are learning, the transition between thinking stages is even more identified as the lessons take place. Here it is important not just provide vocabulary but also communicative models and as well as the youngest learners, a higher quantity of audio-visual elements.*

George reflected on the response of his students towards his lessons, he was able to distinguish their advances and their familiarity with some instructions in his class.

Reference 3. George. Personal reflections. 22nd February (week 6).

> *"Los alumnos continúan respondiendo favorablemente a los estímulos audiovisuales. En cada clase se ha tratado siempre de entrelazar los contenidos siguiendo una secuencia que facilite la asimilación y acomodación del nuevo conocimiento. Es notable la retención que han tenido los niños con respecto al*

vocabulario, además de que reaccionan y responden rápidamente a los comandos que se han dictado desde el inicio de las clases".

Translation

The students are responding well to the audio-visual stimuli. We have tried to follow a sequence that helps both assimilation and accommodation of new knowledge in each class. Its notorious the children retention regarding vocabulary, besides that they react and respond quickly to directions we arranged since the beginning of the course.

George was aware of the development of his learners and the success of his language lessons. George consistently included meaningful associations that helped the children identify the foreign language use.

Reference 4. George. Personal reflections. 13th March (week 9).

"Los alumnos se han mostrado receptivos al nuevo vocabulario siempre dispuestos a cooperar con la clase. Durante esta semana los elementos audiovisuales han demostrado ser la mejor herramienta. Los alumnos demuestran la asimilación del nuevo vocabulario y cómo lo relacionan con su vida cotidiana, existiendo ya anécdotas de su parte sobre su interacción con los padres de familia en casa. Esto beneficia a los alumnos, ya que construyen nuevas experiencias que favorecen su desarrollo".

Translation

The students have been receptive to the new vocabulary, always willing to cooperate with the class. During this week, the audio-visual elements have been the best tool. The students demonstrated their fast assimilation of new vocabulary and the relationship with their everyday life, already existing personal stories with their parents at home. These aspects benefit the students since they construct new experiences that support their development.

George could observe and compare the effect of his materials on the children and identify the success of some of his teaching strategies.

Reference 5. George. Personal reflections. 15th March (week 9).

"Los materiales de los alumnos de tercero en este caso son los mismos que se utilizaron con los más pequeños a fin de observar diferencias entre las conductas de clases anteriores, incrementando el número de canciones y elementos visuales, ya que, siguiendo un enfoque cognitivo la producción del lenguaje estará ligada a la cantidad de información recibida. Esto a la vez, auxilia al practicante a aclarar, establecer y correlacionar adecuadamente los conceptos e interpretaciones del lenguaje (Mannan, 2005)".

Translation

The materials for the students of third grade were the same of those used for the younger students in order to observe that differences between the behaviours of previous classes, increasing the number of songs and visuals, since following a cognitive approach, the oral production will connect to the quantity of received

information. This simultaneously helps the teacher to clarify, stablish and correlate the concepts and interpretations of the language.

Mary associated her autonomy with her capacity to provide meaningful learning experiences to her learners. During her lessons, she also considered her students to plan the following activities, observing their responses, and considering the topics they mentioned during the class. Her supervisor asked her to observe and consider these factors for planning the following classes.

Reference 1. Mary. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 5th February (week 4).

"A teacher is autonomous when the teacher efforts are based on his students, his experiences, and he creates strategies to provide more meaningful learning for his students."

In her reflection after a class, Vicky recognised that one of her developed capacities was communication with her students. She also noticed the impact of understanding her learners better, result of her observation.

Reference 1. Vicky Personal reflections after class observation 2. 5th February (week 4).

"Basically, I learnt to talk to the kids. I improved the way I gave instructions. The teacher helped me with this aspect. The kids have a good logic, they do exactly what you say. I leant to get well with them".

Regarding observation, Anne recognised the effectiveness of some strategies to maintain her students' attention during her classes.

Reference 1. Anne. Personal reflections in her diary. Week 2.

"En la segunda semana de práctica la practicante observó que al hacer ejercicios de gimnasia mental al inicio de clase se consigue mayor atención y concentración del grupo. La practicante notó que a los alumnos les gusta trabajar con materiales coloridos, la practicante descubrió que el contenido fue fácilmente comprendido por medio de hojas de colores".

Translation

In the second week of practice the teacher noticed that applying brain gymnastics exercises at the beginning of the lesson she achieved more attention and group concentration. The teacher noticed that students like working with colourful materials, the teacher discovered that the contents were easily understood using colour sheets".

Almost since the beginning of her practicum, Kate was consistently observing her students, identifying the type of learners she had in the group.

Reference 1. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary. 15th January (week 2).

"It is my second week, and I had had the opportunity to know better the kind of students I have in the classroom. As I guessed, there are some students who do not pay much attention to the class".

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As a result of her observation and reflection regarding the type of students Kate had identified, she chose suitable strategies for them.

Reference 2. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary. 19th January (week 2).

> *"During my lessons, I noticed that some students were not paying a lot of attention and there are other students that do not participate, even, they do not ask for help. In order to correct that, making teams may be a good strategy to help them participate with their classmates and within the classroom".*

One of the consistent characteristics in Laura's lessons was that observing her learners distracted or tired, she included a short break for physical movements such as stretches, or mental gymnastics. Her lesson was at 7 am in the morning and distraction or tiredness was a constant issue for her regarding students' attention. I asked for her reasons to include these breaks and she explained this as shown below.

Reference 1. Laura. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 12th February (week 6).

> *It is important to observe the students and when they are tired or distracted, I apply physical exercises to bring their attention back, they oxygenate their brains and make the class smooth.*

Christina felt satisfied and motivated observing the response of her students to her work. She also reflected on her future plans, based on this teaching experience during the practicum

Reference 1. Christina. Personal reflections after class observation 4. 4th November 2018 (week 8)

> *"Today I can say that I feel satisfied with my intervention because my young adults denote happiness when they saw me, as well as every morning when I arrived in the classroom they asked me which kind of work we are going to do today? What game are we going to play today? And these made me see that they were interested in the things that I could make with them. I had doubts about how I will develop myself in a class or if young adults really learn with a practitioner. But I realized that working as a teacher in the future is something that I will not regret".*

Almost since the beginning of her practicum, Ellen reflected on the importance to observe her students and identify their needs to plan her lessons. She was willing to improve this observation capacity.

Reference 1. Ellen. Personal reflections after class observation 1. 14th August (week 1).

> *I would like to add that when I started giving classes I did not feel comfortable because I did not know well the level of the students or their needs, but I think that I will improve my observing skills over the classes".*

Then, after two months of teaching, Ellen expressed openly her development in observing her students, fact that gave her more confidence when teaching.

Reference 2. Ellen. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 11th October (week 7).

"I have observed and talked to them a lot. Despite, I have more confidence in teaching and I have a good relationship with my students".

4.2.8 Self-evaluation of their teaching

Autonomy is also present when a teacher is able to self-evaluate his teaching work in a critical way (Freire, 1970). Not all the participants in this study were able to see the impact of their efforts on their teaching experience during the practicum. Those who were able to evaluate their teaching to improve it are presented in this section.

In the end of his practicum, George reflected on the challenges of teaching young generations in this changing world. He noticed that constant development is necessary to be a real support for the learners. This reference is analysed carefully.

Reference 1. George. Interview 2 in the end of his practicum. 3rd May (week 16).

(ID) identity

(RE) reflection

(OB) observation

(SE) self-evaluation

My students are very young, I am a supportive character for their progress (ID). Regarding my teaching, I feel I still miss teaching aspects to learn (RE). 60 mandatory hours were not enough to prepare myself for this changing world that you see in the school, for the constant interaction you have with the kids, and the individual personality they already have (SE). Every student is unique and they all have very different types of living this life outside the classroom (OB). Facing the day-to-day activities require new knowledge, new challenges, and the constant link between the learner and the teacher (RE).

One of the constant constraints participants had in their lessons were discipline and management of groups. Tom included this reflection in a WhatsApp message once he finished his practicum

Reference 1. Tom, WhatsApp message after concluding his practicum

My best learning was comparing the theory I saw in modules like development of teaching skills*, or* Learning assessment *versus a real context where in my case the group management is not always working because of time"*

Vicky reflected on her need to improve group control and identified her nervousness as a factor that affects her development.

Reference 1. Vicky. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 11th February (week 5).

"This is the second week I work with this group I teach and I feel I need to improve my group control, I still feel nervous"

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The lack of teaching experience was also commented in their reflective thinking. For instance, Anne recognised her lack of skills to manage teaching with young learners in big groups. However, she also observed her improvement in the process, as illustrated below.

Reference 1. Anne. Personal reflection after observation 3. 26th February (week 8).

> *"I am so nervous with these kids because I feel I do not have the abilities to understand their cognitive development, the group is big. My skills to manage the class are in development. Besides, they are so young, around 6 years old and I feel not very comfortable working with these learners".*

Kate recognised the development of her teaching achievements with her students but also her limitations. Due to her observations, she found a strategy to support her learners.

Reference 1. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary. 23rd February (week 7).

> *"Even, I noticed that they have started using some vocabulary that they asked for during the counselling session. In general, I still need to gain more experience, but I manage how to give my class even when I do not have some of my materials to work with. Also, I am going to bring exercises about the new topic since I notice that there was a lot of confusion with the tenses changes".*

In the case of Laura, teaching at university, she felt her experience in her practicum was useful but certain aspects are missing since her formal education. Dynamic teaching methods, good interaction and communication were observed in her classes. However, Laura felt frustration for the lack of motivation of her learners. Their lack of interest in the language acquisition was a factor that affected her as a teacher. She reflected on her readiness to face these circumstances, as she expressed in the end of the practicum, illustrated in the reference below.

Reference 1. Laura. Interview 2 in the end of her practicum. 13th June (week 16).

(E) emotional side

(SE) self-evaluation

(OB) observation

(RE) reflection

(MO) motivation

> *I arrived so enthusiastic to the practicum, with a lot of ideas (E)* but when I discovered that the system didn't allow me to do many things, *I felt disappointed (E), I discovered also negative things, for example the attitude of the group (OB).* It was helpful but not in the way I imagined due to the students' attitude. *There were external factors that instead of supporting were constraints for me. For example, when you plan your activities and the students are not cooperating (RE).* In my case, I reflect about my attitude, because it has a lot to do with the result. *Maybe I have to read more about psychology. Maybe in the major you don't learn it but it is necessary to learn about cognitive process, learning styles, affective filters(SE).* I didn't know what to do regarding some predisposition towards the language, I have to know what to do. *I made them reflect on their role as future professionals (MO).*

4.2.9 Research about the characteristics of the students to understand them

George was a participant with a high level of engagement since the beginning of his practicum. He constantly researched the cognitive and psychological characteristics of his learners, as illustrated in his reflections below.

Reference 1. George. Personal reflections. 16th January (week 1).

> *"Esta fue mi primera semana de práctica. El primer y más importante problema que encontré fue la edad de mis estudiantes ya que se encuentran entre los 3 y 4 años de edad. Esto los ubica, según Piaget, en la etapa pre operacional donde los niños adquieren el conocimiento a partir de representaciones".*
>
> *Translation*
>
> *This was my first teaching week. The first and biggest problem I found was my students' age, they are between 3 and 4 years old. This fact places them in the pre-operational stage according to Piaget, when the children acquire knowledge with representations.*

Many other participants in this study researched their students' characteristics in order to provide them with attractive activities that engaged and motivated them to participate in the class. The most representative case was Tom (see Appendix H), and Celia and Kate (see Appendix K).

4.2.10 Positive Attributes

The definition of TLA includes suitable attitudes observed in a teacher (Smith, 2003). In general, I observed a common characteristic in my participants; they all looked supportive with their learners. Independently from their personality, all of them demonstrated disposition to answer personal doubts in the classroom, providing more examples to illustrate a difficult topic, repeat and extend explanations, and be there for their audience with empathy. They showed a suitable degree of agency responding to the needs of the learners. The observed attitudes in my participants are arranged following the literature review into willingness, motivation, and empathy.

4.2.11 Willingness and motivation

Willingness is related to TA (see 2.5) as it was observed through enthusiasm and disposition to support the audience with their learning process. Willingness is a personal factor that Huang (2013) relates with the social environment and motivation shown by the teacher. Motivation for teaching was a key factor to research autonomy amongst the participants. The conditions in the schools varied but the participants' willingness was the trigger point to see evidence of autonomy as in George's example below.

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Reference 1. George. Personal reflections. 10th April (week 13).

> *"Durante esta semana los alumnos demuestran interés por la clase sin embargo es notorio que el vínculo afectivo que se alcanzó con este grupo no alcanzó los mismos estándares, ya que muestran signos de temor, pena y baja autoestima, sobre todo entre los estudiantes que recién se han unido al grupo. Esto dificulta la disposición-afectiva de los estudiantes. Al respecto, Krashen (1982) menciona que es necesario integrar actividades que permitan fomentar a empatía, el trabajo colaborativo y la autorrealización".*

> *Translation*

> *During this week, the students demonstrated interest for the class however, it is remarkable the affective bond in this group was not as developed as in the other group, they show signs of fear, shyness, and low self-steam, especially in students who recently joined the group. This factor difficult the affective disposition of the students. Regarding this, Krashen (1982) indicates that it is necessary to integrate activities that let them develop empathy, collaborative work, and self-fulfilment.*

Lucy, teaching a large group of children was challenged by many aims more than teaching a foreign language. Discipline in a group of 36 children, 10 years old is not easy even for experienced teachers. She reflected on the ethos of the school, where shouting to the learners commonly helped the teachers to catch attention back when discipline was an issue. She used that strategy but recognised she preferred motivating her learners, showing them the advantages of learning a foreign language, as illustrated in her reflections below.

Reference 1. Lucy's reflections of observed lesson 1. 7th February (week 5).

(TM) teaching management

(AD) advice

(MO) motivation

(OB) observation

> *"Group control is not as problematic for me as in the beginning (TM). One of my teacher friends told me I can raise the volume of my voice to catch their attention and have more control (AD). I think this action has helped me to control the children, but I prefer to motivate them to learn English, convincing them to learn a language that will be useful for them in the future (MO). The lack of conditions for teaching has an impact on them (OB) because it is difficult to maintain the students' attention and as there are too many students in each group, it is impossible to pay personalised attention to all the kids(TM)".*

As observed in her reflections, Lucy differentiated her teaching possibilities in a large group from her inner desire to be a motivator. She constantly mentioned in the corridors her interest to support her learners. However, the reality was that she had to spend her teaching time in many other tasks at least to control discipline and cover the indicated contents in the book. Her motivation inspired her to motivate her learners to learn a foreign language.

Feeling more comfortable in a motivated class and with freedom for her teaching, Christina kept working and learning during her practicum, as she mentions in her reflection below.

Reference 1. Christina. Personal reflections after class observation 3. 26th October (week 8).

> *"I felt more comfortable than the previous weeks, they enjoy the classes that I give and that makes me feel motivated. I have the option and freedom to prepare my classes, to choose the activities. I am also learning a lot.*

In the end of her practicum, Christina reflected on the motivated she is now with her degree.

Reference 2. Christina. Interview 2 in the end of her practicum. 15th November (week 9).

> *"Doing professional practices was an amazing experience, at the beginning of the carrier I had my mind full of doubts and questions about if I had chosen the correct major. Time passed by and I realized that being a teacher requires a lot of responsibility and with these professional practices I realized that I am able to take that responsibility. I am sure about what I want to do, I would like to teach and this faculty that has given me a lot of learn and unforgettable experiences, I have dedicated my time and all my energy to this school just to give the students motivation to learn, that was my only intention with them".*

4.2.12   Teacher empathy

Some participants in this study showed an evident empathy when teaching their pupils, considering their possibilities of freedom in each setting (Deitch, & Feshbach, 2009), as shown in the reflections below.

A student taught Mary that not everything is competence. She understood her student' spontaneous position regarding a competence proposed for an activity. She understood his feeling and learnt from him.

Reference 1. Mary's reflections after class observation 6. 22nd April (week 15).

> *"Once, I gave them a paper to draw, and I say: I'll see who finishes first, and one boy told me: this is not a competence, we all have to do it and it doesn't matter who is the first. So, I learnt something important, since then, I told them: you all are well, you all work well. This is not a competence".*

Considering students' motivation to participate in her lessons, Mary tried to take advantage of time to include her learners in the activities. She developed empathy in her lessons.

Reference 2. Mary's reflections after class observation 6. 22nd April (week 15).

> *"I learnt to combine the time, letting them participate and also work. They were demanding me a space to participate in every activity".*

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Example 2. Vicky's empathy in kindergarten (Source: research diary)

Description of details in this lesson are provided to understand the situation. Picture 20 illustrates Vicky's observed lesson 5, where she talked about the importance of healthy habits. She used a puppet to make the learners sensitive about the topic, interact, and feel involved in the task of personal hygiene. Vicky was interacting with the learners, observing their reactions and answering their doubts. The children combed the puppet hair, brushed his teeth, washed his face, and covered his mouth when he coughed. Vicky used a water spray diffuser to simulate a sneeze, the kids enjoyed being sprayed with it. Vicky explained them patiently the danger of the germs spread in the atmosphere in real cough and the importance to cover their mouths.

The open philosophy of this school that let the learners express openly considers enough time to all children participate in the activities. Vicky was observing, supporting, and understanding her learners during their recognition of the topic. Her empathy let her integrate all of children without hurrying them.

Picture 20. Vicky's observed class 5. Healthy habits with the puppet. 6th March. Topic: Personal cleanliness

Teaching children was a vital experience for Vicky who commented as personal reflection in the corridors that recognised it is not a teaching area for her. She prefers teaching adolescents or adults, especially for the opportunity to use the language widely. However, Vicky was an empathetic teacher who consistently looked for suitable activities for her young audience. The children expressed emotional bounds to her during her classes.

Example 3: George's empathy constructing a confident atmosphere in kindergarten

A second example is also described in detail. George showed empathy with his students during his lessons. In first grade, a child considered with a mental disorder was constantly ignored by the teachers. The first time I observed a class in this group, the child sat on my lap, mimic and

followed the rhythm of the songs during George's class. The teacher in this group explained to me the "mental" condition of this child.

In a couple of times, George commented in the corridors that this child has not more problems than the lack of attention at home and in the school. I saw the child mumbling the songs, dancing and participating in the class. During the fifth observation, the boy sat on my lap, took a pen, and outlined his hand on my field notes notebook. Then, he looked for another empty page, gave the pencil to me, and signalled to draw his hand again. I outlined his hand, he sighted with relief and went to his chair. Later, another girl came next to me and told me the conversation that appears in excerpt 1.

Excerpt 1. George's little student during class observation 5 (Translation).

> *Look! my mother didn't do my homework! We had to outline our hands on a paper and coloured them, as these ones here. My name is Cynthia, and yours?*

I understood that I had helped this child doing his homework. George had the empathy, patience and a capacity to observe this child and include him in all the class activities. Maybe, the child felt that confidence to do his homework during George's lesson. Picture 21 shows the drawing in my field notes notebook.

Picture 21. George's students drawing of his hand (his homework).
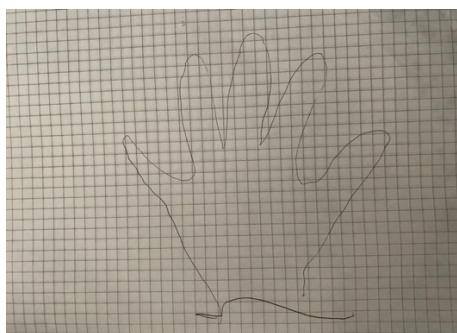
4.3 To what extent does TA development depend upon the parallel development of *creativity* and autonomy in the practicum?

'Creativity is intelligence having fun' (Einstein)

The initial quotation in this context refers to the joy of teaching creatively. This section presents findings regarding the participants' attributes as autonomous teachers. Many vital aspects were identified relating TLA with creativity, as illustrated in numerous quotations with autonomous principles behind the participants' actions and reflections, in line with the literature (Richards, 2003).

The criteria to code these data (see 3.8.1) was carefully considered, considering observable teaching characteristics in the teaching practice (see 2.7). In some of the longer rich extracts, the codes and sub-codes identified during the data analysis process are given in order to illustrate the level of self-awareness of the participants regarding their practice. In some cases, the researcher describes some detailed descriptions observed in the setting.

4.3.1 Application of creative materials, games, and activities

As Richards (2003) identifies, innovative learning opportunities engage learners in the classroom, music and imagination were consistent ingredients in Mary's classes since the beginning of her practicum (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). It was observed that the children followed her activities with enthusiasm. Her attitude was friendly and supportive since the beginning of her practicum, as shown in her reflection below.

Reference 1. Mary's diary, personal reflections. Date: January 15 (week 1). Group: 2°A. Topic: Numbers 6-10.

> *"Today the class was easier because students already knew the numbers, so when we sang, we added more numbers and they loved the song even though they did not see the video, firstly I counted the story about the song, so when we were singing they were **imaging** what was happening".*

Her capacity for observing her students' needs allowed her to help them with games or supportive activities when they were confused. Attractive materials were a constant in her lessons, such as the flowers she used to count with the children.

Reference 2. Mary's diary, personal reflections. Date: January 16 (week 1). Group: 2°A. Topic: Numbers 11-15.

> *"When I taught them the new numbers in English some of them were confused with the names, they used to say two one or one and two instead of eleven or twelve respectively so, I **repeated** again the numbers and **explained** them that they could **recognize** numbers better with the game of the flowers. Finally, they were in teams when I said the number they could **identify** it easy and one team order the flowers so good in its basket".*

Mary tried diverse games in her class. The children practiced and enjoyed the activities.

Reference 3. Mary's diary, personal reflections. Date: January 17 (week 1). Group: 2°A. Topic: Numbers 1-15.

> *"Then I asked If they had played the broken phone [game] but all said that the did not know the game so, I explained them the rules and how to play and they were so attentive, when we finished they said to me that they loved this game and they would like to play it again".*

Mary's creative materials and activities motivated her young learners to participate. Her mentor also recognised the impact of her creative efforts on the students.

Reference 4. Mary's diary, personal reflections. January 30 (week 3). Group: 2°A. Topic: Weather

"*All were **excited** because they all wanted to participate, so I stuck the images on the window and played stop* [game] *so, when I said a word of the vocabulary the students jumped and the winner took the image and so on. My mentor told me that she **loved my material** and the activities made because I **caught the attention** of all* [students]".

Mary's successful teaching experiences in her second day of classes was the result of the combination of meaningful exercises, imagination and attractive materials, as shown below.

Reference 5. Mary's diary, personal reflections. Date: January 30 (week 3). Group: 1°D. Topic: Numbers 1 to 5.

"*Today we sang a different song which was about the number of fingers, so I taught it with my hand and they did the same, then I **explained** the game and I put 2 big cones and some ice cream balls in front of these. I made 2 teams and one by one they passed according to the number that I showed, they loved to do this activity because they said to me **that the material really looked like** an ice cream. Finally, I passed a card with a number when I said stop, the students said to me the number of the card*".

Mary consistently used creative and original activities during her classes such as the day when she decorated the classroom as a jungle. Her students had tickets to enter and binoculars to identify the animals. The response of her students was a real motivation for her, she commented.

Reference 6. Mary's diary, personal reflections. 7th February (week 4). Group: 1°B. Topic: Jungle and sea animals

"*Then in 1°B students were **excited** also because we played that they went to a zoo so I made some tickets that gave them before come to the classroom then when they saw the classroom decorated and they used the binoculars they were surprised and told me all the animals in the jungle easily*".

Mary had the freedom to set the classroom for simulating places students already identified. These actions resulted in meaningful connections for Mary's students.

Reference 7. Mary's diary, personal reflections. 7th February (week 4). Group: 2°A. Topic: Jungle and sea animals

"*I **decorated the classroom** like a jungle, I brought binoculars and tickets, we **simulated** to be in a safari. Some said they have been in the zoo, others not. I used this activity as an introduction for them to practice the vocabulary*".

Mary was constantly looking for meaningful ways to present the foreign language to her young students and make them associate another way to express common things. An example of her

imaginative activities in which the young children were asked to become cars, buses, etc. is given below.

Reference 8. Mary. Corridor reflections after observed class 2. 5th February (week 4).

> *"Yesterday the children were a mean of transportation: a bus, a car, a train, a light stop. So, they were giving instructions. They recalled the mean of transportation they were. Today the **association** was easier because they recalled the means of transportation they represented."*

Christina's case who was teaching at university, also looked for innovative ways to attract students' attention and follow the sequence of the topics with interest using technologies and uploading their outputs.

Reference 1. Christina. Reflective diary. 25th September (week 5).

> *"We also worked with connectors like first, second, then, after, finally… they work was in pairs, I asked them to write a recipe and as a homework they have to record themselves in a video and upload it on YouTube. The next class we watched all the videos together. It was a funny activity to them.*

Coding regarding creativity was constantly registered in the case of George. His willingness to teach and the freedom to plan his classes were observed. His teaching capacities provided a considered amount of information to understand an autonomous teacher's nature and TA development. Appendix F describes many examples from George's classes where his creativity and empathy was observed.

In secondary school, Tom applied diverse creative activities to attract the attention of his overcrowded groups. As described in Appendix H, Tom implemented dynamic lessons with a number of creative activities that involved all the students, even the teacher.

At university, Dany was a versatile teacher-learner who frequently innovated in his language lessons. Videos and creative role plays characterised his classes, as observed in Appendix I.

4.3.2 Improvisation and adaptation

Improvisation in teaching was another code used to express creativity. In this study, participants changing the lesson plan for facing sudden situations or unexpected reactions of the students during the lesson was considered to be an expression of improvisation. Even though the participants were not experienced teachers, some identified coped with sudden complex circumstances. In many cases, participants responded with creative reactions or strategies to manage unexpected situations. One of the most representative coded moments of improvisation was observed in George's observed lesson six, as described below. The impact of the setting ad

his capacity to observe the very young students in his class and improvise his actions are clear in this example.

Example 1 George's capacity for improvisation in kindergarten (Source: field notes and research diary)

The observed lesson six was during the last school hour. George started the class playing a song on his cell phone because the classroom has not speakers or computer installed. The children looked tired, some of them were jawing. George commented later that the children feel anxious at this time because it is almost time to go home. However, the children appeared happy, singing and dancing the song with enthusiasm. Clearly, the children were familiar with that song because they followed the movements and the lyrics with confidence. The second activity was a longer song that implied more movements, concentration, and coordination. I was sitting in a small chair in one of the tables, I noticed that the children looked tired, and as a consequence, they were distracted. George realised this situation and the difficulty to maintain them engaged in the activity. Suddenly, he decided to ask them to stand up, wear their animal masks, and form a line to go outside the classroom to continue with the activity.

This unexpected decision changed the dynamic of the lesson. The learners were excited to hear this sudden instruction. They went to a big container inside the classroom where their masks were kept. The teacher helped them to take their masks, reading their names on them. I was sitting in around one of the small tables with the children, many of them approached to me, showing me their masks, and commenting their mothers had bought or made them. They also showed their masks to each other, recognising the animal they represented and making the sound the animal.

The classroom was transformed, quite noisy, but the children were very motivated to participate in the classroom activity. They were smiling and waiting for that moment to leave the classroom. George was supportive with the children who did not have a mask. He had an eyebrow pencil and drew moustaches and noses on their faces to represent a cat. After being quiet in the line, George took the learners outside the classroom to the front yard's centre. The activity continued smoothly, and the children looked enthusiastic. However, as it was almost noon, the temperature was around 28 degrees Celsius, and the children were sweating with the movements of the song. George decided to go back to the classroom because the school time was almost finishing.

The class was over, and in our way to the exit, the children were approaching to say goodbye to George, showing affective bounds; hugging him and shaking hands with him. Clearly, the children were happy and wanted to express their affection to him after his lesson. They called him teacher.

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In picture 19, the result of the sudden decision to continue the lesson outside the classroom is observed. Both the children and George looked enthusiastic with energy during the activity. Improvisation was a creative way to overcome the barrier of a hard schedule for the lesson.

Picture 19. George's observed class 6. Improvising with the animal masks. 2nd March 2018

In his final reflection, George's sense of adaptation to the setting come from his personal engagement to his audience and his profession, as he expressed in the end of the practicum, showed in the excerpt 2:

Excerpt 2. George interview 2. 3rd May 2018 (week 15)

(OB) observation

(E) emotional side

> *"It was my first experience with children. 4 months ago, I was shocked, surprised to see how the toddlers lose their attention as fast as they suddenly change their mood, their spam of attention is very short (OB). Now, I feel more confident, I enjoy their company. I am always ready to support them and share things, answer their doubts, very happy to have chosen this profession (E). I am convinced this is my ideal profession. I like my development during the practicum, I feel it is suitable to me, my way of being. It cannot be different".*

Other participants also developed this capacity to improvise. Mary increased the level of difficulty of the activity in order to continue the lesson in a meaningful way, given that the children finished the activity promptly.

Reference 1. Mary's diary, personal reflections. 23rd January 2019 (week 3).

> *"Finally, I gave every team some shapes and they **classified** them by colours, they worked super-fast and we finished early so, I made the activity more difficult where they should do the shapes but by teams hanging of the hands in, this activity I helped them a little bit".*

These sudden decisions were useful not just to cover the time for the lessons but also, to motivate her learners in each activity. The visuals Mary brought to her lessons resulted attractive for the children.

Reference 2. Mary's diary, personal reflections. 28th January (week 3).

> *"I played a song and students already knew it so, they sang it without any difficulty, so I suddenly showed some drawings and I saw they were singing more excited".*

As previously mentioned, the conditions were good for Mary in the kindergarten (see 3.4.3), and the foreign language has an important place in the curricula. Her constant observation was an important factor to improvise when it was necessary. In many informal reflections in the school corridors, she mentioned her capacity of improvisation. Her agency was also implicit, taking her own decisions in the right moment.

Reference 3. Mary's corridor reflection after class observation two. 5th February (week 4).

> *"The truth is that I changed everything in this class! My plan was that they make the sounds of the animals, but I saw it was a very easy activity so, I **improvise** the revision of the vocabulary and hiding the animals in the classroom. Even though my mentor told me not to use more than 5 animals, but the kids knew more animals from the jungle. They wanted me to introduce more vocabulary. The activity was easy for them but my tutor told me not make it complex".*

Mary developed important capacities as a teacher, such as observation, improvisation and agency was implicit too as was evident in many data sources. In her reflection, she recognised she took the risk and acted according to her students' needs, as illustrated in her reflections below.

Reference 4. Mary's reflection after class observation three. 11th February (week 5).

> *"In this class I just have planned to teach the vocabulary so, I **saw the children** bored and suddenly decided to apply the experiment related to the topic because I felt it was much time for just one activity and **I took the risk**. I also introduced another complementary activity for tomorrow".*

Reference 5. Mary's corridor reflection after class observation three. 11th February (week 5).

> *"Yesterday for example, I used another experiment with a rainbow, **I took the risk** because it didn't work as in internet, and they also participated forming the rainbow with the dropper in a glass. Little by little they could see the different colours, but it was the result of my **improvisation**".*

After her class observation 5, Vicky commented about her need to improvise because she observed the children's emotion with a song she had not included in her lesson.

Reference 1. Vicky's corridor reflection after class observation 5. 6th March (week 8).

> *"Today, I improvised the baby shark song, I didn't include it in my lesson plan but as I saw them very excited when a child sang it, I decided to include it in the class. The problem as you saw is that I didn't know the lyrics well, they corrected me, emphasising there was a missing part. I have to look for the entire song this afternoon".*

Adaptation in this study is also interpreted as an illustration of creative actions identified in the participants. They found conditions or situations that required modifications in their lesson plans or consideration of the students to work properly. This was the case of Anne, who taught English to different levels with more than 40 children in each group. Anne emphasises the importance to observe and motivate such large groups.

Reference 1. Anne. Personal reflections in her diary regarding the week 1. Her diary was written in Spanish and below is the translation. Anne reviewed and approved it.

> *"La practicante notó el interés de los alumnos por querer participar, pero percibió algunos problemas con los alumnos de 5º "B" puesto que en el grupo la cantidad de alumnos hombres es mayor que de mujeres. Los alumnos forman grupos y se distraen jugando. La maestra tuvo que cambiar la actividad de repeticiones corales libres a repeticiones guiadas y así los alumnos no se distrajeran".*

> Translation

> *"The practitioner noticed the interest of the students to participate in the lesson; however, she noticed some constraints with the students from 5th grade because there are more male tan female students. They make groups and are distracted. The teacher had to change the eliciting activity to guided repetitions in order to avoid distractions"*

In her second week of classes, Anne's observation and reflection capacities helped her improvise. This change resulted in an attractive activity where the students talked about their personal experiences, giving a meaningful sense to this language practice.

Reference 2. Anne. Personal reflections in her diary, regarding the week 2.

> *"Entonces la practicante optó de repente por hacer una lluvia de ideas en el pizarrón, pues a los alumnos les atrae y motiva que se tome en cuenta actividades en su vida diaria, hablar de ellos los motiva a seguir participando".*

> Translation

> *"Then, the practitioner suddenly decided to make a brainstorm on the board, the learners feel attracted and motivated by saying activities they do in their everyday life, talking about themselves, I was motivating them to keep participating".*

Theses capacities of observing and be a creative teacher gave Anne the facility to interrupt an activity to verify whether the children were attentive or not. With time, she managed the group while watching a video as an input, as she expresses in her reference 3 below.

Reference 3. Anne. Personal reflections in her diary, regarding the week 7.

"La practicante observó el comportamiento de los alumnos en los grupos mientras veían un video: algunos comenzaron a platicar o a distraerse entre ellos, así que la practicante decidió pausar el video un momento y lanzar preguntas aleatoriamente haciendo que el grupo comenzara un dialogo. La practicante analizó que los alumnos trabajan cuando están monitoreados".

Translation

The practitioner observed the learners' behaviour in groups while they watched a video, some started to talk or be distracted so the practitioner decided to pause the video and ask them questions randomly. We start a dialogue among the entire group. The practitioner analysed that the students work well when they are monitored."

Lucy, teaching in a primary school, monitored and observed her students during the activities. As a result, her capacity to adapt her lessons to the conditions of the classroom was improved. Crowded classes and a complex English textbook for the children with lack of language background were characteristics of this educational setting.

Reference 1. Lucy. Personal reflections after class observation 3. 5th March (week 9).

"tuve que cambiar algunas actividades que eran individuales o en parejas y hacerlas con todo el grupo, ya que con grupos tan grandes y con el nivel de inglés que tienen, les era complicado realizar las actividades por sí solos, pero una vez que se realizaba en grupo podía darme cuenta de que sí lo entendían y podían darme las respuestas".

Translation

"I had to change some activities that were individually or in pairs and make them for all the group because in such a large group and low English level, it was difficult to do the activities by themselves, once they did them in group I noticed they understood better and could know the answers".

Lucy concluded that creativity was a key factor when she had to improvise; difficult conditions pushed her to look for alternative teaching strategies.

Reference 2. Lucy. Interview 2. (end of the practicum).

"Creativity was important and necessary during my practicum, especially if I had to improvise because when I noticed that the activity was not working, or the children were distracted, or talking, I had to change the activity. If the lesson plan says something but the students were not working or distracted, I had to improvise in that moment".

In preparatory level, in the cases of Kate and Celia, the need to improvise during their lessons was observed. Sometimes, Kate adapted her activities due to the lack of teaching conditions in the school, as she mentions in the reference 1 below.

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Reference 1. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary. 26th January (week 3).

> "The most challenging part this week was that I played some videos for them, but the school did not count with the enough computer equipment for those kinds of activities. I was able to project the videos on the classroom projector but they did not lend me some speakers, so there was not sound for the videos. Even so, I modified the activity a bit, in order to work with the videos without the audio and it worked out. The next time I would like to put some videos, I will consider taking a pair of speakers with me".

Teachers usually have to find solutions when a basic teaching tool is missing in the setting. Kate had decided the way to improvise to solve constraints.

Reference 2. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary. 23rd February (week 3).

> "There was one day that I forgot my markers and my board eraser so, I tried to improvise and explain my class differently by giving oral examples".

In the same preparatory school, Celia expressed a need to improvise during her lesson because she observed her learners and the need they had for further explanations and practice, as illustrated below.

Reference 1. Celia. Personal reflections after class observation 3. 3rd February (week 4).

> "I didn't change my lesson plan, I just had the need to give them further explanations because I noticed in their faces that they hadn't understood the topic well. So, I had to improvise other examples on the board".

When the learners are not as attentive in the activities as the teacher desires, could be a common issue teachers cope with during the lessons. Celia could observe this and act hereto.

Reference 2. Celia. Personal reflections after class observation 4.11[th] February (week 5).

> "Today, as the students were not paying attention, I suddenly decided to take their readings and ask them reading-comprehension questions. I explained they have to pay attention because it is important to be participative in the class".

Managing her teaching in a practical way was also a reason to improvise during Celia's lessons, as she expresses in her reflection below. This reflection was done in the second month of her practicum:

Reference 3. Celia. Personal reflections after class observation 5. 5th March (week 8).

> "It was planned to work with bigger teams but I had to improvise because of the reduced number of students today attended the class".

The participants teaching at university also expressed the need to improvise during their lessons. That capacity to observe and reflect gave them the possibility to improvise and make suitable activities in the precise moment, as Dany expressed in his reflection below:

Reference 1. Dany. Personal corridor reflections after class 2. 9th February (week 5).

> *"I improvised a little bit because I noticed the students did not feel so familiarized with the video at the beginning. I tried to make questions for them to pay attention. I tried to create ways for them to pay attention, it was not just another video but emphasizing it was important for the rest of the class".*

Ellen took the risk and improvise to improve her lessons. She associated these risks with good classes, as illustrated in her reflection below.

Reference 1. Ellen. Personal reflections in her diary. 26th October (week 8).

> *"Finally, I observed that sometimes, the lesson plan does not work so, I have to improvise the class, I took the risk, and I succeed in the class. I am really happy because when I have to take the risk I give a good class.*

Many examples of improvisation are described in Appendix L, where Ellen, Christina and Laura provided great examples. Experience supports teachers to adapt their lessons to the audience or the setting but in the case of my participants with scant experience, it seems their creative thinking helped them to overcome some circumstances.

4.3.3 Creative use of technologies supporting the lessons

In some schools, technologies were not available for the participants who wanted to implement attractive activities for their learners, but this was not a real hindrance. For instance, George constantly used his cell phone in kindergarten to include songs in his lessons. He also borrowed an overhead projector to present his multimedia activities. He reflected on the benefits of using technologies with young learners, as shown in the interview 2.

Reference 1. George. Interview 2 in the end of his practicum. 3rd May.

(TM) teaching management

(O) observation

(RE) reflection

(AD) adaptation

> *In my case, I used internet a lot, especially images in movement for my teaching materials (TM). I used gifts to catch their attention more. If they saw that the image was moving, that caught more their attention (O). When I noticed this, I started using more songs, more videos, more gifts because the kids liked, enjoyed, and participated more(RE). The second part of the practicum was an implementation of technology, based on the observation about the aspects that really worked with the kids(AD).*

George constantly researched about the children. His willingness to prepare attractive lessons, adapting his activities to his teaching possibilities in the educational setting was a constant. Based on his learners, he situated his teaching in a satisfactory way for him and the learners.

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Reference 2. George. Personal reflections. 20th February (week 6).

> *"Los alumnos han reaccionado muy bien al aumento en la cantidad de canciones, gracias al uso del cañón de la escuela se facilita la implementación de elementos audiovisuales en el salón. El uso de presentaciones en* power point *facilita la presentación de nuevos elementos. Siguiendo a Piaget estar en continuo contacto con los estímulos para poder alcanzar resultados de lo que se quiere conocer".*

> *Translation.*

> *The students have responded well to the increase of songs, thanks to the use of the overhead projector that the school provides for the audio-visual elements in the classroom. The use of power point facilitates the presentation of new elements. Following Piaget, being in constant contact with stimuli help students to achieve results about the target learning.*

George's materials illustrated the vocabulary he prepared for the lesson. This was the result of his research, observing positive responses from his students with his students using teaching methods as total physical response.

Reference 2. George. Personal reflections. 20th March (week 10).

> *"Los temas de esta semana se vieron especialmente favorecidos al combinarse con las imágenes, videos y demostraciones propias del método de respuesta física total, ya que los alumnos muestran asimilación de los contenidos al llevar a cabo comandos relacionados a los temas de esta semana. Demostrando una vez más que, como lo menciona Petterson (2004) la capacidad de memorización es mayor si existe una relación palabra-imagen.*

> *Translation.*

> *The topics I this week were favoured with the combination of images, videos, and demonstrations from the total physical response method because the students showed contents acquisition when following the instructions related to the topics of the week. It was demonstrated again that as Petterson (2004) says, the capacity for memory is higher if there is a relationship between word and image.*

Mary and Vicky emphasised the usefulness of technologies for preparing their lessons, selecting attractive ideas for practising contents and creating colourful materials they saw in applications as Pinterest.

Reference 1 Mary. Personal reflections after class observation 4. 1st March (week 7).

> *"We reviewed many means of transportation. I saw the idea in internet, it was very useful to conclude the means of transportation topic. The games were very useful to learn this vocabulary, the children worked well".*

Mary used videos to illustrate some topics that the children had commented during the class, as she mentioned in the corridors. They had a visual reference that connected the language with their talking topics.

Reference 2. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 22nd February (week 6). Extinct animals.

> *"in 2°A we saw some videos to review how animals became extinct".*

Mary also used Internet and applications to enrich her lessons and provide her class with attractive experiences.

Reference 3. Mary. Personal reflections after class observation 5. 6th March (week 8).

> *"I enjoy looking for diverse and attractive materials on line, in applications like Pinterest to innovate with my materials. I enjoy planning varied lessons and the types of required attractive and colourful materials are not a problem for me because I love teaching".*

Vicky found Internet useful to cope with her students' short span of attention. She was constantly looking for attractive activities and materials of her students, considering their interests and the topics they mentioned during the class. This kindergarten let the teachers plan the lessons according to the themes the young children mentioned during their language lesson.

Reference 1. Vicky. Personal reflections. Interview 2 in the end of her practicum. 22nd April.

> *"Regarding materials, I leant to look for diverse materials, the problem is their short span of attention. So, I used internet a lot to look for varied activities that were interesting for them".*

However, the excessive number of lesson plans for Vicky's portfolio of evidence to assess the practicum module pushed to use internet a lot to adapt innovative ideas for her classes. Besides, Mary collaborated with Vicky and supported her to plan creative activities for her lessons.

Reference 2. Vicky. Personal reflections in the interview 2 in the end of her practicum. 22nd April. (week 15).

> *"the quantity of lesson plans I had to do in a week was overwhelming, there were 10 per week! 5 for a group and 5 for the another. Sometimes I didn't have more ideas but the internet supported me a lot with this. I also asked Mary to share some of her activities to apply them with my students."*

Vicky also reflected on the lack of technologies in her lesson. She recognized the benefits of using internet as a source of information for preparing her activities, more than its use in the classroom, as she expressed in the excerpt three, during her second interview.

Reference 3. Vicky. Interview 2. 22nd April in the end of her practicum. (week 15)

(TM) teaching management

(O) observation

> *For me technologies are very useful for preparing my lessons. Indeed, I didn't use technologies here in the school, just to prepare my lessons (TM). The songs I used in every lesson were the only case for using technologies, the*

> *kids enjoy them a lot and I took advantage of them. I decided to use songs because the kids have a lot of energy(TM). With the songs, the kids jumped, danced, and were paying attention to the movements or the lyrics, learning new vocabulary (O). I used them to make kids feel relaxed before the lesson.*

Ellen expressed her beliefs regarding the use of technologies as a practical teaching tool because she thinks her learners are familiar with them. In the end of her practicum, she recognised the advantages of technologies during her lessons, as illustrated below.

Reference 1. Ellen. Interview 2. 9ᵗʰ November (week 8).

(BE) beliefs

(LA) learner autonomy

> *"I prefer the use of technology in my class because my students are millennials, they like to be in their cell phone or their computers. So, for me technologies are important(BE). For example, when some of my students have a doubt about vocabulary, a meaning of a word, I say: check the word in internet(LA), we use "word reference", an electronic dictionary. I don't know, it is easier for them(B)".*

Dany consistently used technology to illustrate the topics. In the video watched in this class, he showed the purpose of the lesson and commented about similar examples. Dany gave his students extra examples of the topic and at the same time they met with the aim of the curricula.

Reference 1. Dany. Personal reflections after class observation 1. 16ᵗʰ January (week 2).

> *"I planned this class with a video that was a good introduction I planned my class this way because it was about conversation strategies. In this video, they developed conversation strategies. I wanted them to pay attention and see the way they could achieve this conversation".*

Dany was one of the few participants which context provided technologies for teaching and it was observed that he used them in all his lessons (see Appendix I for further information).

4.3.4   Internal aspects that hampered teacher autonomy.

Through informal talks after class observation, some participants mentioned aspects that hampered their TA with regard to internal factors. However, they normally omitted to mention these aspects during interviews. One observed aspect that hampered their autonomy was the lack of motivation originated by external factors that diminished their enthusiasm. Personal lack of motivation to be an autonomous teacher was originated by many reasons as illustrated in Liz's example, as a result of the mentor's attitude (see 4.4.2.2).

Another factor was their personal situation that reduced the possibilities to spend time in preparing their lessons. In Lucy's case, she mentioned the number of personal activities she had

to solve in a day, including attending her son, her family business, and the college, including the practicum.

Reference 1. Lucy 's comments after class observation 3.

> *"Well Miss, now I have to hurry up because I need to go to my child's school. Then, after feeding him, I cook and I spend the afternoon in our family business. I need to create spaces to prepare my classes because I have many duties in the afternoons".*

Another personal factor was disappointment with the attitude of the students during the lessons. Laura mentioned after all her observed classes that the lack of engagement of her students made her feel disappointed and she had the impression that all her efforts were useless. It was a constant to hear through Laura's reflection a feeling of helplessness when referring to her students. She tried to motivate them applying engaging lessons, sharing personal and teaching experiences abroad but in her perception, the students were not responding well (see 4.4.4.1).

4.4   *How does the setting impact the development of TLA?*

Kumaravadivelu's (2012) theory of the influence of the context and the need to contextualise the teaching to the audience was considered in this study. The circumstances in each educational setting, the response of the participants' students, and the attitudes from the mentors in the schools were key factors for the possibility to develop TLA among participants. This section presents coded data regarding the mentor, the participants' learners and the setting conditions, as explained below.

4.4.1   Mentoring; positive aspects

Some mentors represented a real support for the participants, especially those who decided to help with organization in the classroom and share strategies to manage teaching. In line with Flores' (2019) analysis, the impact of mentors who provided a type of scaffolding with the process of teaching development of the participants was positive.

4.4.1.1   Mentor scaffolding with participants

In some context, the mentors were a real support for participants, sharing their teaching strategies and ways to manage the groups. For instance, Dany had the support of his mentor at university, explaining and providing feedback when it was necessary. She also let him apply his teaching ideas to complement the contents seen in the textbook, motivating his learners to engage with their activities. Time after the data collection, Dany told me with joy that since his practicum, his mentor had implemented that freedom with the other student teachers doing their

practicum. The idea was successful because his mentor discovered all the potential and imagination Dany had for his lessons.

Reference 1. Dany. Personal reflections after class observation 3. 27th March (week 9).

> *"I feel happy because my mentor let me apply the strategies and activities I look for in the net. She suggests little adaptations to my lesson plan when she considers it necessary but I have that freedom to apply my class".*

Mary was a good observer and adopted strategies that her mentors used with the children. She reproduced her mentors' strategies to resolve constraints.

Reference 1. Mary. Personal reflections after class observation 5. 27th March (week 11).

> *"They were working well but it was difficult make them to form lines, pay attention, do the activity. I felt nervous because I couldn't control them well. I talked to them, making them understand that they had to participate. I have observed that the teacher makes them reflect on their actions and the consequences, that is why I decided to make them analyse the situation and recognize that the reason for losing the competition was they were playing. I learnt this from the mentors: they used these techniques to control the children and this helped me today"*

An embarrassing reaction of a child made Vicky feel bad. She recognised she did not know what to do in that moment. Her mentor helped her and she also observed and learned from that experience.

Reference 1. Vicky. Personal reflection after class observation 4. 4th March (week 8).

> *"In this week I had a problem, I make a boy cry, they had a bottle with candies and one of them didn't receive one and started crying. The teacher supported me, I felt terrible! I didn't do anything. But observing the way the teacher solved the problem helped me with future similar circumstances, then, I knew what to do following her example".*

Vicky recognised the capacities she developed during this teaching experience in the end of her practicum. She emphasised the support of her mentors to achieve teaching improvement.

Reference 2. Vicky. Personal reflections. Interview 2 after finishing her practicum. 22nd April (week 15).

> *"Basically, I learnt to talk to the kids. I improved the way I gave instructions. The teacher helped me with this aspect. The kids have a good logic, they do exactly what you say. I learnt to get well with them.*

Christina reflected on the influence of the mentor when preparing her lessons and including attractive activities for her students' learning style.

Reference 1. Christina's reflections in her diary. 24th August (week 2).

> *"My mentor helped me to prepare the topics of the week. I realized that I had to do more kinaesthetic activities to catch the students' attention.*

Christina recognised the benefits of mentoring in her teaching experience, in her case, the good disposition of her mentor was a key factor for her teaching learning and development.

Reference 2. Christina's reflections in her final report for the practicum module (week 16).

> *The students are very intelligent, the mentor always supports me, and my tutor taught me a lot of things. They helped my when I needed help and all the things that they showed me will help me in the future. I am so grateful with my tutor to give me her time. My mentor for the trust with the students, they taught me to be a better person, to be emphatic.*

Mentors were teaching models to follow e.g. in the case of Ellen, who expressed her desire to follow the teaching practice of her mentors.

Reference 1. Ellen. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 11th October (week 7).

> *"This week I observed a class of my mentor and I noticed that he is very passionate when he is giving classes. I would like to be a teacher like him. I know that I need more experience but in the future, I would like to give classes like him and I confirm that I want to be a teacher for adults because I am more patient and I can understand their needs.*

4.4.2   Mentoring; negative aspects

Some mentors were a real barrier for the development of the teaching of participants. Their absence, indifference, or negative attitude were aspects that hampered the opportunities of participants to develop skills during their practicum, as illustrated in the following sections.

4.4.2.1   Lack of mentoring during the classes

The impact of self-directing teaching without mentoring in the classroom was different in each participant. Some of them were just guided by a supervisor in the university in charge of the practicum module. As the foreign language is not always included in the formal curricula of basic education, an English teacher was not part of the staff of teachers in primary schools. For instance, George was able to observe his students and reflect on the needed strategies for this young group of learners. George's freedom for teaching was usually connecting his efforts with very specific characteristics of a real setting whose members, apart from being so young, had a challenging behaviour for any teacher:

Reference 1. George. Interview 2 in the end of his practicum. 2nd May (week 15).

> *"I feel a little bit nervous because sometimes it is difficult to control the kids that are too many and suddenly they lose control".*

In the case of Anne, she was assigned to teach four different levels in a state primary school that entered to a programme which provides some English lessons to the children. The lack of a mentor in the classroom gave her the freedom to plan and manage her lessons with her own criteria. There was not a text book to follow in the primary school. As foreign language is not within the formal curricula and it has not a real continuity in the formal courses, the time for her lessons were constantly taken for other activities such as meetings with parents, for preparing civic ceremonies, or other activities in the school. Some class observations were cancelled for those reasons. Despite this situation, Anne showed motivated and her enthusiasm for teaching was constant during her practicum.

Reference 1. Anne. interview 2 in the end of her practicum. 25th April (week 15).

(BE) beliefs

(TA) teacher autonomy

> *"I consider teacher autonomy is important (BE) because I apply it. It is important because you make a natural environment for your students, you get more communication with your students and the main point is that you make the class interesting for them (TA)."*

In this case, the learners were excited with her lessons full of innovative activities to learn the language. Her personality was very empathetic, trying to support the children all the time during the lessons without a teaching mentoring. However, not all the activities had a pedagogic support. Besides, without a sequence of work and many class suspensions, her intervention was a random experience for her audience and for herself. As the children knew that English was not included in their formal school grades and the participant is so young, the behaviour of the eldest children was not so engaged to learn the foreign language.

4.4.2.2 Mentors hampering participants with their personal attitudes

Freedom for teaching was not always supported in the teaching settings, and as a result, the capacity for developing autonomy was affected. It was the case of Liz in secondary school whose teaching was constantly restricted by the mentor. When Liz started her practicum, she wanted to implement creative ways of teaching; however, her mentor disagreed on her teaching method. The mentor argued that the teenagers were not ready for innovative teaching so, Liz decided to cover the textbook and forget her intention to be creative and exercise her agency as teacher, as she explained in her reflections during the second interview.

Reference 1. Liz. interview 2. 25th April (week 15).

(RE) reflection

(OB) observation

(E) emotional side

> *In my case, in the school where I was it was not possible to develop teacher autonomy(RE). Even though the teachers who work there are not autonomous. They just follow the programme or the books. They didn't have or exercise freedom for teaching (OB). They couldn't do the activities they wanted. Even though they told me I had to adapt my efforts to the book, that the students are not ready for new paradigms or methodologies. I think autonomy in a kind of school like this one is not possible(RE). In conclusion, I did not have any authority neither autonomy. My lesson planning was easier because they were all based just on the book. In some cases, the teachers made me feel just as the trainee, not as a teacher, as a complement in their classes (E). As a consequence, the students also saw me in that way.*

Unfortunately, in this case, the mentor was a direct obstacle for the development of autonomy. This mentor's attitude was the big barrier for Liz to implement any innovative teaching in this setting.

4.4.3 Learners; positive aspects in the classroom

The learners also had an impact on participants' teaching success. If the students felt motivated or engaged with their learning process, their attitude influenced on the learning-teaching results. In general, this study distinguished positive and negative aspects from the students.

The learners represented a real challenge in some educational scenarios, especially because of the number of them in each classroom. Participants adopted some strategies in order to engage their learners during their lessons. They promoted scaffolding amongst learners, implemented attractive activities that students enjoyed. Many examples of positive responses of the students are shown below.

4.4.3.1 Students collaborating and enjoying the activities

The type of activities that the participants implemented in the lessons resulted in catching the attention of their learners and enjoying the activities. Some participants noticed these results and reflected on this experience during the lesson, as in these of George below.

Reference 1. George. Personal reflections after observed class 2. 15th February (week 5).

> *"The kids are responding so well to my teaching methodologies and I feel they like and enjoy my class. The use of songs is engaging the students a lot, they enjoy singing and dancing and this is useful because sometimes it was difficult for me to have group control.*

Mary motivated her students with her creative materials and activities in terms of maintaining their expectative on the following topic and activity.

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Reference 1. Mary. Personal reflections. Date: January 16 (week 1). Group: 2°A. Topic: Numbers 11-15.

> *"This day, since I arrived the children were so **active and interested** to know what they will learn, at the beginning of the class I showed the numbers 1 to 10 to review them, then I put 11 to 15 and we made a ´´worm´´ and a child said me: Wow! It is so big and colourful! and they started to say what number was their favourite with joy"*

Reference 2. Mary. Personal reflections. Date: January 15 (week 1). Group: 2°A. Topic: Numbers 6-10.

> *"The hot potato game helped me more because in this way the students payed attention while they were playing, and they were so **interested and curious** because they were thinking what number could be taken so they could practice and recognize the numbers in disorder. They loved the activity and they wanted to play again but the time was over".*

Vicky understood the purpose of activities that children enjoyed also helped her focus them on the activities, moderating their energy.

Reference 1. Vicky. Personal reflections in the corridor after observed class 4, 4th March (week 8).

> *"kids love songs, they enjoy them and I take advantage of their movements when dancing because I can start the class with the kids more relaxed and focused on the class".*

There were new topics for her young learners such as the celebration in saint Valentine's day. Vicky tried to introduce the topic but the children were not so familiar with this celebration. However, she emphasised the collaborative opportunity they had with the game she included.

Reference 2. Vicky. Personal reflections in the corridor after observed class 4 (week 8).

> *"I paid more attention to the vocabulary than the celebration. They didn't identify the celebration quickly but they knew they will have a party this week. They enjoy playing games together and respond better to the class".*

Christina constantly observed her students and their positive response regarding the varied types of activities she used in the class.

Reference 1. Christina. Personal reflections. 24th August (week 2).

> *"One topic was* jobs*. I made an activity in which they had to do mimics, they played a memory game, and I felt the students comfortable. I asked them what they would have study if they were not in this major.*

With time, Christina moved into more structured activities using technologies. Her students responded well and they all enjoyed doing their learning outputs.

Reference 2. Christina. Personal reflections in her diary. 26th September (week 5).

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"We also work with connectors like first, second, then, after, finally… they worked in pairs, I asked them to write a recipe and as a homework they have to record themselves in a video and upload it on YouTube. The next class we watched all the videos together. It was a funny activity for them.

As teaching and learning are social activities, Christina understood the benefits of this teaching opportunity to develop many capacities. She learnt from her learners, mentor and supervisor.

Reference 3. Christina. Personal reflections in her final reflection after concluding the practicum (week 15).

"I can say that I am not the same person that I was 4 months ago, teaching to young adults has been an experience that made me grow up as a person, as a teacher. I learnt to face situations that I thought were difficult to me. The students are very intelligent, the mentor always supported me, and my tutor taught me a lot of things. They helped my when I needed help and all the things that they showed me will help me in the future. I am so grateful with my tutor to give me her time. My mentor for the trust and with the students, they taught me to be a better person, to be emphatic".

When the mentor was absent, participants had the entire challenging responsibility of the group. However, Ellen recognised she enjoyed these circumstances and learned a lot.

Reference 1. Ellen. Personal reflections in her diary. 5th October 2018 (week 6).

"This week I have been alone because teacher Alejandro was in a conference so, I have to give students all the classes and they work very well. For me, this week was so hard because all the classes I had to give and I prepared many lessons and I had to be carefully because I had to remember all the topic of the book. I enjoyed staying with my students during this week because they delight the class. I hope to have more opportunities like this because I can discover that I can control the class.

4.4.3.2 Students showing engagement with their learning process

The students had a crucial role in the success of participants lessons and they reflected on this. George constantly expressed in his comments and reflections that the children' improvement motivated his enthusiasm to prepare attractive lessons for his students.

Reference 1. George. Personal reflections after observed class 2. 15th February (week 5).

"The kids are responding so well to my teaching methodologies and I feel they like and enjoy my class. The use of songs is engaging the students a lot, they enjoy singing and dancing and this is useful because sometimes it was difficult for me to have group control".

Mary constantly commented in her reflections her students' engagement during her lessons, aspect that she emphasised was a real motivation for her.

Reference 1. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 14th January (week 1).

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> "My first class was with the group 2°A, I was a little nervous because I was thinking that maybe the class could be boring for them due to this topic students already knew, but when we started singing they loved the song.

Reference 2. Mary. Reflective diary. Date: 28th January (week 3). Group: 2°A. Topic: Weather

> "Today was a wonderful day because my students were so **excited** with the story that I told them about the weather, during the story they were asking "and then" "and then", because they were so interested in the story to know what will happen".

One ingredient in Dany's teaching was that based on the response of his students, he built what he called a supportive and confident environment for his students. The satisfaction and enjoyment he mentioned in his reflection was clearly observed during his observed lesson 2.

Reference 1. Dany. Personal reflections after class observation 2. Date: 9th February (week 5).

> "I feel very satisfied with my teaching development, I enjoy teaching a lot and the best part is that I feel the students enjoy my classes and learn the language in a supportive and confident environment. The gap in our age is only 2 years. I am excited, I enjoy teaching".

When the researcher asked Dany about the activity in this observed lesson 3 regarding the complexity of the participations and competency of the students, he recognised that his students like the challenges in his lessons.

Reference 2. Dany. Personal reflections after observed class 3. 24t March (week 11).

> "In that moment, I felt comfortable with the group, our relationship is very good. It was like a kind of support. I tried motivated them. I tried to take them to another level. They enjoyed these kinds of challenges.

Competition between teams was an activity that Kate consistently used in preparatory and it resulted in an engaging experience for her students.

Reference 1. Kate. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 9th February (week 5).

> My students are creative and in activities like these kinds of competitions they use the English they know and besides, they have fun. The students tell me they enjoy my class too much".

The cognitive purpose of Kate's lessons was not interfered with the enjoyment her students demonstrated during the activities.

Reference 2. Kate. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 9th February (week 5).

> "Regarding the dynamic activities like this one of today, I see the students enjoy them a lot; more than just having fun, the students practice the grammar structures, writing or correcting others during the game.

Learners' participation was one positive response that Kate noticed during her lessons, even with a large group of teenagers learning a foreign language almost at the end of the day.

Reference 3. Kate. Personal reflections after class observation 3. 26th February (week 8).

> *"Although, I included some games in order to let them practice while playing for a bit. I guess they liked, because they participated actively during the games.*

Almost finishing her practicum, Kate recognised the confident relationship with her students They asked their doubts openly.

Reference 4. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary. 8th March 2018 (week 10).

> *"About the progress on the topics, I think that they are more comfortable with the language and they are learning new things and asking for the things that are not clear. Even some of them told me that they had learnt more at my class than at their chemistry class, which made me feel good because they are actually learning".*

Christina used different strategies to cover topics she did not consider so attractive for the students.

Reference 1. Christina. Reflections in her diary. 24th September (week 5).

> *"The other topic was present simple, a grammatical topic a bit tedious but the students learnt a lot, we use a song and a ball to make the learning more active.*

4.4.4 Negative aspects related to learners

This study focuses on teachers and not their learners however, the response that participants found in their learners motivated or disappointed them.

4.4.4.1 Lack of engagement of the students.

The lack of students' engagement was one of the aspects that demotivated participants, and it was observed during the talks after the lessons. However, almost all the participants omitted comments regarding their personal disappointment. For this reason, the data omit a deeper analysis of this aspect even coding this factor.

Anne expressed her concerns regarding teaching big groups, noticing these conditions cause serious trouble in her results.

Reference 1. Anne. Personal reflections after concluding her practicum in an informal text message.

> *The students don't want to use English to communicate. They don't participate in the activities, in fact, they prefer not having classes! They want to translate word by word all the time. 80 % of them don't do the homework, even I have threatened them with consequences in their grades. As they know English is not in the*

formal curricula, they don't care! As they do not practice the language, I need to repeat the themes many times!

Laura clearly expressed her dissatisfaction regarding the lack of commitment of her students. During the interviews in the corridors, she constantly felt disappointed for this behaviour observed in her students, interpreted by her as indifference.

Reference 1. Laura. Personal reflections after class observation 1. 12th February (week 6).

"I wait for more interest from my students, they are indifferent and don't show engagement in their learning process".

During the interviews in the corridors and using text messages, Lucy constantly expressed her constraints regarding the attention and engagement of her students, interpreted by her as indifference.

Reference 1. Lucy. Personal written reflections after concluding her practicum

It's very difficult to catch my students' attention. Some activities in the book are impossible for them to work with. Besides, as the group is too big, it's very difficult to arrange group work for collaboration. As they know there is not grade in English, they ignore the activities. Many students are not motivated to learn. Some students answer my questions but others don't bring the book to the school. There are special impaired students I'm no qualified to work with".

4.4.5 Positive aspects related to the setting and the classroom

The third aspect this study analysed was the impact of the setting on TLA. Depending on the degree of freedom participant had for teaching, they were able and motivated to explore their potential during their teaching.

4.4.5.1 Freedom and support for teaching in the setting

The teaching learning process during practicum here is associated with professional development as Smith and Erdogan (2008) identify the learning that conduce to TLA. As participants were in the final phase of their formal initial education, and without (much) teaching experience, the importance of taking their practicum as a chance to learn was crucial for them as teachers. They had different ways for illustrating their teacher learner autonomy during this teaching experience.

Mary was a participant who developed capacities for guiding her teaching learning. Her observation of the audience let her develop different skills to manage her teaching in a suitable way. The setting provided her freedom to implement diverse creative activities, considering her audience. The interdependence of autonomy between teacher and learners was clear because in this setting the children express their ideas and opinions openly. They also support the teachers

to plan their lessons according to the needs and interests of the children, as Mary expressed in the following excerpt:

Excerpt Mary interview 2. 22nd April (week 15).

(RE) reflection

(TA) teacher autonomy

(OB) observation

(BE) beliefs

(E) emotional side

> "*In this kindergarten, there is more autonomy for the kids (RE). There is not a specific topic that we have to teach, nobody says the topic we have to teach (TA). We had to observe the kids to plan our following class (OB). At the beginning, it was difficult because the children didn't know us and they didn't talk too much with us. I asked my mentor what I could apply if the kids don't talk. She says it is normal because they don't know me. But with time, things were better. I never imagine myself teaching the animal extinction or antonyms to very young kids in kindergarten (RE). I thought those were more advanced topics for older students (BE). It is amazing to see how fast they are able to learn and their suggested topics (E).*"

Example 4: Freedom supported George teaching development (Source: research diary and audio recording of this lesson)

George's teaching development during the practicum seemed natural. His learners advanced in their language acquisition process, showing also affective bounds with him, as observed in the lesson 4. Once the kids saw him entering in the classroom, they hugged him, greeted him with their closed feasts, and asked him to sing *the song*. It was clear how the children identified him and showed affection to him as well as enthusiasm for the lesson and his activities.

There was not electronic equipment in the classroom but George used his cell phone to motivate the kids to sing and dance with this song. Everybody stood up and George played a song in his cell phone: *Hello! How are you?* It was observed that when a teacher wants to include attractive activities, the lack of equipment in the classroom was not an obstacle. The children were 3 years old but imitate the sounds and the movements when greeting and the feelings mentioned in the song such as happy, sad, hungry, and angry. The song also mentioned vocabulary of the animals like penguins, dog, cat, duck, and monkey. The kids repeated the vocabulary, sang, and danced the song naturally, with energy and confidence. It was observed the familiarity the children had then with this song in English.

The teacher indicated that it was lunchtime and George practiced the vocabulary of food and colours with the lunches of the children again. He passed around the classroom and asked them

to repeat the vocabulary. This immediate association of vocabulary with the students' lunch worked because many children already said their food in English as shown in the vignette from the observed lesson 4.

Vignette George Observed lesson 4 in First grade. Lesson 4. 15th February (week 5).

Transcript in the class recording (Bilingual)	Translation
George: **que estas comiendo? Uva! Grape!**	**George:** what are you eating? Grape! *Grape*!
Children**: Grape!**	**Children**: *Grape*!
George**: Y tu?**	**George**: And you?
Child**: pollo**	**Child**: Chicken
George**: Se acuerdan? Chicken!**	**George**: Do you remember? *Chicken!*
Children**: Chicken!**	**Children***: Chicken*!
Child**: Mira maest[r]o, galletas**	**Child**: look teacher, cookies!
George**: Cookies**	**George**: *Cookies*
Children**: cookies! Cookies!**	**Children**: cookies! Cookies!
Child: **Maest[r]o, como se dice manzana?**	**Child**: Teacher, how do you say apple?
George: **Apple! Y que color es? Red**	**George**: Apple! And what colour is it? *Red*
Children**: red!**	**Children**: red!

George used the bilingual method and the children responded directly in English in some cases. Some children still have struggle with pronunciation in Spanish, they have difficulties pronouncing letters like "r" (*maesto* instead of maestro). The children were engaged participating during the interaction and enthusiastic with a lot of energy during this activity. After the lesson, George commented in the corridor that he was looking for teaching methods that supported him with these circumstances in the school. He mentioned the total physical response and the direct method to apply during the lunchtime. George found these associations let the learners express their ideas in another language. His willingness to teach and understand his audience process was a key factor to develop his autonomy. He built rapport.

Christina had freedom to implement her teaching methodologies during her lessons at university. She recognised that this freedom was a key ingredient in her work with her students and their interest in the lessons.

Reference 1. Cristina. Personal reflections in her diary. 12th November (week 11).

> *"Today I can say that I feel satisfied with my intervention because young adults denote happiness when they saw me, as well as every morning when I arrived the classroom they asked me which kind of work we are going to do today? What game are we going to play today? And these made me see that they were interested in the things that I could make with them.*

4.4.6 Negative aspects related to the setting and class

In some cases, the teachers were following traditional teaching practices in the settings. The impact these conditions had on the participants was important but their personal attitude was determining the results. However, not all the cases were the same, participants' internal capacities defined the results in this teaching experience.

4.4.6.1 Large groups

11 from the 13 participants had to teach groups with 30 learners or more. This was the case of Lucy, who repeatedly commented after the class observation that she feels not very confident because there are some moments where she does not know how to control the group. Lucy constantly complained they are too many children in the classroom. Besides, they are not so engaged because they already know that the subject is not formally graded in the curricula, as shown in reference 1.

Reference 1. Lucy. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 26th February (week 8).

> *"tuve que cambiar algunas actividades que eran individuales o en parejas y hacerlas con todo el grupo, ya que con grupos tan grandes y con el nivel de inglés que tienen, les era complicado realizar las actividades por sí solos. Pero una vez que se realizaba en grupo podía darme cuenta de que sí lo entendían y podían darme las respuestas.*
>
> *Translation*
>
> *I had to change some activities that were individual or in pairs and I organized them with the whole group since in such large groups and the level of English they have, it was very difficult to do the activities by themselves. Once the students worked with all the group I could notice they understood and could answer them.*

This condition of different foreign language background among her students was a real constraint for Lucy, especially for her lack of teaching experience to manage such a large group.

Reference 2. Lucy. Personal reflections after class observation 3. 5th March (week 9).

> *"Lo que sí fue un problema para mí desde el principio fue el control de grupo, ya que no había trabajado con grupos tan grandes con muchas diferencias en lo que saben de inglés.*
>
> *Translation*
>
> *"What was a real problem for me since the beginning was group control because I had not previously worked with so large groups with varied English background".*

Anne was another participant whose large groups were a constant in the primary school where she taught and the lack of mentor was a factor that impacted on her teaching development.

Reference 1. Anne. Personal interview 2. 26th April (week 16).

> *As English is not a formal subject in this primary school, the kids don't have a book, so I decided on the contents. Some kids have never taken English classes previously and this makes me the work more difficult. I select attractive materials according to their age, but I am not pretty sure if they are following the sequence of the class because we just have an hour of classes every week.*

The rest of participants did not complain about the number of students in their classrooms, this is a common scenario in Mexican schools. Besides, their lack of teaching experience made them pay more attention on their teaching than their teaching conditions.

4.4.6.2 Challenging schedule for the lesson

Foreign language lessons are not always a priority in many schools. Participants had some constraints with the schedules for their lessons, and they looked for ways to attract their students' attention despite of the class hour. The carefully described case of George (see Appendix F), whose classes used to be during the lunchtime, is an example of the willingness that pushes a teacher to be creative and engaged with the students to have successful teaching results. However, the setting impacts this willingness when freedom for teaching is allowed (see 4.4.5.1), then the teacher can develop his autonomy.

Reference 1. Mary. Personal reflections after class observation one. 28th January (week 3).

> *"In this class students were distracted because it was almost the end of the day and they wanted to go home but when I said them that I brought some puzzles they were attentive again.*

Celia and Kate both had a difficult schedule for her class. The students were distracted mainly because they came from their lunchtime. Finishing the English class at 7:30 pm was another factor that impacted on her classes. The students looked tired and mind absent.

Reference 1. Kate. Personal reflections after class observation 1. 19th January (week 2).

> *Today some students were not very interested, they were talking among them and I noticed that I was forcing my voice in order to try to gain their attention. I think that depending on the hour or even the activities they had during the day is how they could perform during my class that was at 6:30 p.m.*

4.4.6.3 Discipline issues

In general, participants face a combination of lack of teaching experience and some constraints with discipline, especially in the case of teaching large groups. George felt this characteristic in his young learners in kindergarten.

Reference 1. George. Personal reflections after class observation 1. 1st February (week 3).

"I feel a little bit nervous because sometimes it is difficult to control the kids that are many and suddenly they lose control".

Mary was constrained by the fact of paying attention to all students in the short lapse of her lesson's time.

Reference 1. Mary. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 5th February (week 4).

At the beginning, I was worried about the way to control them, I had to listen to everybody and at the same time conclude my activities. Half an hour was not a lot of time for you work. They have different classes, you cannot take more time.

Lack of attention was another factor that Mary faced with her young learners.

Reference 2. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 20th February (week 6).

"…While in the classroom of 1°B the class was a little difficult because students were playing and some of them did not understand the game…"

Tom definitely recognised that teaching in a secondary school implies discipline issues as a constant. At the beginning, it was a real chaos observing a class where the students did not pay attention neither follow directions.

Reference 1. Tom. Personal reflections after class observation 1. 18th January (week 2).

I am very disappointed for their behaviour. The guys were so naughty and this is a real challenge for all the teachers in the school to control them.

Through his practicum, Tom recognised the need to develop capacities such as tolerance to manage teenagers in a large group.

Reference 2. Tom. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 9th February (week 5).

"In need to be patient with these teenagers because they usually do not obey the teachers in the school"

Tom recognised in the end of his practicum that it was necessary to have external support from his mentor to manage the discipline aspect with these large groups.

Reference 3. Tom. Personal reflections after class observation 3. 20th February (week 7).

"Discipline is a constant issue for the number of students every class. I feel much better in these groups. The teacher talked and threaten the students, she said as they don't respect me, I wouldn't go back teaching. The students regretted that situation so, the teacher put a condition: behave well when Tom teaches you again".

The age of learners was a factor that Vicky assumed affected her lessons in kindergarten.

Reference 1. Vicky. Personal reflections after class observation 4. 4th March (week 8).

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> *"Sometimes, I felt frustrated because I didn't know how to control them, they love playing in the classroom.*

Once outside the classroom, Anne commented that discipline is her biggest worry. She notices that they are too many students in the classroom and she sometimes does not know how to control them.

Reference 1. Anne. Personal reflections in her diary. Week 8.

> *"Durante esta semana la practicante enfrento algunos desafíos de control y disciplina en el grupo de 5º "B" pues en el grupo la cantidad de hombres predomina, esto ocasiona que casi todo el tiempo estén jugando o discutiendo entre ellos. Para poder lograr los objetivos de cada clase es importante que el docente conozca sus roles y trabaje en ellos y pueda conseguir la atención e interés de los alumnos.*
>
> *Translation*
>
> *'In this week, the teacher coped with some order and discipline challenges in the 5th B group. The number of males is predominant, this results in they are playing or arguing most of the time. In order to achieve the goals in each class, it is important that the teacher knows her role, work with them and catch her students' attention and interest".*

In secondary school, Liz noticed the difficult situation of managing third grades whose attitude hampered her teaching.

Reference 1. Liz. Personal reflections after class observation 3. 26th February (week 8).

> *"it is difficult to work with this grade, I feel uncomfortable with this group because as they are in the last grade of the secondary, they tend to disobey and be naughty during my class".*

Kate emphasised the short age difference with her students and her lack of teaching experience to cope with large groups of teenagers.

Reference 1. Kate. Personal reflections after the class observation 1. 19th January (week 2).

> *"this is the second time I teach and I find it difficult to manage a big group of adolescents, almost 3 years younger than me".*

Kate also recognised that the age of her students was not easy, teenagers have their own characteristics as learners.

Reference 2. Kate. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 9th February (week 5).

> *"it is still difficult for me to manage the group because the students are in a difficult age.*

Teenagers were not punctual in Celia's lessons, her class was at 6:30 pm, the students were tired and the class was after their lunchtime. For these inconveniences Celia prepared dynamic lessons to attract the attention of her students.

Reference 1. Celia. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 28th January (week 3).

> *"the time for her class is complex because the students have just eaten and they take their time to enter into the classroom. I need to work with many activities to attract their attention".*

4.4.6.4 Lack of teaching conditions

In most of the observed schools, the conditions were not the best for teaching a foreign language. However, not all the participants mentioned these situations in their reflections. Participants took a positive attitude towards the lack of conditions in their classrooms, as illustrated in Tom and Kate's reflections. Meanwhile Lucy thinks is an important factor that hampers teaching. Tom valued his freedom to teach and select suitable activities for his students.

Reference 1. Tom. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 9th February (week 5).

> *"The classrooms were not the ideal ones but I had that freedom to implement activities for my students".*

Lucy was aware of the difficulties a teacher faces when teaching such large groups without suitable conditions

Reference 1. Lucy. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 26th February (week 8).

> *"at the beginning the teacher had to help me with discipline, the children didn't obey me. Besides, the lack of conditions for teaching has an impact because it is difficult to maintain the students' attention and as there are too many in each group, it is impossible to pay personalised attention to all the children".*

Lucy, as well as Liz cases were examples when these external factors represented a real challenge for teaching (see Appendix J for further examples).

Kate's intention to innovate her class with a video was modified for the lack of speakers. She is practical and reflects on the need to bring speakers for her the next time.

Reference 1. Kate. Personal reflections in her diary. 2nd February (week 4).

> *"The most challenging thing this week was that I wanted to play some videos for them, but the school did not have the enough computer equipment for those kinds of activities. I was able to project the videos on the classroom projector but they did not lend me some speakers, so there was not sound for the videos. Even so, I modified the activity a bit, in order to work with the videos without the audio and it worked out. The next time I would like to put some videos, I will consider taking a pair of speakers with me".*

This preparatory school did not offer participants Kate and Celia with any teaching support. The classrooms in this school just had old individual benches, an old board and an old desk. As previously mentioned, Kate and Celia were characterised by their constant efforts to bring the

class lots of materials, activities and games to practice the course contents (see Appendix K for more examples and detailed description of their teaching setting).

4.4.6.5   Exclusive use of the textbook

Working with a textbook is mandatory in the university where the participants taught English. Most of them found a way to complement the book contents with materials that attracted their learners' attention. However, when the calendar marked evaluations, they had to work exclusively with the book as illustrated in Christina's reflections. She started with a personalised rhythm complementing the lessons because in her opinion, the students need more support to understand the topics. Her mentor asked her to use the book mandatorily in the end of her practicum.

Reference 1. Christina. Personal reflections in her diary. 20th August (week 2).

> *This week was harder than the last one, because I got more involved in teaching and not just adding activities to what the teacher gives the lesson. I did not want to work with the book, I felt that the book takes topics for granted and students do not know the topics very well.*

As the number of hours in the practicum are 60, Christina had to increase her teaching hours to gather it. The need to cover contents in the book in order her students to pass an examination was an aspect she understood as part of her duties.

Reference 2. Christina. Personal reflections in her diary. 22nd October (week 8).

> *"This week I started to work with them two hours, and work with the book, I did not like the idea but the students need to work with their book to prepare their exams".*

Christina was always observing her students and considered the need to complement the contents in the book with attractive activities that engaged them.

Reference 3. Christina. Personal reflections in her diary. 30th October (week 9).

> *"When we work with the book the class gets boring but I have to play music similar to the topic*
>
> *or something so they keep active".*

Laura was another participant whose teaching efforts were further than just the textbook. She was constantly looking for extra materials to practice the language and engage her students in their learning process. Games, competencies, collaboration to resolve worksheets were activities consistently observed in Laura's classes before the teacher asked her to focus just on the book, as shown in the reference below.

Reference 1. Laura. Personal reflection after class observation 2. 12th February (week 5).

> *"I feel frustrated by the fact to follow the book the entire time in the classroom. The students don't care about these topics and I feel dissatisfied with the fact to centre all her efforts on the book.*

Dany also had the instruction in the course of covering a mandatory textbook. He constantly included extra activities related to the contents to review, he achieved the interests of his learners. In the end of his practicum, he recognised that this process was useful in many senses; he noticed the development of his agency and observation.

Reference 1. Dany. Personal final reflections of his practicum (week 15).

> *"It was a matter to know the group, know their necessities and I look for things that catch their attention. I tried to make them feel comfortable with their own work. I learnt a lot, I learnt from them. I learnt to take decisions, for example, to choose a video. Then, according to the aim of the class I could take decisions. We considered the contents of the syllabus but I was constantly looking for materials related to it. I tried to make the activities relevant, going further than the book, more meaningful."*

4.4.6.6 Short and sporadic lessons

In some cases, the time for teaching English was short and not always beneficial for the plans of some participants. Anne had the disadvantage to teach English in a primary school where she was in charge of four different grades she met once a week. Due to constant suspension of her class, her experience resulted in sporadic lessons without a regular sequence. In the case of Mary, her lessons were 30 minutes length and sometimes her lesson plan had to be modified to fit with time for her class.

Reference 1. Mary. Personal reflections in her diary. 19th February (week 6).

> *"In 1°B at the beginning of the class students were interested in the instructions because the game was new for them, so they were excited playing and all wanted to participate but unfortunately the time was over".*

Tom in secondary school also mentioned that the time for his lessons was not enough for his planned activities.

Reference 1. Tom. Personal reflections after class observation 2. 9th February (week 5).

> *"Besides, the time for the lesson is so short and I did not have enough time to apply the activities I wanted in an optimal way.*

Vicky in kindergarten also recognised the pressure that implies a short length class, aspect that maintained her worried during her lessons.

Reference 1. Vicky. Personal reflections after the class observation 6. 22nd April (week 15).

> *"it was the first class after holidays, they were excited and they wanted to talk about the activities they did and it consumed much time. I am nervous, constantly checking the time because as we just have 30 minutes,*

> *sometimes it is not enough to conclude my planned activities. If I let all of them participate, I have to be careful with the following activity.*

Sometimes, the length of the lesson was not the inconvenience but the assigned time for the class, in the case of Celia, her students took much time to enter to the classroom because they had class after their lunchtime and the class was their last one of the day.

Reference 1. Celia. Personal reflections after the class observation 2. 28th January (week 3).

> *I feel the time is not enough to do all the activities I had planned for the lesson; the first factor is the time they enter late to the classroom because before the English class they have a break for eating."*

4.5   Summary of findings

In this chapter, findings regarding TLA were presented in the light of Benson's (2017) distinction between two dimensions of autonomy, teachers' internal characteristics and external factors. Data evidence of autonomous teaching was compared with existing theory, adding creativity as a potential internal capacity related to TA which was observed in participants. These findings mostly included the four key cases chosen (George, Mary, Tom and Dany) and the rest of individual cases that provided data according to each theme related to TA.

Smith and Edogan's (2008) model was selected to explain two dimensions regarding teaching and learning to teach. The degrees of the model indicate the levels of development or management teachers achieve in this study. Analysing both the type of participant and the characteristics of the setting where they taught, the data show examples of each level. Table 9 illustrates two dimensions of TA as well as three degrees of autonomy. TA was recognised in many cases, not just in the key cases where participants had freedom, initiative, and determination to manage their teaching and resolve constraints.

Table 9 Dimensions of TA based on Smith and Erdogan' model (2008) considering teacher (learner) autonomy development from participants in this study

Dimension: professional action (teaching)	Related with teacher autonomy development during the practicum	Participants identified in each level of the dimension, based on their observed teaching development in the setting
A. Self-directed professional action	Freedom in the setting for teaching	1. Self-directed teaching was observed in Anne's classes (see 4.4.2.1) but was not effective in absence of a mentor in the classroom
B. Capacity for self-directed professional action	Capacity for teaching with self-direction	2. In George's lessons (see 4.2.2), the capacity to self-direct his teaching based on his learner's interests was observed with productive results
C. Freedom from control over professional action	Freedom and capacity to control teaching	3. Mary and Vicky had mentoring in the classroom and freedom to self-direct their teaching, as autonomous teachers (see 4.3.1).
Dimension: professional development (learning to teach)	Link with TLA development	Participants identified in each level of the dimension, based on their observed teaching development in the setting
D. Self-directed professional development	Freedom for learning to teach	4. Self-directed teacher-learning was observed in participants who took into account key factors to improve their teaching, as in the case of Kate, Celia, Christina and Laura, whose dynamic lessons were examples of successful teaching learning.
E. Capacity for self-directed professional development	Capacity for learning to teach with self-direction and positive results	5. Mary developed her TLA demonstrating her capacity to self-direct her learning as a teacher in many occasions (see 4.3.2).
F. Freedom from control over professional development	Freedom and capacity to learn teaching with positive results	6. Dany had freedom to self-direct his learning as a teacher, his mentor supported his teaching proposals (see 4.4.1.1).

The table summarises the success of the teaching of participants; it was in line with Jimenez Raya and Vieira's (2015) criteria, depending on that capacity to manage teaching in their varied circumstances and resolve unexpected constraints. A detailed discussion is included in chapter 5 regarding each dimension and level.

In the following chapter, the discussion of these finding is presented in order to answer the research questions that guide this study. The findings that fitted with existing theory and other connections with TLA that have not been previously considered in the literature are discussed. Positive aspects that supported TA are emphasised, in order to reflect on the nature and development of TLA. Factors that did not contribute to teacher-learner autonomous development are also discussed.

Chapter 5 Discussion regarding dimensions and development of TLA, creativity and the impact of the setting

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the findings are discussed, comparing the participants' actions and reflections with the corresponding TLA literature. This discussion is divided by theme and attempts to answer the research questions that guide this study (see 3.2). In the first section of the chapter, data regarding the nature and development of TLA (see 5.2) are analysed to answer the first research question. The dimensions model (see Table 2) provided by Smith and Erdogan (2008) was considered as a reference.

In the second section, the parallel presence and impact of creativity (see 2.7) on autonomous teaching is discussed and related to TA (see 5.3). From the beginning of the study, creativity emerged as a key capacity participants developed, especially to overcome difficult circumstances (see 4.3). Creativity was analysed to manage to teach and resolve constraints, as in the case of TLA.

Finally, to answer the third research question in this study, the relevance of the setting is discussed regarding the impact it has on TA (see 5.4). The subsections refer to external factors in the setting, such as the ethos of the schools (see 5.4.1) and the mentors (see 5.4.2). The mentors were essential TA support or hinder in some cases (see 4.4.1). In some settings, participants were encouraged to teach autonomously. In other cases, the ethos of the context represented a real barrier that hampered autonomous teaching. The initial discussion in this chapter identifies the dimensions of TLA.

In the summary section of this chapter (see 5.5), the key points are drawn together, and a revised working definition of TA is proposed based on the findings of this research and a consideration of existing research. The development of TLA is discussed in the following section.

5.2 *What is the nature (e.g., characteristics, willingness, empathy, motivation) of teacher-learner autonomy, and how does it develop during the teaching practicum?*

The first research question of this study refers to the nature and development of TLA. The primary reference for discussion is Smith and Erdogan's (2008) model, which identifies two dimensions of teacher (learner) autonomy regarding professional actions or teaching and professional development or teacher learning (see Table 2). This study identified and linked these two dimensions with freedom in the setting and the participants' control over their actions and reflections through their practicum (see Table 9). Changes in their teaching during the semester illustrate whether or not they had specific teaching development. Some other aspects regarding dimensions and degrees of TA in line with Jimenez Raya and Vieira (2015) are considered, such as managing to teach and resolving constraints. The following sections discusses the founded characteristics or nature of teacher-learners who claimed to be autonomous and their observed teaching development.

5.2.1 Participants' teaching characteristics

According to Smith and Erdogan (2008), the type of teaching autonomous teachers (see Table 2). is based on the participants' capacities and attitudes through observations and reflections. Participants in this study claimed to have improved their teaching after their practicum (see 4.2.8). Their professional identity was also a constant they tried to maintain, identifying themselves as autonomous and creative teachers (see 4.2.7).

For instance, Anne- her teaching context fulfils the conditions of the first level A (see Table 9) in terms of freedom to carry out self-directed professional action. However, the development of her TLA without the support of a mentor was not significant. The classes and activities she designed were not very successful in engaging her learners in language learning. For instance, she would engage them in activities (e.g., colouring whilst she walked around the learners' groups), which were time-consuming, but these were not focused on language learning.

Anne did not have the expertise to manage the class effectively (see 4.2.8). This case shows that freedom for teaching is an insufficient condition for the development of TLA. Anne experienced other constraints such as large groups, lack of adequate teaching conditions and resources, and different language background among her learners, which are all considered as difficult circumstances in the classroom. In her reflections, she was not aware of these weaknesses since her students enjoyed her classes, these conditions are commonly observed in Puebla (J. Benson,

2019) and she did not have sufficient professional insight to realise that they were not achieving the learning outcomes. Other studies in the Mexican context (Flores, 2019) have found the importance of mentoring during the practicum to make student teachers reflect on teaching effectiveness.

On the other hand, George, who had the same supervisor as Anne, demonstrated his capacity for self-directing his lessons in a meaningful way. His activities empowered his young learners in the language lessons (see 4.2.1). George did not have a mentor in the classroom. However, he could conduct the class with a smooth sequence of themes. He included diverse teaching strategies that engaged his learners (see 4.2.11). George's supervisor asked for a reflective section in his lesson plans. These reflections had the purpose of applying activities meaningfully. He went deeper in reflections and research of understanding his teaching and the needs of his learners. As he mentioned at the beginning of his practicum, kindergarten was a new context for him (see 3.4.1). Nevertheless, due to his constant research and reflection, he provided his young learners with opportunities to acquire the foreign language smoothly. This case is an excellent example of level B (see Table 9), capacity for self-directed professional action. His self-directed teaching shows that a student with willingness and other capacities is able to manage teaching.

In the case of Mary and Vicky, who were teaching English in the same kindergarten, their supervisor constantly reflected on the purpose of their activities with them. Their case meets the conditions of the third level, C (see Table 9). In the kindergarten where they taught, their mentors constantly supported them in organizing the children, and taking care of discipline, and let them self-direct their teaching (see 4.4.5.1 for reflections about the importance of a supportive setting). Besides, the policy regarding the teaching methodologies in that kindergarten allows teachers to plan lessons according to their learners' interests and needs. Vicky and Mary were very creative (see 4.3.1) and used technological tools to prepare engaging and innovative lessons. They both had teaching freedom in this setting (see 4.3.3). All these factors in a supportive setting are crucial to implement contextualised pedagogies that meet learners' interests. These conditions also permit student teachers apply pedagogies with a spirit of autonomy. The classroom acquires nuances of an autonomous classroom, as Kuchah (2011) describes in his study. Their young learners' engagement and a certain autonomy for individual and collective activities characterised Mary's and Vicky's practice.

Autonomy and agency were also related to this teaching domain, as discussed in the following section.

5.2.2 **Identity and agency**

This sub-section presents the impact of this study that participants' identity and agency had on their teaching development. A self-perception of being an autonomous teacher was an initial factor for selecting participants. In line with the literature (Benson, 2011; Huang, 2013), the initial point of autonomous teachers is their identity concerning the type of teacher they want or try to be. The initial questionnaire included a section on the perception to be an autonomous and creative teacher (see Appendix D). Motivation was constantly observed in engaged participants, acting as autonomous teachers who managed their freedom to teach to focus on the learners (see 4.2.3). Some participants underpinned that self-perception with actions that projected their autonomous identity. There were observable and implicit actions that determined their teaching succeed.

Teacher agency was observed in the way participants managed their teaching through their teaching instruction. Agency was related to reflective or situated pedagogies (Johnson & Golombek, 2018; Huang, 2013) suitable for each setting. Agency was considered to explain whether the presence of these reflective actions had an autonomous nature. The evolution in the type of decisions participants had (see 4.3) were the key to analyse their development of autonomy, observed as the management of teaching and the capacity to resolve unexpected constraints through the practicum.

Some participants in this study showed their conviction of being autonomous and creative teachers as they claimed to be. It seemed they also felt a particular need to demonstrate to be autonomous in the classroom (see 4.2.5). Participants had little or no substantial teaching experience. At the beginning of class observations, many of them were looking for visual contact with me. I just kept writing in my role of researcher without any intervention during their lessons. I noticed how this need for visual support or approval was diminishing with time. At the end of their practicum, all of them had a certain agency level that it seemed they forgot my presence there in the classroom.

As in other studies (Huang, 2013; Jimenez Raya, 2017), teacher agency has also been related to TA. In this study, agency was found as another key component regarding TA. Based on its definition, teacher agency was identified as a teacher's purposeful decisions and actions (Prestley et al., 2015). Those actions were a reference to analyse the way participants managed the teaching reflexively and resolve constraints. When participants decided to implement a variant or modification in the lesson plan or a constraint appeared in the classroom, their determined decisions were key to applying a degree of autonomy.

TA and agency have similarities when they are defined (see 2.5.4). The development of agency observed in participants was the initial point to exercise their freedom to teach autonomously. The development of confident teaching in most of the observed lessons was observed through the time. Their confidence, combined with the application of creative and attractive activities for their audiences, was identified (see 4.2.6). Some participants constantly expressed they love teaching, which appears to be the trigger point for the practicum experience.

One of George's main observed attribute as a teacher is constant and engaged research to understand his audience and develop contextualised teaching. The fact that English is not in the curricula of all state primary schools in Mexico was a crucial aspect of considering freedom for teaching and developing his agency. George did not have a mentor who guided him in his language teaching development. The teachers in charge of each group supported him in organizing some activities, helping him with discipline issues when the group was out of control, or just observing what was happening during the English lesson.

Sometimes, e.g. in class observations one and six, the teacher was doing some other activities outside the classroom during George's lesson. Consequently, he had total control of the classroom, and his decisions controlled the plan and the management of the lesson, the sequence, and the time for each activity. He had the freedom to decide on the contents to teach, the teaching methods and materials used. It was clear that he developed teacher agency. Detailed examples of his work are included in Appendix F.

In line with the literature (Palomera et al., 2008; Tuncay, 2002), most participants in this study were engaged with their audience learning process. Huang's (2013) study shows that the direct relationship between identity and agency development seems an interrelated characteristic. In this study, identity was the starting point for selecting participants who defined themselves as autonomous and creative (see 3.6.1). In line with the literature (Benson, 2011; Huang, 2013), it seems that an autonomous identity was a constant in the development of TA amongst participants (see 4.2.6).

Table 10 illustrates how participants engaged their learners in the first column and helped them overcome unexpected moments in their practices in a creative way. These strategies impacted the learners and their teaching positively, resulting in successful teaching experiences. The second column illustrates how their teaching-learning process benefited their practices, designing reflective outputs and inviting their learners to engage with their learning process. The third column emphasises the impact that autonomous teacher-learners produced on their students during their observed lessons and their oral and written reflections. This emphasis on positive results is trying to underpin creativity as a key part of TA. Not all cases and all participants had

such a consistent successful result. However, it is worthy to emphasise when efforts had a positive impact. Constraints were not included in this chart because they will be discussed later, analysing aspects that hampered TA.

Table 10 Capacities, outputs and positive impact on learners of TLA

Creative strategies with agentive behaviour	Output	Positive impact
Creating dynamic lessons	Planning and creating stimulating activities and materials Introducing peer interaction (see 4.3.1)	Learner engagement Collaborative attitude amongst learners
Improvisation	Changing the learning environment e.g. leaving the room to do the activity outside (see 4.3.2) Taking advantage of existing materials e.g. Wearing masks to perform a song (see 4.3.2) Varying the pace in order to keep the learners' attention e.g. Introduce a short physical exercise (see 4.2.12)	Bringing the learners´ attention back Motivating learners
Adaptation	Reorganizing the order of the exercises Organizing different opportunities for interaction e.g. teams, pairs, versus individual (see 4.2.2)	Positive response from the learners
Creative use of technologies for teaching	Integrating use of videos, recorded songs, documentaries in order to make the learning content more meaningful (see 4.3.3)	Greater learner attention and motivation
Knowledge of teaching		
Observation and reflection on their teaching	Asking questions in order to obtain feedback on their teaching (see 4.2.8)	More positive results with the learners
Understanding their audience	Carrying out learner cognitive development and psychological stages (see 4.2.2)	More positive results with the learners
Understanding the teaching process	Carrying out personal research on teaching methods (see 4.2.9)	More smooth lessons
Evaluating their teaching constantly	Reflecting on the teaching results. Questioning their learners about their progress (see 4.4.3.1)	Situating their teaching based on their learners
Personal capacities		
Showing willingness and motivation	Engaging learners with the lesson. e.g. Bringing attractive and meaningful materials to the lesson (see 4.2.5) Planning their lessons based on observation of the group (see 4.2.5)	Learner engagement and motivation
Teaching with empathy	Observing needs during the lesson e.g. Including more explanations with easy vocabulary and many examples to practice (see 4.2.4) Bilingual strategies to facilitate learning e.g. Explanations in mother tongue to avoid confusion and stress during instructions and explaining grammar (see 4.2.5) Integrating the group in the activities e.g. Considering all the learners to participate in the activity (see 4.2.2)	Students' emotional bonds Gratefulness from learners

As a result of the lack of teaching experience and mentoring in the classroom, some participants had to manage their teaching themselves, take the control of the classroom and use appropriate strategies in their lessons. used in their lessons. The most useful autonomous initiatives that supported their practice and their autonomy were the use of observation, reflection, and research regarding the needs of their learners. These capacities had an impact on their teaching practices.

According to the definition of Smith regarding TLA (2003), the development of teaching skills, knowledge for teaching, and attitudes for managing the group was perceptible in most of the participants (see 4.3). To be more precise, as the literature suggests (Palomera et al., 2008; Yaman & Alkac, 2002), the empathy participants had for their pupils was essential to understand the needs of the setting (see 4.2.12). In this study, participants showed commonalities, such as considering their audience to plan their lessons (see 4.2.7). Another characteristic in some participants was researching cognitive development and stages to understand the cognitive stage of their students (see 4.2.9). Managing their lesson with creative teaching (see 4.3.1) and suitable agency (see 4.2.6) were characteristics that implied TA. As observed, internal capacities were initially developed from the participants willingness and motivation (see 4.2.11).

Some personal circumstances (see 4.3.4) and some setting conditions (see 4.4.6) hampered the possibility of applying autonomous teaching. Willingness, motivation, and teaching capacities were the strategies participants used to overcome difficult circumstances. This interdependence between the teacher and the learner let some participants focus on the audience more than on the contents, especially those who had freedom for teaching in the setting (see 4.2.5). The second domain of TA is professional development, discussed in the following section.

5.2.3 TLA development

The second dimension refers to learning to teach or professional development (Smith & Erdogan, 2008). Participants achieved different professional development levels through their practicum, what Smith (2003) calls TLA. Diverse internal and external factors defined the difference. Participants learned to teach in real scenarios, it seemed that the degree of learning was proportional to the degree of autonomy they achieved. In the initial interview, they claimed that their common practices were related to teaching autonomy and they had the goal of becoming successful EFL teachers.

Nine participants said they did not have previous teaching experience. They had just practised with microteaching in previous teaching modules. Just four participants mentioned they had some teaching experience with small groups or counselling learners in some private lessons. Their motivation to become teachers were diverse (see 4.2.11). They expressed that their joy for teaching came from admiring a relative who was a teacher, an inspiring teacher, bad teachers who inspired them to avoid applying their practices or their interest in foreign languages. All this information was collected through informal interviews and comments in the corridors of the schools.

Some participants mandatorily covered contents from textbooks during their lessons, meeting the ethos in the school without freedom for teaching in the case of Lucy (see Appendix J). She just worked with the students' book and the listening book during her lessons. Lucy commented and reflected that parents and teachers considered that working with the book was the primary indicator that the course was effective. She felt some frustration because she had to learn teaching in this way (see 4.4.6.5). She was aware there were no opportunities to have teaching freedom. This is an example of degree D, self-directed professional development (see Table 9). Lucy learnt to teach under difficult conditions that controlled her teaching opportunities. The more restrictive schools reduced the possibility of developing TLA and one reason for this is the excessive number of identified controllers (McGrath, 2000).

The teacher development of participants, as in the case of Tom is clear. He observed and reflected about his students' reality and his teaching possibilities in the setting. Tom taught English in secondary school under difficult circumstances and without teaching experience. He developed agency, planned dynamic and creative lessons where students worked individually and collaboratively. To be honest, in the beginning, I believed there were not much data to analyse in this case. This was my first-class observation out of the university, and I felt so nervous and disappointed. In the end of the observation, I tried to understand what happened in this overcrowded class, I felt the context was so far from any type of autonomy.

What happened, in the beginning, was that my trainer side betrayed my researcher side. I worried more about evaluating teaching than analysing objectively a common setting in state schools in Mexico. However, after revisiting data, rereading about difficult circumstances, and reflecting on his results, I understood the efforts of a determined and motivated teacher-learner. Maybe his teaching strategies were not extraordinary. However, they were creative and effective to engage his students. His strategies modified his students' initial negative attitude and helped him cope with the EFL difficult conditions in that school. This transformation empowered Tom and his students. The case of Tom represents a clear example that an autonomous teacher can manage his efforts orientated to engage the learning process of his audience. Tom overcame difficult circumstances with his reflective practice and engaged his students with their foreign language acquisition process.

Other participants looked for various tools and knowledge to improve their lessons, even under difficult circumstances. This was the case of Kate, Celia (see Appendix K), Christina, and Laura (see Appendix L). The main commonality observed in their classes and their reflective portfolios was their dynamic lessons based on their learners' interests (see4.2.7). When mentors are supportive, this provides support for developing TLA as in the case of Christina and Laura at university.

Kate and Celia had the same mentor who was usually meeting administrative responsibilities during the English lessons. Through the practicum, their efforts were observed in the number of activities and exercises they prepared for their lessons. Their engaged attitude with their learners was another commonality observed (see 4.2.4). To be a willing teacher and prepare attractive lessons for their students placed them in category E; capacity for self-directed professional development (see Table 9). These participants developed this capacity to learn to teach, and at the same time, they met the needs of their learners. Having the capacity to conduct teaching without much support is an example of the development of TLA.

When the setting offers certain freedom for teaching, and the mentor supports a student teacher, this leads to a positive result in the classroom. The case of Dany, whose teaching activities were attractive for the group (see 4.2.1), is a good example of category F (see Table 9). He seemed so engaged with his teaching, showing a positive attitude in the classroom (see Appendix I for examples). He was constantly searching for online materials related to the course contents. He usually enriched his lessons with varied materials and used dynamic activities. His strategies usually included many students in the dynamics (see 4.2.1). His mentor gave him the freedom to choose his materials and supported him with constant feedback. This freedom to self-direct his learning as a teacher allowed Dany to be an autonomous teacher-learner according to this TLA model.

All participants received the same formal education. However, some showed more teaching skills since the beginning of their practicum. The principles in their BA programme contents include modules to provide and practice teaching skills. This study did not focus on pedagogies during the participants' formal education, but on pedagogies they considered during their teaching practice. Some participants adopted pedagogies with supportive autonomy nuances. When they had freedom for teaching, some participants tried to consider their students to create scenarios for their learning process. Even though participants were not aware of this, these pedagogies supported their students in different aspects, as discussed below.

5.2.4   Pedagogies applied by autonomous teacher-learners

The pedagogies participants learned during their formal education are not the focus of this study, but the pedagogy participants applied during their lessons. According to Flores et al. (2016), the main purpose of the practicum is to develop the critical ability of student teachers to understand and transform pedagogies using reflectivity, self-direction, collaboration, creativity and innovation. The BA programme in this university emphasises, at least in a paper, the importance

of autonomy and creativity among other desired capacities in student teachers' teaching (BUAP, 2009).

For some participants who developed TLA, their learners were the centre of their efforts and they applied diverse pedagogies to support learner autonomy in the classroom from the initial observation onwards. Cotterall's (2008) case studies, analysing individual learner histories, contribute a closer view of learner autonomy, correlating autonomy with good language learners. Cotterall observes three dimensions of learner autonomy: methodological, psychological, and political or social. These dimensions were observed to some extent in the data.

The first methodological dimension (following Holec, 1981) refers the adoption of suitable methods to achieve cognitive aims. In the three educational levels, participants enriched the course contents with dynamic lessons were their students were constantly participating (see 4.2.3). For instance, in kindergarten, participants used a suitable pedagogy according to their students' age, possibilities, and conditions in the educational settings (see 4.3.1).

The second dimension of LA is psychological (Little, 1991) which entails the abilities and capacities the learner develops to keep motivated to learn. Mary was amazed by her learners' capacity to understand and follow the exercises, especially those that the toddlers enjoyed, such as songs and games (see 4.2.1). George reflected on the importance of empowering his young learners by giving them the freedom to participate spontaneously (see 4.2.1). Motivation and contextualised pedagogies can result in the development of autonomy (TLA and LA).

The third LA dimension is political / social concerning the content of learning (Benson2001). The content of learning is determined by policies and educational settings that define the priorities in learning. Some participants supported their students with extra materials that complemented the curricula (see 4.2.4). For instance, Dany noticed that when his students felt motivated and were part of the activities, their results were more productive. One common action in his was class was complementing the contents of the book with related and dynamic activities where his students played and, at the same time, they enjoyed the activities (see 4.2.1). This apparent bottom-up teacher response to the needs in each setting is observed as an autonomous principle used as a response for specific circumstances in the educational context.

It is clear that learner autonomy is crucial in an educational setting, especially for student teachers who have freedom for their teaching-learning process. At the same time, the role of the teacher trainer is essential in supporting autonomous learning amongst these student teachers (BUAP, 2009). These two dimensions of learner autonomy, as a teacher and as a learner, had an intimate relationship in this study.

In line with many researchers (Breen & Mann, 1997; McGrath, 2000; Smith, 2003; Vieira, 2007; Jimenez Raya & Vieira, 2015, Jimenez Raya 2017; Johnson & Golombek, 2018; Vieira, 2020), participants supported individual as well as collective participation practices to promote constant interaction and engagement amongst their learners (see 4.2.3). Participants also promoted scaffolding among students in many senses by adapting a pedagogy, even when they did not notice these results directly (see 4.2.2). Their reflection regarding their teaching was constant in most of the participants.

According to Dikilitas and Comoglu (2020), reflective practice is considered a substantial element in student teachers teacher education programmes. Johnson and Golombek (2011) observe that reflective practice provides student teachers with relevant concepts that can then be practised in real scenarios to support everyday learning.

There were some factors or controllers, as McGrath (2000) calls them, that hampered the possibility to implement a pedagogy considering (for) autonomy. Lucy's case in primary school was the most representative regarding factors that hindered the development of teaching capacities (see 4.4.6.5). The English teacher demanded she limits her efforts to the use of the textbook. Pedagogies that considered students in the core of the teachers' efforts (Jimenez Raya & Vieira 2015) in that big school were absent. A large number of students and the lack of supportive conditions result in teacher-centred activities. The interest for covering contents in the textbook was prevalent. The teacher's desk is in front of the class, and all the benches in tight lines without space to move around the classroom are characteristics of this primary school. The English lesson was in the same situation following the ethos of the school, supporting teacher-centred methodologies.

In Lucy's case, regarding the English materials, the huge gap between the textbook contents and the learners' language background was a serious constraint. Lucy showed her creativity, illustrating the new vocabulary with the colourful prints she brought to the classroom. The intention was to connect the students with the language and attract their attention. She brought to the classroom colourful printed images that stuck on the wall. Detailed grammar explanations, and translation were her teaching strategies that sometimes caught her learners' attention. However, not all children in the back part of the classroom were motivated to follow the lesson. The small room and the backpacks in the small corridors between benches did not let her even be in contact with the learners in the back of the classroom. These difficult circumstances (Kucha, 2011) represent a challenging barrier for TLA.

The type of materials, activities and interaction some participants used (see 4.2.4) are characteristics of autonomous and supportive pedagogies. Cheon et al. (2018) identify the

resources that teachers use in autonomy-supportive classrooms. They emphasise the benefits of this teaching style; greater psychological need satisfaction during teaching, greater teaching efficacy, and the adoption of more intrinsic instructional goals. Participants in this study commented on their satisfaction and motivation after their teaching interventions (see 4.2.11). Their most common reasons to feel satisfied were their students' responses at their pedagogies and their own teacher development. They considered it essential to pay attention to individual needs, general characteristics of their learners to understand them better and identify specific needs they had to engage in their language acquisition process. Efficacy of teaching success was observed by applying pedagogies that placed the students in the centre of the teaching process (see 4.2.8).

In Cheon's (2018) study, a motivating style was characterised by intrinsic institutional goals and intervention-enabled gains. In this study, participants with an autonomous spirit showed actions that permitted their students to have a certain freedom when participating (see Appendix G for examples at university). Autonomy was observed (see 4.2.1), empowering students and, at the same time, empowering participants as teachers who had a certain freedom in their teaching practices. As Little (1995) posits, this interdependence of autonomy lets the community of practice show an autonomous spirit, defining the learning-teaching process in their rhythm and contextualised teaching.

Some participants seemed to adapt their teaching to engage their learners and make them collaborate (see Appendix I for examples in Dany's lessons). Their activities were dynamic opportunities to use the language in a meaningful way (see 4.2.2). The teacher-learner (Jimenez Raya & Vieira, (2015; Kumaravadivelu, 2008) requires a certain level of freedom to develop an independent curriculum according to the setting, culture, and audience. In this sense, participants in this study could contextualize their efforts by adapting their teaching to the setting and their learners needs (see 4.2.9).

Authors, as Rebolledo and Smith (2013, p.9), define successful teaching when 'students are engaged, participating actively, and when they make progress in their learning'. It seemed that most of the participants in this study achieved this type of successful teaching experiences. During the final lessons observed, participants were more attentive to the response of their learners. In their reflections, participants recognised the importance of their learners' learning process as a priority, more than their own teaching (see 4.2.8). Teacher education is also a factor that underpinned the participants' actions, as analysed in the following section.

5.2.5 Second Language Teacher Education (SLTE) as a source of tools for teaching

As the literature reports (McGrath, 2000; Palomera et al., 2008; Burns and Richards, 2009; Jimenez Raya & Vieira, 2015; Johnson & Golombeck, 2016; Manzano Vazquez, 2018; Vieira, 2020), teacher education is a key support for student teachers who become novice teachers. In this study, teacher education provided participants with tools to apply autonomous teaching in many senses. One of the advantages for participants in this study, and line with the literature (Tunkay, 2012), was the curriculum they had followed at the research site university which contains certain autonomous learning principles and an appropriate philosophy of teacher education (see 1.4.1). These principles seemed similar to those reported in the literature through respectful teacher-learner relationships, individual and supportive nurturing, empathy, and flexibility to apply the lessons (see 4.3). Participants developed diverse teaching capacities and reflected on the importance of their attitude when teaching. Initial education provides them with teaching knowledge in a reflective way. They can be selective when applying meaningful strategies in real scenarios. What is more, TA could be a possibility of successful future teaching.

Teacher education should include integral and complementary perspectives in the curricula. Laura reflected on the need to include the psychological tools that support teachers to understand their learners. She felt disappointed with the lack of response and commitment of her students. In her reflections, Laura considers that a reinforced pedagogy for autonomy in ELT education is necessary. She reflected on the fact that the curricula in the formal ELT missed the psychological aspects of the learners. Some health support for teachers that have to overcome attitudes such as apathy or indifference from their learners is necessary to scaffold teaching during the practicum, she considered. Maybe her self-evaluation was so demanding, but she is accurate in the sense of analysing the programmes and the type of support they offer for future teachers to cope with new generations in this changing world, as Kumaravadivelu (2012) suggests. In general, it seems that the teacher education participants received was helpful regarding their teaching potential and tools.

As Burns and Richards (2009) set, SLTE has two mandatory responses, internal changes, supported by applied linguistics and teacher education. These internal changes, at least, can make teachers aware of their role in education. For instance, the exclusive use of the textbook hampered the possibility of applying autonomous teaching in primary schools. Besides, the materials were so complex for the children to understand, even in Spanish. Most of the children had never had an English lesson before. Participants were aware of the importance of the role of the teacher, considering the multitask proficiency needed to attend many duties at work, combined with personal responsibilities.

'Higher education needs to give learners a sense of autonomy, including the chance to think critically, make decisions, take responsibility, and manage risks' (Jimenez Raya, 2017, p.17). Participants in this study (see 4.2.9) wanted to construct a connection between their learners' mother tongue, the foreign language and culture in their role of teachers, as Kumaravadivelu (2008) suggests. Common day-to-day activities were commented to make a meaningful connection with the use of the language, especially with young learners whose spontaneity seemed to give the lessons a successful result. In their own words, participants took risks with diverse teaching methodologies involving meaningful information that engage their learners (see 4.2.2). Student teachers' critical thinking supports them when applying teaching principles in a meaningful way.

Autonomy now is a common goal in education (Manzano Vazquez, 2018; Jimenez Raya, 2017) but it is not always a reality in many schools (see 4.4.6). Participants in this study tried to implement teaching methodologies they considered suitable for their audiences, based on their observations and reflections (see 4.2.2). However, pedagogies implemented in the schools were not student-centered or pedagogies for autonomy (see 4.4.6). However, during the class observations and in line with the literature (Palomera et al., 2008; Tunkay, 2002), some participants looked friendly and empathetic, providing their students with a certain LA (see 4.2.1).

As Lamb (2008) posits, collaboration is an expression of autonomy that in this study supported the participants' process of teaching-learning, and at the same time, entailed commitment and empowerment. At the end of the practicum, the type of activities some participants applied had also changed; they were more dynamic and at the same time, more attractive for their learners. Learners' collaboration and interaction during the activities was a constant in some lessons. For instance, they were organizing pair group, team competition, and whole group activities (see 4.2.3).

In their teaching and interviews, the reflective stance that many participants showed included constant self-evaluation of their teaching work. In the following section, the reflective attitude participants showed is discussed.

5.2.6   Self-evaluation as an expression of teacher autonomy

Participants' self-evaluation regarding their teaching showed a reflexive capacity of an autonomous teacher (see 4.2.8). this is also a capacity that characterises critical thinkers (Freire, 1978). Suddenly, at the end of the study, some participants evaluated their development, recognising aspects to improve or that were missing in their lessons. Self-evaluation is one of the highest levels of knowledge in learning taxonomies. Some participants were able to see some

aspects they considered necessary to improve as a teacher, recognising that they still need to develop some teaching skills. Capacity for professional development was also observed through a reflective attempt to evaluate the participants' own teaching.

TA has been defined as the ability to improve one's teaching through one's efforts (Lamb & Reinders, 2008). Participants of this study with these types of reflections showed a high order of thinking. The sense of self-evaluation of participants supported by feedback from mentors and supervisors, even the researcher, was evident in reflective teaching and in most cases led to them being better observers of their lessons.

The recognition of the learners' individuality and the need to place them in the centre of the learning-teaching process is useful for real achievements in the classroom (see 4.2.5) and teaching improvement (see Appendix K). Participants reflected on the importance of observing and recognising their audience and preparing suitable activities to support meaningful learning (see 4.2.7). Reflective actions and decisions or agency were observed, and a capacity to situate and creatively manage teaching (see 4.2.6). As a result, their students were attentive to the varied number of creative activities they brought to the classroom (see 4.4.3.2). Participants recognised their teaching development but also the need to improve some teaching skills (see 4.2.8).

Some participants included reflective practices to manage to teach and resolve constraints. Concerning knowledge for teaching, observation, reflection, self-evaluation, and research were identified as evidence of their teaching-learning (see 4.2). The participants' cognitive process was not directly measured, just observed through these developed capacities that some participants demonstrated. Their reflections focused on their learners and how to make them engaged with the lessons through the practicum. Their observation let them understand their audience and act according to their needs. The combination of reflective attitudes and an empathetic stance was another constant observed in the data amongst participants, as explained in the following section.

5.2.7   Empathy as a common characteristic of participants

A key and common capacity developed amongst participants was empathy. Empathy was observed in ten of the thirteen participants (see 4.2.12) to connect with their audience and plan their lessons accordingly with real needs and conditions in the setting. These aspects were directly related to TLA. In this study, teacher empathy was identified as 'that empathic communication by the teacher will result in students experiencing greater understanding and acceptance and thus develop more positive attitudes themselves and towards schooling' (Deitch & Feshbach, 2009 p. 85). Empathetic participants innovated in their lessons, consolidating the integration they accomplished in their groups (see 4.2.2).

One commonality of this study was that participants considered their audience's needs and interest to plan their lessons. Data collected in this study showed willingness triggering the efforts of the participants (see 4.2.11) and agency (see 4.2.6) regulating their teaching. This shared characteristic of autonomous teacher-learners orientated their efforts to support learners in their language acquisition process. For instance, George constantly showed his emotional side within his teaching performance. Challenging circumstances made him improve his teaching (see 4.4.6.2). He developed skills such as creativity, observed through his capacity to adapt the lesson plan, improvised in classes when necessary, and considered critical thinking in the right moment. Empathy with his young learners guided his observations, reflections, self-evaluations to adapt his teaching to the setting. His case is evidence of TLA development.

As Lamb (2008) posits, the role of the teacher as a cultural bridge in the teaching setting is essential. In this study, Mary was another participant whose empathetic actions were distinguished in every class observed. She paid special attention to her young students and planned her activities based on their interests and possibilities to understand the topics (see Appendix G for further details). She is a creative teacher, and her efforts when applying creative materials and games seemed effective and motivating for her students (see 4.3.1). Teachers with this clear vocation and passion for teaching make the difference, investing time and interest in obtaining successful and productive results in the classroom.

Tom was one of the participants under the most challenging circumstances (see Appendix H for examples). The secondary school where he taught had many inconveniences regarding infrastructure, discipline, and schedules for the language lesson, usually at the end of the school day (see4.2.2). However, his creative teaching efforts and empathy with his students transformed his teaching during the practicum. In the beginning, he looked nervous, and discipline was a real constraint in the lessons. His students hardly paid attention to Tom's instructions. Students left the classroom without much care of the homework instructions in the first observed class. During the last observed class, the bell rang, indicating the end of the class, but the teenagers continued with the exercise. They were so engaged and focused on the competition. Their attitude changed; the activities in the class attracted their attention. This achievement was not an individual one for Tom as a teacher but the entire group who changed their attitudes.

Empathy is one of the most relevant characteristic of the nature of TLA. Empathy helps motivate learners to express their ideas differently, work with varied and attractive materials, and work interactively. Palomera et al. (2008) emphasise that ELT education should include the emotional side to develop empathy amongst future teachers. The needs of student teachers and their well-being should be considered for successful teaching results. In line with this suggestion, some

participants in this study were empathetic and expressed constant attention to the learners'
psychological side.

Data related to the participants' attitudes were mainly observed as willingness, motivation, and
empathy (see 4.2.10). These expressions gave them the initiative to connect with their pupils and
engage with their practice. In this study, motivation was classified as an internal characteristic of
autonomous teachers. Participants' efforts were constantly pervaded with enthusiasms and
energy for teaching.

Teaching motivation was commonly found in this study. Some participants, almost concluding
their formal education, performed as motivated novice teachers. Their teaching knowledge and
theoretical references provided in their formal education seemed to help them complete their 60
hours of teaching under diverse teaching scenarios. So, motivation should be recognised during
ELT formal education as an important factor to consider in the curricula and in the classroom.
Teacher educators should consider the importance to motivate teacher-learners.

Participants did not comment on the factors that affected their teaching and their attitude. The
most common factor was the restrictions of the setting (see 4.4.6). The lack of freedom for
teaching controlled their efforts. For instance, Laura commented on her frustration for dedicating
the entire class to reviewing the textbook contents. In her view, her students were not so
committed as with the exercises to practice the language she used in the initial phase of the
practicum. This was a clear example of how the creative teaching of participants motivated their
students. The following section includes a discussion regarding creativity and teaching aspects
that involved autonomous teaching.

5.3   *To what extent does teacher autonomy development depend upon the parallel development of creativity in their practicum?*

The second research question in this study looks for the parallel correspondence between TA and
creativity. It seems that creativity has not theoretically been related to TLA in applied linguistics or
empirical research before. After listening to participants in the exploratory phase, creativity
emerged as a common strategy they used to overcome difficult circumstances in the setting and
engage their students in their language acquisition process.

Internal capacities observed in the autonomous teacher-learners were identified, focusing on
creativity. The participants who included more creative activities and materials in their lessons
achieved diverse ways to be autonomous. The participants' autonomy and creativity were
identified through many examples in the last observed classes (see 4.3). Their capacity to manage

to teach and resolve constraints was characterising their teacher-learner autonomous development (See Appendix O for a summary of this relationship). These capacities, knowledge of teaching and positive attitudes observed in the participants were also recognised as internal aspects of autonomous participants. When observation, reflection or self-evaluation are not part of the teaching process, the results are not fruitful.

Actions or strategies observed in participants that engaged with their students made the difference in teaching observed. These strategies are related to aspects of TLA. Every context values autonomy and creativity in different proportions (Richards, 2015). In supportive contexts, participants were able to apply creative teaching taking advantage of the available tools in the classroom (see 4.3.3). The activities and attitudes to cope with the day-to-day teaching work were related to autonomy principles (see **Error! Reference source not found.**) and creativity in many senses. Evidence in this study helped to tease out the impact creativity has on the autonomous teaching of participants.

Creativity emerged as a characteristic observed in many participants since the initial class observations to cope with diverse circumstances. The researcher observed the need that participants had to overcome some challenging circumstances in the classroom. For these reasons, creativity was considered a possible construct of TA. Creativity helped understand more regarding the nature and development of TA among student teachers, similarly to other empirical studies (Ollerhead & Burns, 2015; Huang, 2013). Creativity is a valuable ability in teaching for implementing innovations and necessary to cope with unexpected situations in the setting (Richards & Farrel, 2005).

Research developed by OCDE (2019) classifies creativity as a thinking skill, as present and future essential competency in young learners who are part of these complex, digitalised, and globalised times. As Sayer and Ban (2014) recognise, the language learners' contexts provide difficult scenarios for teachers in Mexico. A few EFL instructional hours are programmed per week in schools, teachers have limited time to apply their methodologies, and students have limited exposure to the language. However, creative ways to manage constraints overlapped with searching for expressions of autonomy observed amongst participants in this study (see 4.3).

For instance, Mary was teaching English in kindergarten under very supportive conditions. Mary's main attribute was her creativity observed in varied activities in the lesson and the colourful and attractive materials she designed. Appendix G contains detailed examples of creative materials and lessons. Mary is considered one of the most creative participants in this study.

In the initial phase of this study, it seemed that creativity was a remarkable capacity that made autonomous teaching possible. However, the lack of control or the excessive time for activities made the purpose of lessons lost. It was the combination of creative teaching with teacher agency to monitor, conduct, and finish activities that resulted in what was called in this study an observable expression of TLA. The main characteristic of an observable expression of autonomy was the combination of creative teaching activity, a creative response to a sudden event, or improvised action with a suitable decision that made the action effective (see 4.3.1).

Not all of the expressions of TA were observed in the classroom. Participants just reflected on the role of the teacher under difficult circumstances when the setting conditions were restrictive, without teaching opportunities (see 4.4.6). Observable expressions of TA, as called in this study, are explained in the following section.

5.3.1 Observable expressions of TLA in terms of creativity

The reason to identify observable expressions of TLA was not to generalise or measure autonomy or creativity. The intention was to differentiate when novice teachers can successfully manage their teaching – recalling 'successful' as Rebolledo and Smith identify the participation and engagement of learners in the lesson – However, when the setting did not provide freedom for teaching, a reflective stance was the only achievement amongst participants in terms of autonomy (see 4.4.6.4).

In the World Economic Forum (2018), a claim that teachers can support creative development through pedagogical and curricular interventions was exposed. These interventions help learners develop their cognitive and creative potential. Similarly, participants in this study considered creative strategies that originated creative outputs from their learners, stimulating other abilities such as concentration, empathy, and collaboration (see 4.2.3). As Li (2020) posits, language teachers might be aware of their students' importance developing these capacities.

Following the thread, it was observed that teaching creatively commonly results in teaching for creativity, as Hulse (2015) reports in his study. Appendix L describes the cases of three participants teaching English at university with suitable conditions and technologies in the classrooms. They had an engaged and creative spirit for their lessons. However, aspects such as management of emotions, too much improvisation, and lack of mentoring impacted their TLA.

In recent literature, many researchers have identified creativity as a means of resistance from predetermined curricula that do not fit with the audience (Ollehead & Burns, 2015; Richards & Coterall, 2015; Coffey & Leung, 2015; Kurtz, 2011; Hulse, 2015). In this study, many participants

used a mandatory textbook, and sometimes they noticed that their students needed a closer and meaningful interaction with the foreign language (see 4.4.6.5). This study is not attempting to affirm that just creative teaching complementing the lessons is an expression of TLA. According to findings, in this case, creative teaching with agentive ways to manage the audiences and resolve constraints was classified as an autonomous observable expression (see Appendix N for detailed examples).

In summary, data regarding creativity overlaps in many senses in terms of aspects that support TLA. The aspects that were identified are illustrated in table 11 below. The column on the left differentiates the role of the teacher, the type of pedagogy they implemented, and the role of the setting in terms of support of a degree of autonomy. The column on the right summarises the observed aspects that contributed to what is called in this study observable expressions of TLA.

Table 11 Aspects that contributed to observable expressions of TLA, in terms of creativity and agency.

Creativity regarding:	Aspects that contribute to observed expressions of TLA
Role of the teacher	Motivated and motivating learners, willingness to plan meaningful and attractive lessons, engagement observed through the type of teaching practice. Managing creative teaching, resolving constraints creatively.
Pedagogies supporting autonomy in the setting	Activities supporting the empowerment of learners, reflection, imagination, flexible/divergent/creative thinking, variety of solutions, innovative teaching methods. Use of technologies to support imagination, use of authentic/meaningful materials
Impact of the setting	Conditions to provide enough time to work creatively with technologies, collaborate, create and use innovative materials, creating meaningful and contextualised pedagogies.

Each section of the table is discussed based on the data in this study, supported by the correspondent literature.

5.3.2   Role of creative teachers in TLA

The absence of mentoring and the role of the foreign language in the schools were key aspects that conducted participants to be autonomous at different degrees. As a general overview, seven of the participants, six females, and one male, had some previous teaching experience as counsellors at home or in small groups. The other six, four females, and two males said the practicum was their first actual 60 hours of teaching experience. For that reason, mentoring was important in their teaching guide and development. However, not all of them had that support in the classroom.

Participants tried to understand the needs of their learners (Reinders & Balcikanli, 2011). Thereby, creativity emerged as a capacity to create dynamic classes to motivate their learners and, in some cases, overcome teaching barriers in some settings, such as challenging schedules for the class or lack of conditions for teaching (see 4.4.6). Another factor was the personal situation of each participant. For instance, Lucy was not seen as autonomous teachers at first glance. However, her efforts were diminished by her personal situation that impacted on her TLA results (see 4.3.4).

Creativity is a capacity that teachers already have or can develop (Li, 2020; Batey 2012; Korthagen, 2004; Kilianska-Przybyb, 2012; Leher, 2012). Similarly, (Runco, 2008; Fasco, 2001), some participants in this study chose creative teaching methodologies to engage their learners and motivate them to learn a foreign language (see 4.3). In line with Richards and Cotteral (2015), participants in this study also demonstrated their willingness and motivation to look for innovation in their teaching regarding attractive and varied teaching strategies (see 4.2.11).

The use of creativity and autonomy was identified as a constant capacity to teach and resolve constraints in this study. Examples from most of the participants illustrate the relevance of this capacity as a personal attribution (see Appendix F for examples) planning creative lessons (see 4.3) or applying creative strategies to overcome diverse circumstances (see Appendix G) and attract the attention of the audience whether the teaching conditions were optimal or not (see 4.2.9).

As Kurtz (2011) concludes, when a teacher is not dominant, the result is a more productive lesson. Kurtz observes that dynamic activities with a flexible application are chosen, and learners are constantly collaborating and interacting in the class. In this sense, participants in this study could integrate their students into various creative activities during their lessons (see 4.3.1). In line with the literature (Jimenez Raya & Vieira, 2015), freedom for teaching gave participants an opportunity for autonomous teaching and LA support. Their creative strategies let learners collaborate and have certain freedom for the outputs (see 4.3).

West (1960, p.1) defines difficult circumstances as teaching more than 30 learners, 'congested on benches', in charge of a teacher whose language abilities are not always proficient. In primary school, English is not included in the formal curricula and this caused a lack of engagement amongst learners, especially in 6th grade (see 4.4.4.1). Students knew English was not part of their grades, and their efforts were moderated. Besides, the large number of students in the classroom was also a factor that hampered the application of creative teaching (see 4.4.6.1). As the foreign language did not have privileged schedules (see 4.4.6.2), Anne considered creative methodologies to attract her learners. These decisions were observed under difficult schedules when students were tired, hungry, or impatient (see 4.4.6.4).

In secondary school, three aspects that seemed to be complex for creative teaching were mainly found; large groups, mandatory and sometimes exclusive use of a textbook and the foreign language occupies in the schools. As Rebolledo et al. (2015) notice, the application of dynamic lessons in secondary schools can improve the teachers' motivation and confidence and, consequently, in their learners under difficult circumstances. Participants in this study had some freedom to include creative strategies such as grouping learners, pair work, group collaboration to develop the required exercises. Creative activities were also permitted, motivating the teenagers to participate (see 4.2.3).

In preparatory school, a large number of learners was a constant that affected the application and organization of creative activities. Participants looked for attractive role plays for their students, games, and competitions in the classroom (see Appendix H). However, their students' age of the high number of learners in the classroom were factors to consider for the success of the activities (see 4.4.6.3).

In this study, creativity was the main observed characteristic amongst participants teaching at university. The freedom participants had in the classroom to apply teaching methodologies and tools was a crucial factor in connecting creatively with their audience (see Appendix L). In line with the literature (Jimenez Raya & Vieira, 2015; Kumaravadivelu, 2012) creativity requires developing future teachers as a desired skill in the knowledge society. According to findings, successful results were observed in the integration of the students in the class activities. Besides, students' engagement in the different types of role plays, games, and competencies was a successful result (see 4.4.3.2). These actions were identified in the pedagogies participants tried to apply, as discussed in the following section.

5.3.3 Used pedagogies supporting creativity as well as autonomy in the classroom

According to Xerri (2016), creativity is considered a key component of learner-centred pedagogies that support the development of creative language experiences. Many of the participants observed their audience and planned their teaching according to their students' needs and interests, and this freedom implies autonomy for teaching (see 4.2.7). Participants in this study taught the foreign language and considered the learners' mother tongue to be a mediator in their language acquisition.

As Robinson (2011) explains, creativity helps to determine suitable work according to the setting. In this study, some participants included activities that were attractive and made students more engaged with their learning process. Participants' learners played and enjoyed with the activities while practising the language (see Appendix L for examples).

Regarding creative teaching, this study gathered findings from two very different scenarios. In the first scenario, and in line with other studies (Smith 2003a), participants had a certain level of freedom for pedagogies that they considered useful and meaningful for their audience. These scenarios were the right arena to develop many capacities. The level of motivation that some participants had and good teaching conditions defined the progress that they were able to achieve for themselves as teachers and for the foreign language learning of their students (see 4.2.11). Since a Vygotskian perspective, that dynamic, creative and constant interpersonal activity learners had, induced them to internalise bites of knowledge and develop more intrapersonal activity.

The second type of context in this study was a traditional classroom with mandatory administrative tasks and the exclusive use of a textbook. When participants were not able to guide their efforts based on the needs of their audience, their opportunities for autonomy were almost null (see Appendix J for examples). Their response was conformity with the ethos of the school and accomplishing the 60 hours of teaching required to pass the practicum module. Their observed development was self-awareness of their role as teachers under difficult circumstances, in this case, they were hampered by mentors who limited their possibilities to develop their own teaching approaches (see 4.4.2.2).

Nine of the thirteen participants developed creative teaching and included creative strategies in their lessons (see 4.3.1). As mentioned above, the initially observed attitude in these cases was characterised by motivation and empathy with their audience. This empathy had a positive result in the creative integration of every lesson designed especially for the audience (see 4.2.12). For instance, George, in kindergarten, commented about necessary reading and research to understand his audience and select appropriate activities according to their age. He also reflected after every lesson to reframe the following objective. As the literature highlights (Little, 2004; Freire, 1970), his critical thinking was decisive to modify his lessons through time according to the needs of the setting. Those internal aspects that were not observed directly in the classroom underpinned his TLA and positively impacted his teaching results.

The opposite case was with Liz in secondary school, where she was limited to following the exercises in the textbook. Liz could not develop any type of autonomy in her teaching to complement her lessons. The mentor scolding her in front of the learners had a strong negative impact on her identity, motivation, and agency. The lack of freedom combined with this negative attitude from the mentor (see 4.4.2.2) was a real barrier to the development of TA in Liz's case. Psychological wellness is also vital for the development of pedagogies related to autonomy and creativity.

In line with the literature (Little, 2004), some participants favour autonomous atmospheres in their lessons with a flexible attitude. Cheon et al. (2018) found that three empowering personal-professional resources resulted when supporting autonomous atmospheres in teaching. In Cheon's study, the results were greater psychological need satisfaction during teaching, greater teaching efficacy, and the adoption of relatively more intrinsic (and less extrinsic) instructional goals. In this study, participants recognised they felt more empowered as teachers and in their teaching (see 4.2.1). Some participants openly reflected on the importance of applying creativity in their teaching to improve the results. These developed capacities and others in the participants resulted in crucial evidence or observable expressions of developing TA (see

). The use of technologies for teaching was not always constant in state schools. However, in those settings equipped with technology, the results were positive and creative, as shown in the following section.

Creativity regarding:	Aspects that contribute to observed expressions of TLA
Role of the teacher	Motivated and motivating learners, willingness to plan meaningful and attractive lessons, engagement observed through the type of teaching practice. Managing creative teaching, resolving constraints creatively.
Pedagogies supporting autonomy in the setting	Activities supporting the empowerment of learners, reflection, imagination, flexible/divergent/creative thinking, variety of solutions, innovative teaching methods. Use of technologies to support imagination, use of authentic/meaningful materials
Impact of the setting	Conditions to provide enough time to work creatively with technologies, collaborate, create and use innovative materials, creating meaningful and contextualised pedagogies.

5.3.4 Creativity and the use of technologies the setting

Participants in this study took advantage of the resources in the setting if they were available, such as technologies. When the setting was provided with technologies, participants could develop engaging activities for their learners. Educational policies and curricula suggests the use of technologies in education in Mexico and many parts of the world. However, the findings showed a close up of the availability of technologies in the classrooms and confirming what Ramirez (2015) observes; technologies are not so common to find in state schools in Mexico. In some cases, technologies in this study were a key source of information to prepare creative lessons and were functional to be used in diverse educational settings (see 4.3.3).

In primary and secondary school, participants taught in classrooms without electric tools installed in the classrooms. Vicky and Mary reflected on the use of applications and websites to prepare their lessons and obtain creative ideas for their activities and materials. In these two cases, technologies were a key tool for the teachers than for their practice (see 4.3.3). In their cases, Mary and Vicky estimated the inconvenience of moving their classroom to use the computer room for the activities. The only practical implementation was portable gadgets such as their cell

phones and a tape recorder to include songs in their lessons. However, in both cases, the internet was a source of creative ideas to plan their lessons. They recognised the benefits of implementing activities that engaged their young learners during their short lessons. Adaptation using their cell phones was a good tool for managing their teaching.

George sometimes took the overhead projector to the classroom to work with videos and Power Point presentations with animations. Lucy could use the speakers for the listening exercises, and Anne never used technologies in the observed lessons because they were absented in the classroom. The conditions were not the best because besides small spaces and lack of equipment, the groups' large size was a factor that impacted their practice (see 4.4.6.4).

At the secondary level, the use of technologies was absent. In these contexts, the classrooms were not provided with any electronic tools or internet for teaching. In case participants wanted to use computers, they had to move to a different classroom (computing laboratory). They commented that moving from the room was time-consuming for the lesson, just for an activity (see 4.4.6.4). So, both participants did not consider the possibility of teaching using technologies (see appendix F for examples).

In preparatory school, both participants agreed that teenagers are more distracted with multimedia than with printed materials. The reality is that their classrooms had just old benches and an old desk. These conditions pushed them to be creative to teach without teaching tools and attract their learners' attention (see Appendix I for examples).

At the university level, creativity was primarily identified with the use of technologies during the lessons. Participants had to cover a mandatory textbook in the course (see 4.4.6.5). They looked for a way to complement and adapt their teaching with creative activities. Participants had the facility to use the platform that contains diverse types of materials from the book. Additional to this multimedia, they used the internet to complement the lessons suitably and creatively. Teaching conditions were appropriate for teaching a foreign language in this ELT programme (see Appendix J for examples). Creative lessons were observed using a video or documentary to illustrate the topics of the programme.

For instance, Ellen is a young teacher who used these available technologies in the classroom with practicality. Her small age gap with her learners made the class seem like an excellent example of scaffolding to learn the language and teach to teach. This young generation constantly used technologies in the classroom, both the ones installed in the classroom and their personal gadgets. The innovation of using technologies is now an everyday tool for young teachers and learners. However, the creative and suitable use makes the difference with just paying attention

to a gadget. In this university, the teaching conditions are supportive, which represented an advantage for the entire group. The impact of the setting on TLA is analysed in the section below.

5.4 How does the setting impact the development of teacher-learner autonomy?

The third research question in this study refers to the educational impact of the setting on TLA development. As the literature recognises (see 2.6), the setting has an essential impact on the possibilities of teaching autonomously. In this study, the perspective regarding autonomy illustrated the prevailed ethos in the school, supporting or hampering autonomous teaching.

In line with other studies (Lamb, 2008; Kumaravadivelu, 2012), the experience during the third cohort enlightened the importance of the setting. In phase three, two educational settings were observed; one was privileged and the second one a little bit neglected regarding the mentor's presence and the conditions for teaching a foreign language. Both extreme settings conducted me to deeper reflection when comparing the differences between conditions in the contexts. If the setting was so restrictive, participants just reflected on the importance of the role of the teacher under difficult circumstances (see 4.4.6.4). If the setting was supportive, participants could develop their capacities and skills (see 4.4.5).

Freedom in the setting for applying planned activities was a key factor to observe TLA autonomy evidence. For instance, Dany was a very engaged participant in a supportive context with freedom in his teaching. His best attribute was his creative teaching and his natural development of agency. He took advantage of the available technologies in the classroom to develop creative teaching. See Appendix I for detailed examples observed in Dany's lessons. All his development was supported by the freedom in the setting and the mentor's support for his lesson plans.

In some cases, as the literature identifies (Smith, 2019; Kucha, 2013) challenging circumstances were a reality in the settings. Educational settings impacted TLA results through the experiences with mentors, learners, and participants' conditions in their practicum. As participants were not experienced teachers, many of them omitted to mention in their reflections essential factors in the settings that hampered or supported their teaching development. For instance, Tom was teaching English in a state secondary school whose conditions were difficult. His best attribute was his creative teaching to engage his students even though they did not have proper teaching conditions. See Appendix H for more detailed descriptions of his development.

Once the teacher-learner had certain capacities or was willing to develop them, some characteristics in the setting sometimes represented another challenge for participants to cope with. Every mentor, every group of learners, the type of ethos and infrastructure in the schools supported or hampered the freedom to teach at the student teacher's discretion.

Most participants in this study had freedom for preparing their lessons and managing their teaching in the classroom. However, in some settings, especially when English was not in the formal curricula, they had to cope with diverse circumstances without mentors (see 4.4.2.1). Appendix J contains the cases of two participants teaching English in primary school, coping with mentor aspects that hampered their TA development.

During the practicum, the teaching-learning process is associated with professional development in Smith and Erdogan (2008) model. As participants were in the final phase of their initial formal education and without (much) teaching experience, the importance of taking their practicum as a chance to learn teaching was crucial for them.

Some settings provided the freedom to English teachers and participants for teaching, especially when English was in the curricula. However, participants' willingness seemed to be the triggering factor to achieve autonomous teaching under diverse paradigms or ethos. The ethos in the settings has an impact on autonomy, as analysed below.

5.4.1   The ethos of the setting and pedagogies

Permissive ethos had a positive result in the development of TLA (see 4.4.6). Every school had an impact on the possibility of applying creative teaching and contextualised pedagogies. Following McGrath's (2000) model, the levels of autonomy identified in the diverse settings were different.

In table 12 below, the levels participants achieved during their practicum are illustrated. In level one, not autonomy is recognised because participants worked to cover the textbook contents, as the setting demanded. Participants who covered the textbook and prepared extra activities based on their learners' needs are listed in the second column. The third column illustrates the participants' efforts. Level 3 is the highest level of autonomy because participants worked on their teaching development.

Table 12 The evolution of an evaluative stance in this study. Based on McGrath, 2000.

Level	Self-focused	Participants	Other focused
1	Achievement of imposed goal	Lucy, Tom, Liz, Dany, Laura, Christina, Ellen	Monitored by the language teacher in the group
2	Own role in managing students' learning	George, Mary, Vicky, Anne, Kate, Celia	The needs and wants of the students

3	Own professional development	George, Mary, Vicky, Anne, Kate, Celia, Lucy, Tom, Dany, Laura, Christina, Ellen	These participants developed their learning to teach process with varied mentors and setting support and showed autonomy in their teaching.

MacGrath (2000) and others (Lamb, 2008; Jimenez Raya, 2017) observe that there are constraints in the setting that can affect TLA development. He classified them into micro or institution internal decisions when the teacher has some influence on them. Macro, or decisions taken outside the institution where the teacher has no control, and the ground-rules, are expected to work with the syllabus, textbooks, and examinations.

These unwritten traditions that conform to the ethos in the school were also some constraints amongst participants in this study who wanted to implement dynamic language classes. Some mentors supported the idea and let participants apply a variety of teaching methods. Nevertheless, other mentors demanded the exclusive use of a textbook, focusing on preparing the exams to evaluate the semester. These instruments of control lessened their freedom to teach (see 4.4.6.5). In some cases, self-reflection and negotiation made possible autonomous actions.

When the circumstances were challenging such as large groups, poor classroom conditions, and lack of teaching tools, participants tried to implement a certain pedagogy considered all their learners, as Lucy expressed:

> *"The lack of conditions for teaching has an impact on the students because it is difficult to maintain their attention and as there are too many students in each group, it is impossible to pay personalised attention to all the kids".*

In this study, the type of pedagogy that some participants centred on their learners contributed to have smooth teaching and meaningful contact of the learners with the language. Vieira (2007, p.16) recognises that pedagogy *for* autonomy "entails a closer relationship between the teacher and the learner empowerment". On the other hand, Kuchah (2011), claims that pedagogies *of* autonomy can respond pragmatically to difficult circumstances. In a sense, some participants included pedagogies with a nuance of autonomy for their learners. Some participants e.g. George, Mary, Dany, Anne (see 4.2.1) mentioned their intention to empower their learners, creating learning opportunities in the classroom.

As Jimenez Raya (2017, p.15) posits, TA 'is not about being free from external constraints but about developing a professional sense of agency as a teacher, about the willingness and ability to find spaces for manoeuvre, navigate through constraints. It is about exploring possibilities, most often in adverse settings'. As English is not included in the curricula of primary schools, this was a determining factor for their teaching development. The lessons were programmed during other

activities such as lunchtime or other school events such as meetings, festivals rehearsals, or civic ceremonies. However, participants showed great efforts to have successful teaching under these circumstances.

Sometimes, the participants' development was internal because the teaching they wanted to apply was not allowed in the setting. Their reflections showed their awareness regarding the role of the teacher and the influence of circumstances or the practice of traditional ethos in the settings (see 4.4.6.4). Table 13 summarises the positive and negative aspects observed in the settings related to the possible development of TA.

Table 13 External factors that impacted teacher autonomy regarding the setting.

External factors related to the SETTING	
Positive	Negative
Supportive conditions (see4.4.5.1)	Demanding exclusive use of a textbook (see4.4.6.5)
Freedom for teaching (see4.4.5.1)	Large groups (see 4.4.6.1)
	Short and sporadic language lessons (see4.4.6.6)
	Lack of primary conditions for teaching (see 4.4.6.4)

Every school provided specific teaching conditions and the mentor's presence to support and scaffold the participants' teaching development. However, the conditions varied widely, as is shown in the following section.

5.4.2 The mentor supporting or hampering TLA

Regarding the setting, the presence or absence of a mentor who guided participants was relevant. The classroom mentor had an essential role in the TLA development, as observed in this study and in line with another TLA research in Mexico (Flores, 2019). A total absence of a mentor was observed in two schools from the eight different settings. The results in both cases were different.

In the first case, the lack of a mentor gave Anne total freedom in her primary school classes. Anne developed diverse teaching capacities in the classroom. She developed agency for managing to teach, especially regarding discipline and group control in her numerous groups. The fact of having large groups with an inconsistent lesson frequency represented a real challenge for her. Another observed situation was that many children had a total lack of foreign language background. This situation provided her with a mixed audience that was a real challenge in her sporadic lessons. The type of activities Anne used seemed that were not always contributing to the foreign language learning, more than to occupy the children during the lesson.

Chapter 5

As Johnson and Golombeck (2016) conclude, the mentors' presence helps novice practitioners understand their role and contextualize their teaching. In this case, the lack of a mentor in the classroom impacted the development of TLA in the case of Anne. Not English teachers were employed in this primary school so, not mentoring was available for her. The opportunities to teach English in all different grades Anne was assigned were inconstant. Sometimes, the time for the English lesson was taken for other activities. This situation made this research difficult because her groups were many, the schedules were not always respected, and Anne could not teach. On the other hand, Anne tried to apply varied strategies to attract the attention of her learners. However, her efforts were overwhelmed by the number of learners, and discipline was an issue that hindered the results. These findings suggested that difficult circumstances are a real barrier to TLA development in some cases.

The second case without a mentor or English teacher was in kindergarten and provided different data. George was able to recognise the specific characteristics of his young audience. He integrated them into various activities that let them succeed in their foreign language acquisition process. The kindergarten teachers participated in language activities, and their presence gave the activities a sense of integration. However, their support was limited to the organization of activities and discipline when it was necessary. The staff in this school did not include any English teacher. This situation let George organize his lessons with the guide of his practicum module supervisor. Despite his lack of teaching experience, he based his efforts on his audience. In this case, as the literature suggests (Jimenez Raya & Vieira, 2015), this freedom helped the teacher-learner to develop autonomous capacities to empower himself and his audience. The fact that George observed and researched the cognitive characteristics of his audience made the difference. They resulted in what seemed successful teaching experiences with the children (see Appendix F for his examples).

In Lucy's case at primary school, the English teacher (mentor) was present in each lesson. The teacher assigned to the group, and the mentor supported her with discipline and organization. Her assignment was exclusively centred on covering sections of the textbook assigned. The supervisor at the university guided Lucy. She made observations and suggestions in her lesson plans. Lucy was in charge of the entire lesson, and the mentor was not scaffolding her language teaching.

As Yaman and Alkaç (2010) posit, mentors need some requirements to scaffold teacher-learners during the practicum. Some of these factors are knowledge of pedagogical aspects, personal and professional qualities, classroom management skills, and self-efficacy. In this case, the main task that Lucy had was to cover the contents of the book. Given the number of children in the small

classroom, and the lack of teaching conditions, every class looked such a real challenge for a novice teacher (see Appendix J for examples).

In other cases, mentors did not comment participants' teaching, and more than freedom, teaching scaffolding was neglected. This situation was commonly observed at the secondary level. In Tom's case, his mentor supported him in all the activities he planned to apply. During our informal comments in the corridors, Tom expressed his satisfaction with the English teacher comments. She confessed that her language training consisted of one-month summer courses where she could not learn the language at a communicative level. The foreign languages didactics and pedagogies were not explained with enough time or practice in these summer courses. She recognised she felt so proud of Tom's work and ideas for teaching. After a class observation, she commented this to me, recognising Tom's good exercises and teaching methodologies considered in his lessons. This case is an example of moral support, the mentor could not contribute to Tom's teaching-learning process. This is an unfortunate reality for many language teachers in Mexico and other countries worldwide (Smaller, 2015).

Liz's case in secondary school was the most obvious where the mentor was the biggest barrier to autonomy. Initially, I observed in Liz many teaching advantages; her spoken English is smooth because she had been working abroad in summer camps. She was motivated to teach teenagers, and her perception was being an autonomous and creative teacher. However, her differences with the mentor were the main reasons for Liz to limit her efforts to answer the textbook.

Liz needed teaching support or scaffolding more than being frequently scolded by the mentor in front of the teenagers. The mentor attitude seemed that affected her motivation, her affective side, and her motivation. At the end of the practicum, she expressed she just wanted to finish the teaching hours and leave the school. Her teaching experience was not the best opportunity to develop any TA, apply any creativity or develop any agency. In her own words, she expressed her disappointment in the excerpt below:

Excerpt 1. Liz final reflections at the end of her practicum

> *I just want to finish my practicum because the attitudes of the teachers haven't been so friendly and supportive with me. I feel frustration with this bad experience I had with the students and with the teachers. In conclusion, I have now a negative and strong feeling regarding my practicum.*

The exclusive use of the textbook and the mentor's attitude were factors that made Liz feel uncomfortable. As a consequence, she was not motivated to commit to her learners and teaching. Mentors should consider the importance of supporting novice teachers, enhancing their

attributes as teachers and providing objective feedback regarding teaching aspects. Correcting Liz in front of the students made her feel insecure and with less authority in the classroom.

Appendix K illustrates the cases developed in preparatory schools, Kate and Celia, who had freedom for teaching and were responsible teachers managing their autonomy for large groups of teenagers. The mentor was absented in most of the observed lessons, so Kate and Celia were totally in charge of the group. Their dynamic lessons resulted in observed interaction and participation during their lessons.

For instance, Kate was one participant who developed TLA in the sense of the observed motivation. She developed her capacity to manage a group with 36 teenagers, 18 years old in average in the classroom. In her case, dynamic lessons were observed with multiple activities for practising the contents of the programme. The English teacher in charge of that group or mentor had constant administrative activities that required his presence at the time of the class. Kate was teaching alone with the group and planning her lessons, monitored in the university by her supervisor of the module.

Mentoring was a crucial development factor for participants teaching at university in this study. The philosophy of autonomy is important in this university, at least in its official documents. In general, mentors at university were more supportive because they are teacher educators. The teacher has academic freedom, select suitable teaching methods for their classes (BUAP, 2009).

In the case of Dany, his mentor reviewed his lesson plans, advised him after his lessons and suggested complementary activities for the class. In line with the literature this was an illustrative case of teaching scaffolding (see 4.4.1.1). The mandatory use of the book is a requirement in this university. Dany used his freedom to look for materials to illustrate every theme. His creative activities usually included videos, PowerPoint presentations, role plays, collaboration, and innovative exercises (see 4.3.3). Dany took advantage of that support and developed his teaching capacities in his lessons. From the very beginning, his development of agency was observed. The mentor introduced him as a teacher to the group. She also showed constant support to him during his lessons (see 4.4.1.1).

In Laura's case, she was an autonomous novice teacher whose determination was not always supported by her mentor, who was less demanding with their students. They worked together, but Laura seemed more interested in her learners' practice of the language. She provided them with extra materials, activities, games, and independent work. In line with the literature (Little, 1991; Smith, 2003; Smith and Erdogan, 2008), autonomy was observed through her suitable support in the classroom, promotion of critical thinking amongst her learners, and extra work as

homework to illustrate the topics. In the corridors, her mentor told me that Laura was so stressed. She had big expectations from her learners. Her mentor has almost 15 years of teaching experience. The lack of the mentor's enthusiasm for teaching was observed compared with Laura's enthusiasm. It seems that this is a clear example of the de-skilling process Smaller (2015) mentions, referring to teachers whose enthusiasm has decreased and reduced to follow the curricula, illustrating de-professionalization and conformism.

In Christina's case, the constant need to improvise her lessons because of the absence of the mentor helped her develop teaching capacities. Her motivation to support her audience was enough to overcome these circumstances to manage the class alone. The presence of a mentor is desirable (Flores, 2019). However, many participants, as Christina, demonstrated they were able to develop useful capacities autonomously to manage their teaching and resolving constraints (see Appendix L).

The only case where the mentor was a real barrier for this study was with Ellen's mentor. His attitude was negative when I asked to observe lessons, apply interviews, or talk about Ellen's practicum experience. Unfortunately, in this case, I had no access to enough class observations. The mentor was constantly scolding my participant due to her enthusiasm to participate in this study. This mentor represented a real limitation in this case; his negative and selfish attitude avoided more profound research of an enthusiastic participant who seemed very engaged with her students.

In line with Flores (2019), mentoring has a relevant impact on the teacher-learners' possibilities to develop TA. One important aspect to mention was the support of engaged supervisors that some participants had in their practicum module. Some supervisors guided them on a critical journey. They did not observe their lessons; however, they supervised the lesson plans, inviting the participants to reflect and investigate their proposed activities. When the supervisor demanded reflective proposals for the lesson plans, the reflective stance of the participant was noticed. Some participants commented that initially, they proposed a game for the class, but the supervisor asked the purpose or the type of teaching method behind it. In other cases, the supervisors were not so engaged, and they did not make the participant reflect on the purpose of the proposed activities.

5.5   Summary of the chapter

In this chapter, data from the reflections of participants and the researcher diary were discussed and linked with the literature. In this section, a discussion organised by theme in order to answer the research questions of this study was developed. The development of capacities such as

creativity and agency was significant in both difficult and supportive contexts, considering the educational setting impact. The findings were linked with the corresponding literature, and particularities from each setting were discussed. The overlaps in the findings between t TLA and creativity were supported by theoretical aspects that emphasised the importance of willingness and engagement to be autonomous teachers.

Autonomy in education is vital for empowering teachers and learners beyond prescriptive methodologies; a major break from educational tradition. As Smith (2019) recognises, bottom-up alternatives which recognize, build on, and support the teachers' expertise and self-esteem are currently necessary. Sayer, (2009) has criticised Mexico for its ELT programmes in public education. However, this study as in other cases (Rodrigues, Sanchez, Kuchah, 2018) has shown that there are engaged teacher-learners with vital characteristics who are willing to develop their own TA in service of their learners. It is also shown that the learners who are not engaged will respond to teachers who exhibit creativity and empathy and this can bring hope for future of ELT in Mexico and other countries.

The participants in this study constantly analysed their teaching; thus, reflection regarding their practices and teaching improvement is vital in TLA. Another benefit was that this reflective practice was based on their learners' needs. The participants were able to select suitable teaching methods for their students and reflect on their results. As Benson (2013) claims, approaches to autonomy in the classroom are opportunist in the sense that each teacher is allowed to or can do certain actions under specific circumstances in each setting.

As a starting point for autonomy, data showed that willingness for managing teaching with relevant and contextualised pedagogies for autonomy was important. Empathy for their learners and personal teaching motivation in participants made the difference in the observed teaching (see 4.2.10). The commitment participants developed with their learners, and their creative teaching made the difference.

One observed capacity was creativity, in the way to manage to teach and resolve constraints. Touches of agency were observed during the lessons where creative activities had productive results and attracted their learners' attention. In this study, the way to resolve constraints combining agency and creativity defined the character of observable expressions of TA.

Some participants projected a teacher identity with control of their teaching. Sometimes, the lack of support from their mentors made them adapt their teaching to the needs in the setting. As Smith (2019) posits, applying a bottom-up or context-sensitive approach is important to adapt

teaching to each setting. Some participants had certain freedom for teaching. However, autonomous teaching was directly proportional to the motivation of participants.

Overall, a gradual change in most of the teaching practices of participants was observed in this study. They reflected and had more control when managing their teaching in their practicum. As Johnson (2009b) states, improvement in thinking is scaffold by others, supervisors, mentors and certain reflective input from my queries for this study. So, constant feedback and reflections participants had resulting in individual knowledge that positively impacted the setting. Some participants focused more on their learners than just their teaching. Managing both the freedom they had in the classroom and sudden constraints were situations that conduced them to develop autonomy. Creativity was constantly identified as a capacity used strategically in teaching development, especially under difficult circumstances.

In two cases, the setting was the most significant barrier to develop expressions of autonomy. One common aspect that disappointed or hindered these participants to be autonomous was the restrictive ethos of the setting, as in the cases of Liz and Lucy. Having a textbook as a priority in the course was a factor that reduced the possibilities of participants having any freedom to implement attractive or contextualised teaching methodologies. Besides, their mentors' lack of support represented a significant obstacle. When the mentor's attitude was negative, the participants' efforts were hampered. A diligent work to cover the contents of the course was observed in both cases. However, these factors diminished their willingness to provide students with extra materials or attractive teaching methodologies in both cases.

In Anne's case, the lack of support and guide of her classroom efforts resulted in total freedom for teaching. However, freedom for teaching is not always equivalent to have TA, especially when the efforts and outcomes are not in a structured direction. Her students looked engaged in some activities, but their limited language background, the number of students in the classroom, the type of activities that were more structure-oriented, and the lack of consistent schedules for the English lesson were obstacles to develop a smooth learning process. As a result, a random language experience was obtained. In other cases, the core ingredients that articulated the development of TLA were:

-their teaching capacities

-teaching knowledge to achieve the aim of the lessons

-attitudes that participants demonstrated when managing their teaching and resolving constraints.
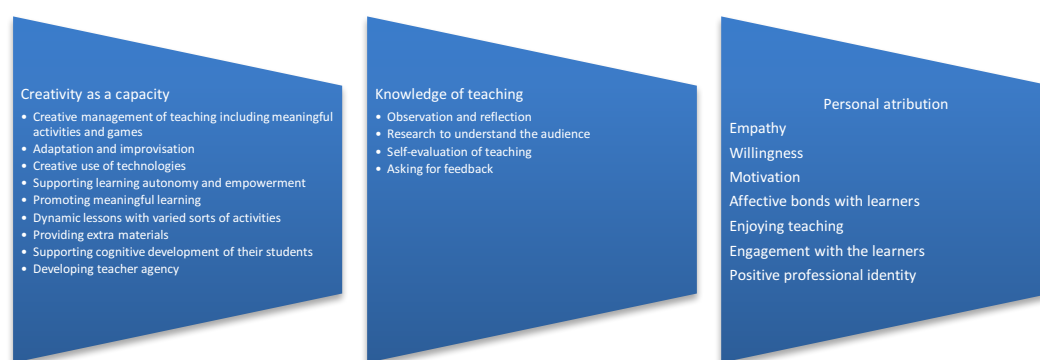
Participants showed empathy with their students as a commonality, especially those who were constantly motivated with their teaching. George, Mary, Vicky, Tom, Dany, and Laura, who were considered the participants who developed more autonomous behaviours and agency, were characterised by their empathy. They looked engaged in their lessons, with a characteristic willingness during her activities in the classroom. A humanistic stance let them contextualise their efforts in a way their students seemed engaged during the lessons.

In conclusion, it seems that the development of TLA is strongly influenced by the student teachers' own determination to teach and their commitment to their audience. As Dikilitaş and Comoglu (2020) claim, teacher education is vital to provide student teachers with knowledge and teaching abilities. What is more, as Manzano (2018) suggests, inquiry-oriented teacher education is the most potent approach to the promotion of TA. In this study, data showed that autonomous principles acquired during their teaching education guided participants to observe their audience (see 4.2.7), reflect on the teaching that resulted effective for the specific needs in the classroom (see 4.2.8).

These internal initiatives made the difference under good or difficult conditions to cope with diverse teaching challenges. Nevertheless, some participants had that determination to teaching based on the audience, but there were no suitable conditions or support in the setting. It was confirmed that TA is not an isolated concept. As Benson (2013) identifies, a teacher interdependence with the audience, being the mediator between external factors and the learners, increases the challenges to cope with the day-to-day work. Therefore, external aspects that influence TLA might not limit the teacher's efforts to combine the expected duties with a situated pedagogy for autonomy. Socio-cultural factors are relevant to be considered in every setting.

The summary of these findings is illustrated in Figure 13. According to Smith and Erdogan's (2008) definition of TLA, it is arranged into the capacities, knowledge and attitudes of the participants.

Figure 13 Teacher-learner internal autonomous components observed: capacities, knowledge and positive attitudes.

Creativity as a capacity
- Creative management of teaching including meaningful activities and games
- Adaptation and improvisation
- Creative use of technologies
- Supporting learning autonomy and empowerment
- Promoting meaningful learning
- Dynamic lessons with varied sorts of activities
- Providing extra materials
- Supporting cognitive development of their students
- Developing teacher agency

Knowledge of teaching
- Observation and reflection
- Research to understand the audience
- Self-evaluation of teaching
- Asking for feedback

Personal atribution
Empathy
Willingness
Motivation
Affective bonds with learners
Enjoying teaching
Engagement with the learners
Positive professional identity

The participants noticed their audience's engagement with the foreign language (see 4.4.3.2) but above all, the influence of the affective bonds between teachers and learners. They constantly mentioned that they enjoy teaching and their learners are their inspiration to improve as teachers (see 4.2.2). It seems that what triggers autonomous teaching is this internal motivation that underpins all the efforts that teaching requires (see 4.2.11).

Some participants in this study showed abilities to overcome constraints such as teaching large groups of very young learners during lunchtime or in the last hour of the day. These factors, far from hampering their teaching development, were a challenge for the participants who were able to manage their teacher development (see 4.4.6). It is important to bear in mind that the participants have no prior teaching experience and their motivation and willingness were key factors in their efforts. Achieving meaningful teaching, researching about the audience, reflecting on the learning advances observed in the classroom, creative and attractive lessons for young learners, and empathy were capacities listed in chapter four that resulted in lessons with suitable agency at the end of the participants' practicum.

Contributions regarding the internal capacities of teachers were found in this study. On the one hand, the findings expressed the importance of certain teaching capacities, knowledge and attitudes that the participants developed during their practicum. The impact of early teaching education on student teachers in their initial teaching was essential. There is a need to focus on adapting efforts such as flexibility, observation, and reflection in real settings.

Basri (2020), Micallef (2016), and others (Smith, 2003; Lamb, 2008; Kennedy & Pinter, 2011) observe through their empirical research that LA and TA are interrelated and interdependent terms. This study also found that the participants who supported LA benefited from this when engaging their students (see 4.2.1). Some participants reflected on the empowerment that autonomy brought to both teachers and learners.

The relevance of the external factors that support or hamper autonomy in participants is illustrated in table 14. In some cases, difficult circumstances were identified, representing severe

challenges for the participants and their possibility to become autonomous teachers. Positive and negative aspects regarding mentoring, students and the settings are presented in this table.

Table 14 Positive and negative external factors that impact TLA.

External factors that impacted TLA			
	Mentoring	Related to the learners	Related to the class and setting
Positive	*Mentor scaffolding *Supporting participants	*Scaffolding among learners *Enjoying learning *Learning with commitment	*Supportive conditions *Freedom for teaching
Negative	*Random mentoring * No mentoring at all *Mentor hampering participants' actions or motivation	*Discipline as a constraint *Lack of learners' engagement	*Large groups *Hard schedule for the class *Discipline issues *Lack of teaching conditions *Short and sporadic lessons *Exclusive use of a textbook *Lack of freedom for teaching

5.5.1 Proposed working definition of TLA

After data analysis and discussion, the working definition for TLA was re shaped, including themes and sub-themes that emerged in this study.

Based on the findings of this research, the working definition was expanded considering that TLA can be said to be identified through an analysis of internal capacities such as creativity and agency, knowledge for teaching, and positive attitudes to managing to teach and resolving constraints and is to be seen in interdependence with external factors such as characteristics of the learners, the mentors, and most importantly the educational setting. So, TLA is the expression of internal capacities, knowledge, and attitudes, facilitated by agency and willingness. A range of freedom is associated with their capacity to manage teaching from difficult settings to supportive settings.

This working definition is illustrated in figure 14, which summarises these dimensions, providing examples of participants' creative strategies with the agency observed in this study.

Figure 14 Representation of the definition of TLA in this study
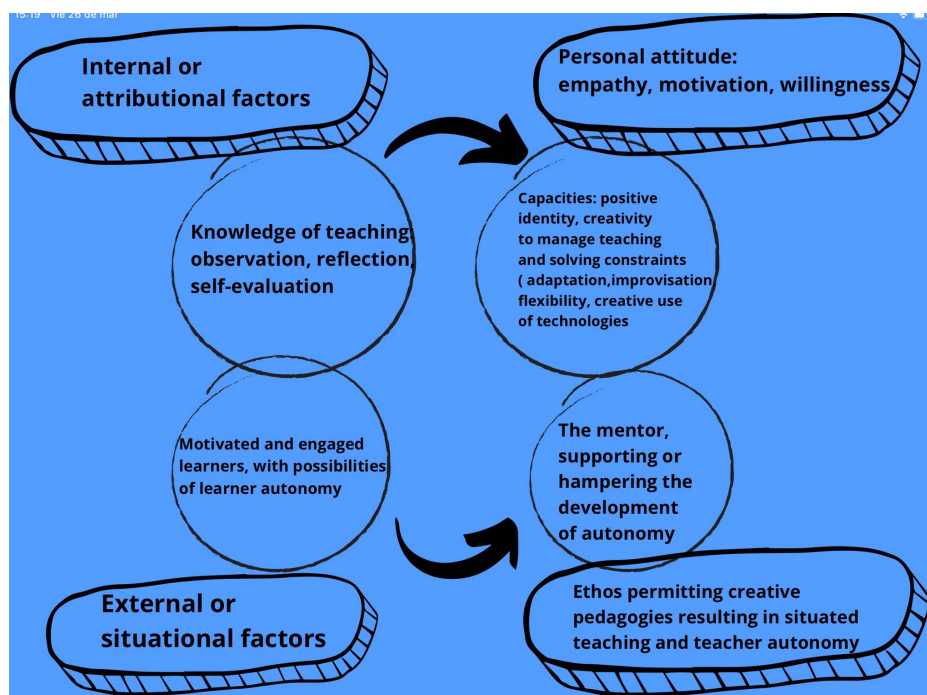
As Jimenez Raya (2017, p.27) and others (Manzano, 2018) recognise, teacher education prepares student teachers to overcome 'internal resistance, external constraints and, most important of all, willing to explore the space of possibility in their teaching'. SLTE provides the initial stock of strategies and teaching methodologies that teacher-learners can apply. A capacity to be reflective about their teaching and suitable agency when applying their teaching methodologies in the classroom were capacities some participants developed in this study. These dimensions were observed through capacities that could be developed into other cognitive skills depending on their willingness and level of engagement.

As Flores (2019) posits, mentors have an important role in successful teaching-learner autonomy because they support or hamper the participants' teaching development. Finally, the pedagogies the autonomous teacher-learners implemented and developed focused on their audience's needs and consider classroom conditions.

5.5.2 Summary of findings

This section summarises the findings that were discussed in the previous chapter. The combination of participants' internal teaching capacities and a certain freedom for teaching in the settings made the difference regarding autonomy. In this study, a number of participants based their efforts on the needs and interests of their learners. They were able to adapt their teaching to the conditions and possibilities of the setting (see 4.4.5). Some of the participants managed both to cover the contents in the course and provide their students with extra materials and

practice (see 4.2.4). This means that some participants could achieve teaching contextualization depending on the freedom of the setting.

Table 15 shows a general representation of these findings in this study and the interdependence of TA, creativity, and the impact of the setting. One common aspect amongst participants in this study was their disposition and engagement to support LA through the freedom they gave their students in class. This fact empowers both the teachers and their students, as participants in this study recognised (see 4.2.1). Not all participants had ideal teaching conditions in their classrooms; however, their attitude was essential to overcome these inconveniences.

Table 15 Interdependence of TLA, creativity, and the impact of the setting observed in this study.

Condition: Freedom and supportive conditions in the setting		
Internal capacities of the teacher	Attitudinal: empathy, willingness, motivation	Professional: teacher autonomy, agency, creativity and professional identity
Teaching strategies used	Creative activities and materials. Critical thinking to adapt their lessons to the conditions in the setting	Providing their students with freedom when creating outputs, supporting critical thinking
Result: Empowerment of teachers and learners, supporting learning autonomy		

In the following chapter, the contributions, implications and limitations of the study are presented.

Chapter 6   Contributions and limitations

6.1   Introduction

The first section of this chapter elaborates on the contributions of this study to the field of autonomy in ELT, especially in the field of TLA, creativity and the impact of the setting. The second section lists the limitations of the study, some suggestions for future research and includes personal lessons learned regarding this research experience.

6.2   Contributions and implications of this research

There are several important areas where this study makes an original contribution. These include the nature and development of TLA in student teachers and data suggest that creativity is a capacity that overlaps in definition with TLA and can be associated with the concept of autonomy as a construct. This is in the sense that creative participants were able to implement useful strategies to manage teaching and solve constraints in the classroom. The section corresponding to the impact of the educational setting also sheds new light on relevant factors that impact on TLA.

6.2.1   Nature and development of TLA

Firstly, this study contributes to filling the gap in our understanding of the nature of TLA (see 1.5 and 4.3). In terms of the characteristics of TLA, willingness and motivation to manage teaching based on their learners' needs were identified as a basic principle in this study. The data confirmed these common aspects regarding TLA amongst the thirteen teacher-learners. From a socio-constructivist view (Johnson & Golombek, 2016), participants were constructing their teacher agency during their teaching semester, empowering themselves to manage their cultural, linguistic, pedagogical, and interactional resources to support productive students' learning (see 4.2).

This dual dimension of TLA considered in this study, viewing the participants as teachers and as teacher-learners, is identified because these student teachers took on the responsibilities of language teachers inside the classroom, managing their lessons and resolving constraints during their classes. Once the participants had finished their classes, they were able to analyse and reflect on their classroom actions. It is in this sense that student teachers are considered to be teacher-learners.

Student teachers' agency helps construct an environment that provides learners a certain level of autonomy. In line with Kuchah (2011), some participants observed and included their learners' interests to plan the lessons, and they built rapport with them. Some participants provided their students with some freedom in the class; as a result, their students appeared to be more engaged and empowered. This fills the existing gap regarding the promotion of learning autonomy even in underprivileged educational contexts (J. Benson, 2019). In line with Jimenez Raya and Vieira (2015), it was concluded that some of them were able to use their freedom for teaching (TA) and provide their learners with spaces for action or learner autonomy (LA) (see 4.4.5.1 and 4.2.1).

This thesis can also prove to be an inspiration for teachers to develop autonomy working under both privileged circumstances or situations in disadvantage. In this study, some teacher-learners became aware of their teaching potential through autonomy. They visualised autonomy as a valuable way to empower themselves and support their self-confidence as teachers. The findings show participants' enthusiastic learners, participating and collaborating in the activities (see 4.4.3.1).

In this study, participants' teaching development was directly related to their capacity to observe the students and reflect on the specific characteristics of the educational setting. If they felt motivated, their reflective process suggested necessary teaching adjustments for the specific audience. Based on their students' interests and likes, some participants took advantage of their teaching possibilities in the classroom. Therefore, these actions were related to the level of engagement that the participants showed with their students.

The development of TLA is analysed through a related construct, creativity, during the teaching practice. Participants' attributes illustrate the first identified dimension of TLA (Benson, 2017), which is personal capacities. In this study, capacities such as creativity, dynamism in planning classes and using attractive materials, creative use of technologies (when available), adaptation, and improvisation were found to be characteristics of some teacher-learners and therefore were identified as important characteristics of TLA. Regarding the teaching-learning process, ongoing observation and research about their learners, constant reflection, and self-evaluation of their own practice support their TLA development. Their willingness, motivation, and empathy were attributes that further characterised autonomous teacher-learners. Teacher educators could also consider the benefits of adopting TA principles in their practices. As Benson (2010) recognises, teachers usually teach as they were taught. Teacher educators are teaching models for their learners: future teachers who could be aware of the importance of developing contextualised teaching capacities. The findings in this study suggest that teacher educators should empower themselves and student teachers with reflective context-situated and learner-centred practices.

6.2.2 Creative and autonomous teacher-learners

A second and no less important contribution is that the originality of this study is based on the relationship identified between the parallel development of TLA and creativity. This combination seems not to have been directly reported in previous ELT literature. Creative ways of managing teaching and creative solutions to cope with diverse circumstances at different levels were aspects that seemed to result in successful teaching practices. Participants in this study perceived themselves as autonomous and creative teachers since the participants selection phase. They showed and developed diverse internal teaching capacities during the practicum. Autonomy in the sense of having willingness to apply contextualised teaching and creativity to engage their students during each lesson.

Teaching autonomously was related to teaching creatively in the data analysis section. The relationship or combination of autonomous principles with creativity represents an opportunity to consider for teacher-learners, language teachers, teacher trainers, and teacher educators. Internal capacities such as creativity and agency seem to trigger expressions of TLA (see 4.2.6). These aspects were observed through the type of creative materials participants used or adapted for their lessons. Improvisation and adaptation were observed when unexpected circumstances appeared in the classroom.

Creative student teachers use dynamic and innovative teaching methods where their students can participate and interact actively. Activities supporting the empowerment of learners are also applied by creative and autonomous student teachers. Constant reflection about this type of teaching was provoked by my questions, which finally had an impact on the participants' development and results. Their imagination and divergent thinking are triggered with constant reflection providing a variety of activities and solutions to cope with sudden situations in the classroom.

According to the findings in this study, there are three key factors which support creativity and autonomy: the teacher, the pedagogies that consider the learners at the core of the teaching process, and the setting, supporting a type of teaching with a degree of freedom. Clear evidence of this relationship is inconclusive, given the relatively small size of the study. However, creative teaching emerged as potentially the most important capacity developed by these participants to manage their teaching and resolve constraints under both supportive and difficult circumstances.

The term creativity is directly related to agency during class observations due to the need to properly guide and control creative activities in the lessons. Reflective actions (agency) help start,

monitor, and conclude activities that engage the students. Otherwise, the application of creative strategies without control can result in entertainment without a pedagogical aim.

Managing teaching with creativity was a characteristic constantly observed in this study. Engaged student teachers plan meaningful and attractive lessons to motivate learners, showing their constant willingness to support their students. Their engagement is observed through the type of teaching practices applied. Many participants also developed a capacity to resolve constraints creatively, especially in kindergarten, where young learners are so spontaneous. In the cases of Mary and Vicky, their mentors monitored them and accompanied their teaching practices. They provided a type of teacher scaffolding when managing the group and resolved constraints.

Teacher educators should consider the opportunity to support student teachers with learning spaces for creative and autonomous outputs. Innovative and engaging actions can represent an initial point to develop the teacher-learners' potential. As Little (2005) claims, teacher-learners with autonomous opportunities in their learning process are more likely to apply these strategies when they teach.

6.2.3 The impact of reflective practices and professional development

Thirdly, this study provides a significant opportunity to advance the understanding of TA development at different levels.

For instance, it seems that student teachers who developed a certain autonomy in this study were constantly reflecting on their teaching. As a result of constant observation and reflection when student teachers consider their students' needs and likes, their classes seem successful. Some participants also supported their students' learner autonomy, permitting them to take minor decisions in the class, and provided extra materials for understanding complex topics or language grammar rules and a certain freedom to participate in the lessons. These actions empowered their learners through the course.

The reflective practice allows student teachers to self-evaluate their own teaching efforts and encourage their students to learn. Several participants in this study were constantly asking for feedback from the researcher, looking for suggestions for implementing diverse teaching strategies, activities, and materials for their classes. However, just two participants openly recognised the importance of continuous professional development (learning how to teach) and their lack of teaching experience. It seems that their priority was learning to teach in real scenarios. The analysis of data in this study suggests that student teachers do not necessarily

value professional development. However, it is essential to emphasise the benefits of continuous professional development during formal education.

Teacher educators consider it important to support reflection among future teachers. It seems that reflection and reflective practices are essential for the development of an autonomous teacher. Reflective practice is also useful to develop a self-evaluative attitude based on observations and the audience's setting and specific characteristics. Educating teacher-learners is a process that provide feedback constantly and supportive attention by teacher trainers. The specific number of teacher-learners in a group in this researched setting, around thirty, could be the main limitation for educators to promote reflective lessons. However, teacher educators in this setting should consider monitoring the collaborative participation of student teachers in reflective exercises to make them more responsible and autonomous learners. This strategy can be adopted in many other ELT settings.

6.2.4   Use of technologies

The effectiveness of meaningful and creative use of technologies during the lessons is the fourth contribution of this study. Creative teaching using electronic tools provides opportunities for teachers to motivate and attract the learners' attention in their language acquisition process. When the context did not provide participants with any technology for teaching, some participants took their personal gadgets such as cell phones, laptops, and speakers to enrich their lessons. In George's case, he asked the school for an overhead projector to implement interactive and attractive activities for the young learners. Another important use of technologies is for preparing lessons, especially at kindergarten level. At this educational level, creative ideas are applied when creating colourful materials and attractive activities.

In primary schools, the classrooms were not provided with any technological teaching tools, and neither were they in secondary schools. However, the participants in these levels applied creative activities when it was possible to attract their students' attention. For instance, Anne asked the students to investigate vocabulary or grammar rules. The children seemed to be motivated by these tasks, asking for the opportunity to take their gadgets to the class, something that was forbidden in the school.

At university level, all the classrooms were equipped with a computer with internet connection. Technologies considered as teaching tools let student teachers apply interactive lessons. The use of electronic dictionaries, videos in YouTube related to the course content, grammar exercises, and extra examples, were some of the observed uses of technologies. Power Point presentations

were visual tools were used in their classes. All these teaching strategies led to positive attitudes from the learners.

At university level, the use of authentic and meaningful materials was an effective participants' resource to engage students during the language lessons. The use of technologies supports imagination among learners. For this reason, it is especially related to creative teaching and motivating learners. These internal characteristics show that under diverse circumstances, engaged autonomous teachers can manage their teaching in different settings. Those conditions in the classroom were supportive in the sense of the possibility to teach with technologies, collaboration, creating and using innovative materials. The result was the application of meaningful and contextualised pedagogies.

The participants developed diverse strategies, abilities ad capacities, that were taught since their formal education, as reflected in the following section.

6.2.5 SLTE

The fifth contribution of this study refers to the consideration of autonomy in SLTE. As Manzano (2018) claims, autonomy appears to be a significant aim in language education. However, not all BA settings promote real autonomous opportunities for future language teachers. As Little (1995) claims, when teacher-learners can be autonomous as learners, it is more likely that they will apply autonomy as teachers. Some participant in this study demonstrated their capacities for managing their teaching based on students' interests and needs.

Benson (2010) posits that teacher education also appears to be most effective when integrated with practice, a view that is explicit in approaches such as action research, reflective practice and exploratory practice. This BA programme include pedagogies for autonomy to support student teachers to develop the capacity to observe, reflect and contextualise their pedagogies. This study offers some relevant insights into participants' teaching success when applying TLA and creativity even in challenging circumstances.

In some cases, the mentors assigned in the schools had an important role in this development, as explained in the following section.

6.2.6 Supportive mentoring

The impact of mentors on TLA was considered as part of the factors found in each setting. Participants' teaching was positively and negatively affected depending on their mentors and their autonomous capacity to direct their teaching according to their students' needs and

characteristics. As Flores (2019) observes, mentors are a key factor supporting or hampering teacher-learners' development. When mentors monitored participants' teaching in this study, providing feedback, this was positive for both participants and their learners. Some participants stated they had learned a lot because of the mentors' support in the classroom that functioned as a type of teaching scaffolding.

When mentors were not supportive, internal capacities defined the achieved development of many participants during their practicum. Indifference was an attitude that some mentors showed with the participants, especially in the preparatory school observed. This mentor was absent during the English class and as a result, no teaching feedback was provided. However, the participants teaching under these conditions developed a sense of autonomy, observing the teenagers' needs and providing them with extra language practice to learn the topics.

The participants' psychological wellness was affected when the mentor adopted a negative stance with teacher-learners. Teacher-learners are defining their identity and confidence. They are expecting good results with their students and mentors. In the cases observed in this study in secondary school, both participants had a mentor, one supportive and the another not supportive. The difference was total because with the supportive one, Tom developed a creative teaching practice that changed his interaction with his students. In the case of Liz, her psychological wellness was seriously affected to the point of crying when recalling her mentor's treatment of her. I was surprised as a researcher to observe how the mentor's negative attitude could cause such damage in an initially motivated student teacher.

The participants' agency made a difference in their teaching-learning process when applying contextualised and reflective pedagogies that considered their students. Some participants achieved awareness regarding the role of the teacher. This awareness can be the initial point of inspiring teacher-learners to improve their teaching practice. An autonomous spirit could maintain their motivation and willingness when teaching. The impact of the diverse settings visited is analysed in the following section.

6.2.7 The impact of the setting

Challenging circumstances were identified throughout this study. In the eight research settings visited, the most common conditions found were large classes, lack of teaching tools, and challenging schedules for the language classes. Many primary schools did not have an English teacher on the staff. For that reason, many participants did not have mentoring during their lessons. Observing eight different settings represented an opportunity to analyse participants' autonomous spirit under diverse circumstances. The most privileged and supportive scenarios

were found at university level. This educational setting provides teaching conditions such as technologies in the classroom, internet connection, freedom for teaching, and mentoring. The participants who taught in this university had many available teaching tools that were used properly. Their lessons were dynamic and the relationship with their students was engaged. Some were more creative than others but having good teaching conditions helped in general to achieve their aims within their own teaching style.

The pitfalls are varied in the different educational levels where the participants were observed (see 4.4.6). Most of the participants in this study coped with some struggle in the classroom that conducted them to apply a number of strategies to have a smooth teaching (see 4.4.6). Mediation has core differences but also commonalities regarding interactions in the classrooms. The development of autonomous teacher-learners and a high degree of freedom were characteristics found in supportive settings.

The kindergartens were spaces where creativity was very appreciated and effective with the young learners. The participants had teaching freedom so they developed different capacities regarding group control, the application of dynamic and creative lessons, and empathy. These were key elements in their results. George, Ale, and Mary were representative examples of teachers who, in both privileged and challenging scenarios, had the capacity to connect with their young learners and motivate them in their lessons. Their creativity varied, but their willingness was clear. Willingness was a characteristic of this group of teacher-learners who achieved their teaching goals.

Basic education (primary and secondary schools) represented a real challenge for most of the participants. The lack of teaching conditions, the large number of students in the classroom, and the absence of a mentor, represented factors that had an impact on their teaching results. For some of them these challenging situations made them develop teaching capacities. In conclusion, the educational settings represent a factor that finally defines the possibilities to develop autonomous teaching and creativity.

All these characteristics were present in lessons that seemed to have an autonomous spirit. These capacities could be considered not just by teacher-learners but also by teacher trainers, observing the impact on the outputs. Theoretically, this relationship should underpin a deeper reflection regarding the interdependence between diverse capacities that can impact on teaching.

Teacher educators should promote reflection, self-evaluation, and awareness amongst student teachers regarding the impact of autonomous actions. Opportunities for autonomy could be useful for teacher-learners who could apply autonomy with their future students. As Little (1995)

concludes, teacher-learners who has had autonomy can promote autonomy in their future classes.

The following section refers to the limitations and suggestions for future research.

6.3   Limitations of the study, suggestions for future research and lessons learned

The first limitation of this multiple case study was the number of observed classes per participant. A semester is a short period to see teaching development in a participant. The initial research design considered observing three lessons. The observations were programmed at the beginning, in the middle, and almost at the end of the practicum to compare the differences in the research participants' teaching. Six observations were done in the third cohort. More observations could have illustrated more examples of TA. The differences in the settings, the diverse audiences, and varied conditions of the participants' work were important to consider when analysing the data.

Another limitation was the lack of access to class observations and interviews in one primary school. A potential problem was the inconsistency of teaching a foreign language in that primary school. The lack of systematised schedules for the language lessons was a barrier that caused many suspensions of the lessons. Sometimes, another activity was planned instead of the English class. As a consequence, the lessons were sporadic, and class observations did not follow a sequence. At the university, just one mentor refused to collaborate, and he had an uncooperative attitude with the researcher. This attitude represented a barrier; this research participant was observed just in two lessons. In the cases of both primary school and university, the study could not be as initially planned.

Creativity was not the only observed capacity developed by participants when teaching. This research does not aim to examine many other capacities related to TA in detail. This fact could be seen as a limitation because TA is a multidimensional term. However, many other capacities are present when teachers decide to apply principles of autonomy in their teaching. In some cases, the combination with agency demonstrated that participants had real control of their teaching. Besides, in these observed examples, initiative, flexibility, spontaneity, improvisation, and adaptation were catalogued here as expressions of creativity. Many capacities are used by participants but their most important characteristic was their willingness to work, contextualising their teaching techniques with positive attitudes.

A deeper and more personal analysis of participants who performed many autonomous actions in their teaching could have provided more information to better understand their nature. A deeper

investigation into the participants' reasons for researching about their learners could have been fruitful for the data analysis. Looking for more detail regarding participants' relationship with their learners and their empathetic actions could have provided more information regarding their reasons for their observed attitude. It would be helpful to research whether participants showed interest in investigating the students' needs in previous modules.

This thesis does not include monitoring participants after their practicum. Monitoring teaching in workplaces would allow further analysis of TA development and real teaching practices. Considering the limitations of lesson observation in some settings, longitudinal research observing TLA during the practicum and later in their first job could be a fruitful study. This transition from a student teacher to an in-service teacher would provide interesting data.

I found this research experience fruitful in many senses. Since coming back to work as a teacher trainer during difficult circumstances, partly caused by the COVID 19 pandemic, I constantly reflect on the importance of autonomy, teaching management and the way I resolve constraints, especially with my learners' lack of autonomy and their internet connection problems. I consider the most important practical application of these findings in my setting is the exercise of autonomy for both teachers and learners. Teacher trainers should take ownership of the opportunities for autonomy. Based on the findings of my study, I suggest a flexible, reflexive, creative, and empathetic practice. This autonomous teaching may respond to teacher-learners' real needs considering they will have to cope with diverse educational settings in the current job market.

TA has allowed me to put into practice many components of autonomy together with a certain awareness of my learners. Now, I provide them with more freedom to give their opinions, analyse their outcomes after their online teaching practices, and reflect on the impact of their teaching strategies. Critical thinking, creativity, and reflection are key capacities that I consider and try to include in my own teaching practice. My students express their satisfaction in having original classes, which are both unpredictable and dynamic. Online, they enjoy collaborating in the breakout rooms, planning role plays or grammar sentences. This interaction lets them provide their ideas and opinions, and feel part of the group. They have expressed their satisfaction in having this engagement with the entire group because these virtual classes have often led to feelings of isolation.

This research has also allowed me to improve my research methods. The act of applying critical thinking in each session has provided me with the opportunity to hear my students better and consider their interests and needs when planning my lessons. We look for alternative activities for difficult topics and negotiate final outputs. Empathy, motivation, and willingness are attributes I

have applied during our interaction on line. We are humans, working with humans who have different backgrounds and work under specific circumstances.

My students had commented on their struggles with their internet connection and changes in their life with this pandemic. These comments help me see my learners through empathetic lenses and prepare them for teaching realities outside the classroom. I try to provide them with opportunities to have autonomy and be creative in the class. Empowering learners through their autonomy, creativity, and agency makes them feel professional and more responsible. Their response and engagement are observed, not in all of them but many of them. Promoting critical thinking through different types of activities is a constant opportunity for my students to develop their judgement, resolve constraints, research, innovate, look for alternatives, respect each other, and collaborate. Finally, I consider autonomy and creativity suitable 'tools' to give us direction in the ocean of learning.

Appendix A   English Language Teaching BA curriculum

Appendix B   Current ELT curriculum
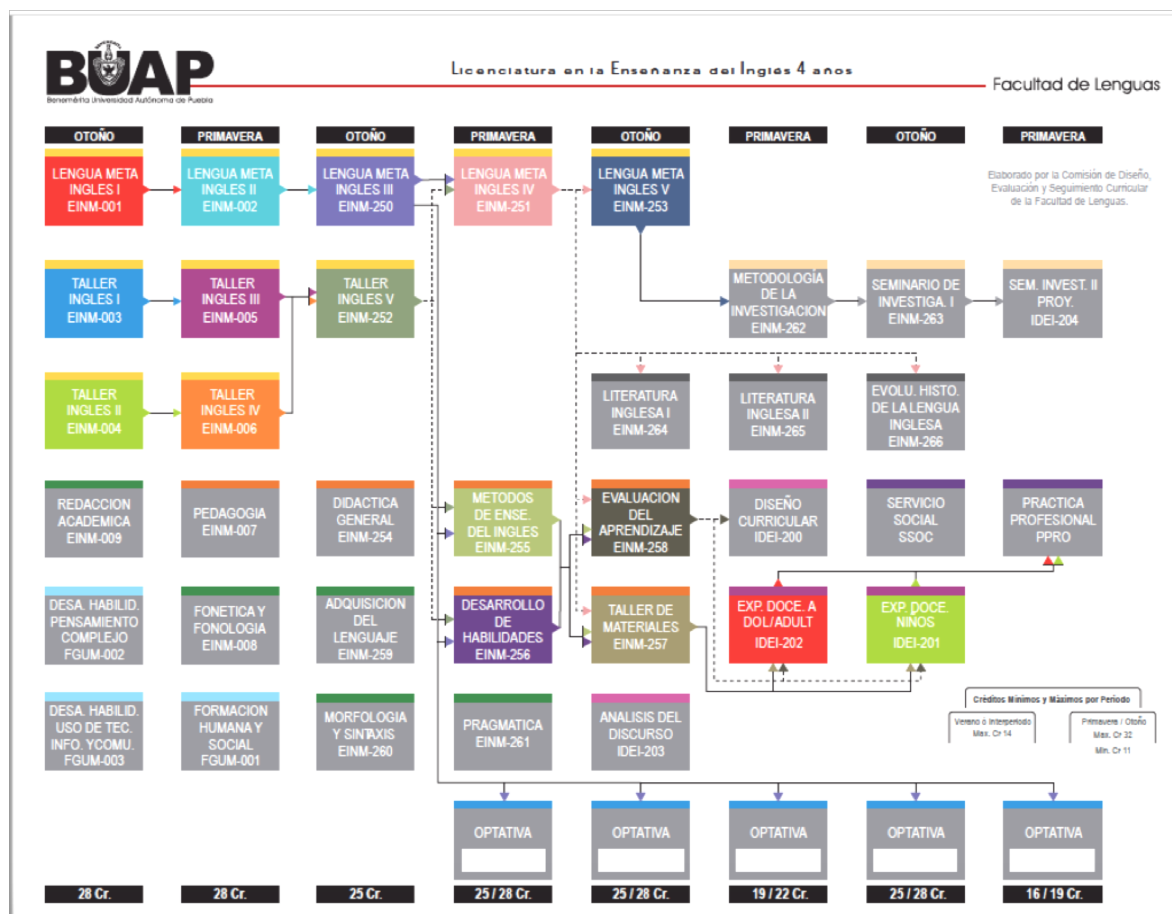
Appendix C   Questionnaire: Exploratory phase

Open questions for the focus group, June 2017

The role of ICTs in the development of teacher autonomy in ELT student teachers.

	Teacher autonomy and creativity
1	What does teacher autonomy mean to you? Why do you think this?
2	Can you describe an autonomous teacher? What are the characteristics of an autonomous teacher?
3	In what ways might teachers or mentors support their student teachers' autonomy when they are teaching during the practicum?
4	In what ways might creativity support teacher autonomy?
5	What factors might be an obstacle or support in the development of autonomy as a teacher?

Appendix D   Questionnaire: Selection of participants

This questionnaire was administered for the selection of participants during the day student teachers enrolled the practicum module.

Dear participant: the present questionnaire has the intention to research about your teaching experience during the practicum. Please write your name and contact details **just** if you are willing to participate in this research project.

Name _____

 Cell phone number or email _____

Age _____   Male_____   Female_____

1. Do you already teach English? _____ Where? _____

2. Where are you going to develop your practicum?
3. Circle the kinds of didactic material you consider important to use when teaching a language

   Videos   songs   movies   charts   webpages   games

   Books   magazines   dictionaries   maps   blogs   newspaper

   Others: _____

4. What kind of materials would you like to use during your practicum?
   Videos   songs   movies   charts   webpages   games
   Books   magazines   dictionaries   maps   blogs   newspaper
   Others: _____

5. Do you usually use technologies when teaching? Give examples
   _____

6. What do you do when you cannot use a material that you had prepared because of a problem (electricity, internet connection, broken equipment, viruses in the PC, etc.)
   _____

7. Are you creative when teaching? Why?
   _____

8. Do you like to design your classes, including innovations? Or do you prefer to follow instructions or the book's contents?

   _____

Thank you very much for your invaluable participation!

Appendix E   Initial participants interview

The study participants were interviewed at the beginning and at the end of their participation.

TEACHER AUTONOMY, CREATIVITY AND THE USE OF TECHNOLOGIES

1. Can you define teacher autonomy (TA)?

2. Do you consider TA important in the classroom?

3. Do you consider yourself an autonomous teacher? Explain.

4. Can you give a definition of creativity?

5. Do you consider creativity an important characteristic in language teachers?

6. Do you consider yourself as a creative teacher? Explain

7. Do you consider the use of ICTs important in the language classes?

8. Do you usually use technologies when teaching English? Why?

9. What are the advantages you see of using technologies when teaching?

10. What are the disadvantages you see of using technologies when teaching?

Appendix F George teaching English in kindergarten. (Source: field notes, research diary, literature and George's reflections)

This appendix contains transcribed field notes and segments of the research diary describing the observed classes. Literature corresponded to some themes is included. George was the key participant one, who developed many capacities related to TLA and this section provides evidence of his improvement.

Example 5. George and group management skills

In his first classes, he looked nervous, continually looking for eye contact with me. It seemed he was looking for approval or support. The situation to manage more than 30 children, three years old who are still adapting themselves to the school routine, is a real challenge even for an experienced teacher. As Jimenez Raya and Vieira (2015) assert, to achieve autonomous teaching, the teacher needs many skills to manage the classroom with self-determination, responsibility, and critical awareness. Finishing that lesson, he reflected on the role of the teacher in charge of too many young students whose span of attention is short. Picture 22 shows George's first observed class. His initial reaction was nervous when trying to control the children.

Picture 22. George's observed class one

George's biggest constraint was group control because he could not apply his activities during the planned time, he said. That constraint motivated him to research the characteristics of his audience. However, his teaching transformation entailed many capacities, the first and the one

that let him apply his planned lessons was his clear development of agency. I observed a bigger number of activities included in each lesson, with a natural control when the children were distracted or mind absent. His capacity to observe them and situate his learning with creative activities according to their age, their interests, and the possibilities in a classroom without many resources, resulted in smooth lessons that the learners seemed to enjoy.

In some cases, especially in basic education, the lack of English in the formal curricula resulted in the lack of an English teacher in the school. The lack of a mentor in the classroom had some impact, sometimes positive, regarding teacher autonomy. Sometimes the impact was negative considering the lack of teaching experience participants had.

Example 6. George's spontaneous reactions and freedom for teaching

In class 2, George started the lesson giving directions: Sit down and stand up, listen and wash your hands. The children looked motivated to participate in the activity following directions in the foreign language. Suddenly, a girl wanted to cry because she missed her parents. George quickly recalled the colours with her in order to distract her, pointing out some balloons stuck on the wall. He kept showing them different objects in the classroom. George was moving all around the classroom; the children followed him with interest. Then the dynamic was that the kids said a colour and George run around to show them an object of that colour. They also recalled different colours, George immediately helped them to see the examples in the classroom.

His agency helped him manage a class with very young learners who still miss their parents during their first days of school time. That friendly and exhausting attitude apparently was into a game but indeed, George was constructing an empathetic and trustable identity for his young audience with his learners. With the emotional bounds, the children showed they expressed their emotions and affection for George in an opened way in each session. George's attitude was very empathetic and created a confident atmosphere that let him develop a soft agency to manage his teaching.

Excerpt 1 corresponds to interview 2, administered in the end in the practicum. The identified aspects related to teacher autonomy in his reflection are coloured and coded with their initials below.

Excerpt 1. Interview 2 George at the end of the practicum. May 26th, 2018

Identified codes

(F) freedom

(W) willingness

(TA) teacher autonomy

(E) emotional side

(SE) self-evaluation

(LA) learner autonomy

(C) creative teaching

(R) reflection

> *"The freedom that I had (F) in my practicum was important. The advantage I had in this case is that I chose the topics (W), until the level I wanted to develop them (TA). I felt comfortable with my teaching (E), with my students, also my development in the classroom (SE). There was an impact on my students, they felt they did not just receive information. I made them participate in the class and using the language (LA). They were involved in the language with games, songs, they received and used the language (C), not just comparing it with Spanish (R). English was another way to say the things, they noticed they could produce in other language (LA). I consider I was autonomous during my practicum (TA)."*

In this reflection, he describes the freedom for teaching he had for making decisions before and during his lessons. He observed the importance of promoting learner autonomy in order to create an integrated experience for his young audience. His capacity to decide on the variety of activities to implement in his lesson was defining his agency in the moment of contextualising the activities and situating his learning.

Example 6: George's creativity

The case of George provided many aspects observed in the development of teacher autonomy under difficult circumstances. As an autonomous teacher, George showed his development of creative thinking, planning his lessons, and applying strategies to engage his audience as illustrated in this example in the observed class 5. George was in the third month of his teaching, and the big difference in his lessons illustrated all his reflective autonomous transformation. This lesson was dynamic with a variety of activities that integrated all his audience in the classroom. The class seemed successful in the sense of the observed total participation and integration of the children in the activities.

First, George greeted his learners and asked them to stand up. They started the class with a greeting song, which seemed attractive for the pupils to practice vocabulary. After many lessons, it appeared the children had practised the song, and were familiar with the vocabulary and

movement involved. Most of them sang with confidence, dancing and mimicking each section of the song with enthusiasm. In the end, Willy asked them to clap as rewarding for their participation. Their expression was of satisfaction at the same time that they clapped. Then, George played immediately another song to review some parts of the body while the children were still standing. The learners were attentive, pointing out the part of the body that the song indicated. They looked interested and excited to participate. Some children responded with more energy than others, but the entire group was attentive to the activity. George asked again to reward themselves with a clap.

As described in this first moment of the lesson, George showed a capacity to manage the class with appropriate activities for the children. Before the lesson, he mentioned he researched the learners' cognitive development and characteristics at that age. The type of activities he used was evidence of his acquired teaching knowledge. His creative starting with that warm attitude resulted in integration and a successful beginning for the lesson.

The learners sat down after practising more vocabulary from the song with some short exercises. The children that were usually standing up and distracting others during the classes went around talking and standing up while George was preparing the overhead projector for the next activity. Taking advantage of this, George invited them to model the following song supported by a video projected on the walls. His agency was performed naturally, without impositions. The rest of the children observed the students' movements and followed them with attention, imitating their movements during the following song. This creative strategy helped George to control the group and at the same time, the modelling part integrated all the children in the scaffolding. Incorporating this dynamic with the learners is evidence of his capacity to manage his teaching correctly. His friendly attitude with an adequate agency when inviting these children to model the song resulted in a teaching practice that integrated the entire group.

The following activity was a multimedia presentation with the support of the overhead projector. George was teaching vocabulary about the weather and seasons of the year in a creatively. The presentation contained diverse colourful examples of the seasons, illustrated with attractive characters in movement. The same leader children stood in front of the classroom and helped him model the actions such as windy, rainy, sunny, cold. Suddenly, as the entire group was so noisy, George used another creative strategy to control discipline. The volume variation when repeating the vocabulary helped him to attract the learners' attention again. The learners played with their voice volume when repeating the vocabulary, with a low voice and then shouting the words.

George demonstrated again a suitable agency, and he could practice the vocabulary integrating all the children and gaining their attention.

Finally, he played a song that contained all the vocabulary they were previously practising in this class. Most of the learners were singing; some of them looked tired and mind absent. When they finished with this song, he said goodbye because it was almost time the children leave school. I noticed that this day the teacher let him stay longer than the established time for the English lesson. After the class, he commented he had observed his learners and identified the type of useful strategies not just for catching their attention but also engaging them in their learning process unconsciously. This capacity to learn how to teach was evidence of his development of teacher autonomy that includes this knowledge to manage to teach, as analysed below.

George reflected at the end of the practicum concerning the importance of creativity in his lessons. Willy took advantage of the freedom for teaching he had in the classroom, that sometimes seemed more a neglected language teaching condition. In the interview 2, George found the advantages of the use of creativity in his lessons. As he expressed, this was his first experience teaching very young learners. So, he read about the characteristics of his audience, and planned his lessons considering their cognitive level and mobility possibilities. This personal capacity under these circumstances is an evidence of the development of his autonomy without a mentor in the classroom. His utterances projected a teacher who knew his audience and his agency helped him suitably apply activities and manage the situations. He expressed his use of creativity in the second interview, as illustrated in excerpt 2.

Excerpt 2 George quotation in interview 2. Use of creativity. 2nd May 2018

(CR) creativity

(RE) research

> "*I used creativity while teaching, especially when I planned my classes (CR). Most of the things I taught were vocabulary, but more than this, the process of assimilation and accommodation in the kids were considered. The accommodation process was easier when I used creative activities (RE). I used games, toys, songs, puppets. I developed short conversations to use the new vocabulary. Creativity helped me to teach in a more natural way(CR).*

The constant use of creativity was a key capacity George developed in his lessons. The way he used the language with the children through these varied activities was essential for the children to recognise the foreign language naturally and smoothly in the classroom. The result was that the children had integration in the group, and they also showed interest in the type of activities he used, repeating and identifying the new vocabulary.

Example 7. George researching characteristics of his learners in kindergarten

In primary school, participants developed the ability to select teaching methods that resulted attractive for the children' interests and age. For instance, in kindergarten, George chose creative activities that integrated his learners into a smooth and enthusiastic participation. He mentioned the spent time researching the learners age, cognitive development, and motility possibilities in order to plan a meaningful lesson. In the observed class 1, they were reviewing the greetings in English. George introduced the conversation in Spanish in order to be sure the children understood the purpose of the conversation. Then, little by little, George avoided to use Spanish and he focused the conversation in English.

This bilingual method let the children participate confidently because they understood the purpose of the conversation. His bilingual method was underpinned with the use of a puppet called "Blue". The toddlers, four years old on average, looked amazed and motivated by the presence of Blue. Willy introduced a short conversation, including a greeting, asking them: How are you? What is your name? answering, saying nice to meet you, and bye. The learners paid close attention to the sentences and repeated the short conversation in front of the group, interacting with Blue. Every child in the classroom participated and interacted with the puppet successfully, as is shown in the vignette below. This short illustration, in excerpt 3, corresponds to an example of interaction from the observed class one.

Excerpt 3. George Class observation one. Example of a successful short interactive activity for young learners. February 1st 2018.

Transcript in the class recording (Bilingual)	Translation
George: ahora, vamos a saludar a Blue! Good morning! Julian come here! Vas a saludar a Blue!	**George**: now, let's greet Blue! *Good morning! Julian come here!* You are going to greet Blue!
Julian: Hello	**Julian**: *Hello*
George: ahora, le vas a preguntar How are you?	**George:** now, you are going to ask him *How are you?*
Julian: How are you?	**Julian:** How are you?
George: Good! (with a voice for the puppet)	**George:** Good!
Excellent! Clap Julian	*Excellent! Clap Julian*

The children were smiling and interacting with the puppet to practice this short conversation. That was a creative way to engage the children to greet in English and the puppet was a tool that motivated them to interact. I observed that the teacher let him stay longer in the classroom in order to have enough practice with every child. Despite of the fact that the teacher was constantly worried about discipline and silence in the group, the children looked motivated to practice the conversation. At the beginning, George asked them to participate individually. After some minutes, the children asked him to pass in front and have the conversation with the puppet. They wanted to touch and stroke the puppet. In picture 23, a shot of the lesson is presented.

Picture 23. George, class observation 1. Greeting and interacting with the puppet. February 1st 2018.

This general interest from the learners allowed him to support them individually with the conversation; his interest in his students' learning was evident. The rest of the learners also helped the volunteer who was practising the conversation. The observed interaction resulted in group collaboration to achieve the purpose of the lesson.

In his reflections in the corridors, George commented that this freedom for teaching conduced him to look for the programme that the Ministry of Education (SEP) in Mexico offers for this educational level. The topics are varied, but he used his criteria to select attractive activities that his audience could relate with their environment. He also explained the satisfaction to observe how his learners recognise little by little a different way to name diverse objects in the classroom. His research supported him to select the topics and its sequence for his course.

George was not guided in the classroom by any mentoring. After the second observation, I asked him if this situation affected his teaching. He answered that his reflection after applying the activities let him modify and adapt every lesson according to the children' needs. Besides, his

engagement and willingness guided him to read and research preparing his lessons and helped him overcome this situation.

The professor in charge of the practicum module at university corrected his lesson plans dosing of contents or timing the planned activities. After the observed class two, he also commented he was nervous about teaching such young learners, as he expressed in excerpt 4:

Excerpt 4. George Interview 2. 2nd May 2018

"after this holiday break, it was satisfactory to see that my students remembered the vocabulary and the songs we have reviewed in the class. As Krashen suggests, the affective bond is also supporting their motivation to learn a foreign language"

His reflections were supported continuously by his autonomous initiative to research his audience and improve his lessons. In this case, some supervisors demanded critical lesson plans, supported by authors whose contribution underpinned the teacher-learner proposal to apply in the classroom. This scaffolding was a vital piece of the puzzle that participants found during the practicum. It seemed that their research understanding was almost null at the beginning of the practicum. However, after comparing the theoretical support with their experiences in the classroom, it seemed research about the setting was a key support to understand the needs of the context and contextualise their efforts.

So, he decided to read diverse authors e.g. Piaget and Krashen to understand his audience better. His autonomy made him investigate his learners' age potential, mature characteristics, and cognitive development. He chose the type of teaching activities according to the kids' possibilities and age that the literature suggested. For George, his learners were the core motivation of his teaching efforts, as he mentioned in the interview 2, illustrated in excerpt 5.

Excerpt 5. George's interview 2. May 26th, 2018

(NT) novice teaching

(R) reflection

(E) emotional side

(W) willingness

(ST) supportive teaching

(I) Identity

"It was my first experience with children(NT). Four months ago, I was quiet, surprised to see how the toddlers lose their attention as fast as they suddenly change their mood, their attention gap is very short (R). Now, I feel more centred, I enjoy their company (E). I am always ready to support

them (W) and share things, answer their doubts (ST), very happy to have chosen this profession(E). I am convinced this is my profession. I like my development, I feel it is suitable to me, my way of been. It cannot be different (I).

As he recognized in this excerpt 6, his observation and reflection let him recognise the characteristics of the group, then, he researched the way to work with them. Even though he expressed his satisfaction when he was teaching these children and observing their response to his activities.

Example 8. George adaptation at kindergarten

Creativity was present in sudden decisions such as adaptation to the setting. For instance, George commented on the importance of adapting meaningful practices for the learners to recognise a useful way to use the foreign language. Instead of being disappointed for teaching English during the lunchtime, he decided to adapt his lessons to these circumstances. In the observed lesson 2, George started the class with a song that attracted the leaners' attention. Then, he reviewed the vocabulary of animals and parts of the body. Suddenly, he was interrupted by the teacher, who indicated that it was the lunchtime. He asked the children to wash their hands and be quiet to have their lunch. The children were hungry but followed his instructions, saying thank you in English when he passed through the classroom providing antibacterial gel for their hands. When they were eating, George used the bilingual approach again, asking questions related to the vocabulary of the type of drink or food they were eating, colours, size, as illustrated in excerpt 6 below.

Excerpt 6. George Observed lesson 2. Successful practice with young learners. First grade. 1st February 2018.

Transcript in the class recording (Bilingual)	Translation
George: que estas comiendo? Uva! Grape!	**George:** what are you eating? Grape! *Grape!*
Children: Grape!	**Children**: *Grape!*
Willy: Y tu?	**George**: And you?
Child: pollo	**Child**: Chicken
George: Se acuerdan? Chicken!	**George**: Do you remember? *Chicken!*
Children: Chicken!	**Children***: Chicken*!
Child: Mira maest[r]o, galletas	**Child**: look teacher, cookies!
George: Cookies	**George**: *Cookies*

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Children: cookies! Cookies!	**Children**: cookies! Cookies!
Child: Maest[r]o, como se dice manzana?	**Child**: Teacher, how do you say apple?
George: Apple! Y que color es? Red	**George**: Apple! And what colour is it? *Red*
Children: red!	**Children**: red!

George used the bilingual method, and the children responded directly in English in some cases. Some children still struggled with pronunciation in Spanish. They have difficulties pronouncing letters like "r" (*maesto* instead of maestro). The children were very responsive, participating in the interaction and enthusiastic with a lot of energy during this activity. After the lesson, he commented in the corridor that he was looking for teaching methods that supported him with these circumstances in the school. He mentioned the total physical response and the direct method to apply during the lunchtime, taking advantage of the variety of food the children have and observe. He found these associations let the learners express their ideas in another language.

As observed, George was a teacher with a great willingness to teach and support his audience, even under those not optimal circumstances. His capacity to reflect on the possibilities he had for his lesson during the lunchtime guided him to research suitable teaching methods that resulted in meaningful practices for the children. His empathy and patience helped him adapt his teaching to these moments when the audience is more attentive to feed themselves than learning a foreign language.

Appendix G   Mary, field notes, reflective diary and photos

Another participant teaching English in kindergarten whose teaching was very creative and autonomous was Mary. Significant moments in her observed lessons are described in this section.

**Example 9. Mary, creative teaching in kindergarten**

Mary was distinguished by her creative teaching and design of creative materials in the kindergarten. She had not much previous teaching experience, but her willingness to teach creatively was evident. For instance, in the observed lesson 1, that was the first time Mary taught that group of children three years old. Fifteen students attended the lesson that day; ten girls and five boys. Those toddlers were so open and self-confident because they followed a dynamic system that let them constantly participate and express their opinions openly. Mary was introduced to the class as the new English teacher. The kids greeted her enthusiastically. Mary looked a little nervous, but she was smiling, having a relaxed interaction with the children. That was an essential factor that seemed to let the learning process go smoothly.

That morning, there were five teachers in the classroom, the interaction, attention and support to the children was excellent in this school. Mary indicated they would hear a song to start the lesson. All the children in the classroom sang and followed the song with its movements very well. It was evident that they were familiar with the song, and they liked it. This starter let Mary established a confident initial atmosphere in the classroom. As this was her first class with them, Mary asked their names. She looked friendly and a bit shy during the introduction, but she walked around the classroom to listen and repeat each name. Her voice was not loud, but the kids followed her instructions well. The other teachers in the classroom supported Mary with their names and catching the children attention.

Then, Mary asked if they remembered the numbers. She showed them the numbers from 1 to 10 in colourful cards; the children observed them with curiosity and repeated them with Mary. She indicated they would solve a puzzle, and the teachers helped her arrange four tables to sit the children in teams of four. They chose a number from one to five, Mary gave them a puzzle that corresponded to that number. This freedom to choose the puzzles seemed that caused them emotion of deciding on their materials. Mary indicated with a determined and confident agency they all could start solving the puzzle. The children looked interested and participated in solving the puzzle in the team. This activity made them collaborate in the teams and integrate their efforts to solve the puzzle. The teachers were so supportive and practised the vocabulary with the

children. Mary monitored the activity with all the teams and asked the children questions regarding the numbers and the animals that appeared in the puzzles. The pupils were attentive in the activity even when they still could not read the name of the number but they followed the images and the drawings to complete the puzzles. In picture 2, we can see those materials that seemed attractive for the learners.

Picture 24. Mary's class observation 1. The animal puzzles. 29th January 2019
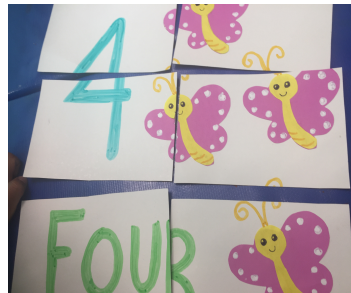
Mary was a teacher who developed many capacities, and this class is clear evidence of her willingness to teach these young learners with attractive materials. Her creativity was perceived in her materials, organization in the classroom, and how she practised the language. Her friendly smile helped her behave a smooth agency to manage the children favourably, despite the number of learners in the classroom.

Her self-perception about her teaching was characterised by creativity. Her self-perception as a creative teacher motivates her to improve her innovative teaching. This is illustrated in excerpt 7, during her first interview at the beginning of her practicum:

Excerpt 7. Mary's quotation in interview 1. Creative identity. 10th January 2019.

(ID) identity

(MO) motivation

> "I consider myself a creative teacher because I noticed my students learn better with my teaching style, all the materials I use in the lessons and the kind of activities I apply in the class(ID). They have told me that learning English is easy with me because they did not like learning English with those traditional and repetitive methods their previous teachers used (MO)."

Her identity of being a creative teacher motivated her to follow using the type of materials and activities she noticed were attractive and her audience said they liked. Since the beginning of her practicum, she expressed her interest to be a good language teacher because of her secondary school good experiences with her English teachers. She also mentioned the motivation she had

because some relatives are teachers too. Enjoying teaching was a constant comment Mary said in the corridors and her observed lessons were the evidence of her love for teaching.

Example 10. Mary's development at kindergarten

Mary was from the third cohort I observed. Consequently, my observations and question were more focused on the nature of participants who showed autonomy through their actions. Since the beginning, one of Mary's most noticeable characteristic was her variety of creative materials. She also showed a smooth agency to apply her planned activities. During the firsts lessons, Mary looked shy, and the volume of her voice was low. However, at the end of her practicum, she was able to perform a confident agency, managing the lessons with 18 children in a friendly way.

She expressed in the corridors she loves teaching, and the time she invested in researching innovative ideas based on the learners was worthy. She identified her facility to create materials and used the with the children with satisfactory results. That combination of creative materials with an adequate agency to manage young learners was apparent that she had a successful impact on her audience. These characteristics correspond to some have been identified applying a pedagogy for autonomy (Smith, 2003; Vieira, 2007). For instance, when the learner can learn under motivational circumstances and there is a facilitation for their learning process. Mary considered her learners to plan her lessons. She looked for creative ways to associate the language with their interests. Her teaching abilities increased into this interdependence she had with her audience, again as authors have identified when characterising the development of TLA (Smith 2003; Vieira, 2007).

Example 11 Mary and her creative use of technologies in kindergarten

In kindergarten, access to technologies in their classroom was almost null. However, my participants could adapt their gadgets to their lessons for including varied materials. In Mary's case, she used a song as a lesson starter, sometimes the main activity also included songs, and in the end, to close the lessons. In her final reflections, she said that the lack of technologies in the classroom was not a big deal for her courses. They had 30 minutes lessons so, the time was not enough to introduce many activities using technologies. However, her use of internet was very important in the sense of researching innovative teaching methods, creative materials, and dynamic activities related to the topic of the week.

In excerpt 8, Mary expressed the inconvenience to attend to audio visual room to have a multimedia activity.

Excerpt 8 Mary interview 2. 22nd April 2019

(TM) teaching management

(BE) beliefs

> *I just used the audio-visual room sometimes to watch a video and recall the topics we had seen. I used the tools just to make a review of the taught topics. But as we just have 30 minutes for teaching English,* we don't have enough time to use technologies every day because it implies moving from the classroom*(TM). There is much time to prepare the room, turn computer on, the kids all want to pass to participate using the computer so, there is not enough time for including the use of a computer in our lessons.* Technologies are useful in that sense; they support us as teachers when looking for information using different strategies and materials, not just for the students' learning process *(BE), but also for us trainees, learning to teach."*

Mary also commented in the corridors about her constant search in internet to prepare her lessons. The attractive and creative materials she usually brought to her classes were so colourful and attractive for the learners. I repeatedly asked her about the time to prepare such creative and colourful materials. She answered she enjoyed the impact they caused on her students, and the practicality to check applications such as *pinterest* to obtain diverse creative ideas.

Appendix H   Tom, teaching English under challenging circumstances in a secondary school

Tom was a key participant teaching English in a secondary school. The gradual freedom he had for teaching helped him to cope with the overcrowded classes and the lack of teaching resources in that setting.

**Example 12. Tom, a creative teacher working at secondary school**

At the secondary level, creativity was also necessary to overcome the reality of teaching in mass education settings, generally without teaching conditions and mentoring support. For instance, Tom had tough experiences with the 34 teenagers, 14 years old on average in one of his groups. However, in class observation three, everything was different, he gathered certain freedom to include creative activities besides the textbook. He started the lesson practising the alphabet written in a bond paper he prepared for that activity. Each letter had a letter initial that indicated to raise the hands; right, left, and clap. The entire group participated, integrated with enthusiasm, even the head English teacher decided to be part of the activity. Tom managed his teaching with creativity and agency to signal directions and timing the activity naturally and friendly. His teaching willingness was now observed through attractive activity that besides practising the language involved brain gymnastics. The fact that the teacher was voluntarily participating in the activity encouraged the audience to participate more, achieving a total group integration.

Then, they practised a couple of exercises with hidden messages that Tom coded, relating numbers with letters of the alphabet. Volunteers competed to decode the messages on the board. The rest of the group decoded the messages in their notebooks. The integration and interest in the entire group was observed during the activity too. Tom showed his capacity to manage the lesson with smooth agency and discipline was not a problem because the audience was working with interest. Her group management now was more manageable than at the beginning of his practicum.

Finally, Tom asked them to sit in pairs for affinity and he gave them an encrypted ring with another code for the alphabet. This material was innovative and attracted the audience's attention with observed emotion. They competed decoding another hidden message that was in a printed paper. The class was over, and the learners wanted to continue working with the activity. They looked interested and pleased with this creative way to use the foreign language. Pictures 25, 26 and 27 illustrate the observed lesson three.

Picture 25 illustrates the chart Tom used in the lesson to practice the alphabet. We notice the classroom conditions, the old and broken whiteboard, but particularly Tom' determination to attract his students' attention in the class with a challenging and creative activity using bond paper.

Picture 25. Tom Observed lesson 3. The dynamic alphabet on bond paper. 1st of March 2018.
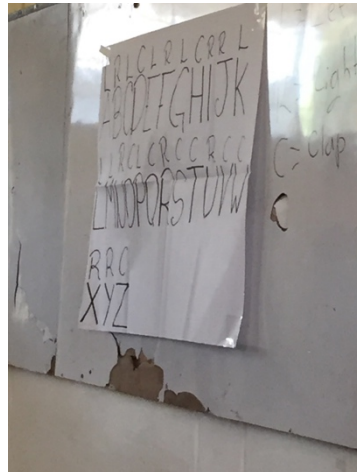
In picture 26 we observe the integration during the lesson when the learners decoded the hidden messages in English. This creative way to introduce the foreign language resulted in a lesson that the learners seemed to be engaged with. They seem to be enjoying the competition when finding the hidden message.

Picture 26. Tom Observed lesson 3. Competitions in a foreign language. 1st of March 2018.
Decoding the hidden messages

In picture 27, we see his materials, the ring and the short printed message the learners had to decode in their notebooks. After the class, Tom commented he spent some time creating the rings and printing the messages, but he was pleased with the results. This lesson was opposite to those previously observed in the beginning of his practicum. He developed many teaching skills to manage his teaching and solve constraints in this large group.

Picture 27. Tom Observed lesson 3. Rings and the encrypted message. 1st of March 2018.
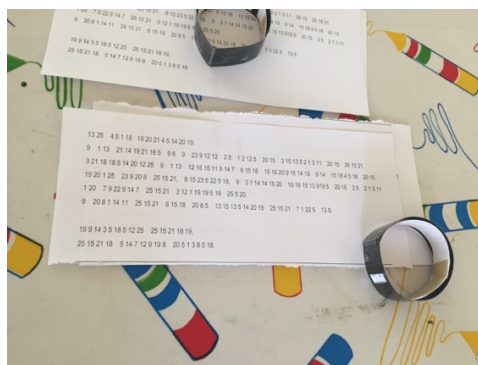
Tom reflected at the end of the practicum about that freedom he had for teaching. He recognised the difficult circumstances concerning the small physical space in the classroom and a large number of learners in his groups. However, his attitude let him overcome these barriers with creative teaching, expressed in excerpt 9.

Excerpt 9. Tom Interview 2. 25th April 2018

(TA) teacher autonomy

(CR) creativity

> *During my practicum, I could apply creative activities in the lesson. The classrooms were not the ideal ones but at least I had that freedom to implement suitable activities for my students (TA). Creativity was necessary during my practicum because as more creative, you have to pay more commitment in planning your class, your teaching materials (CR). The students notice when a teacher pays effort in preparing the class and the activities are well done and they enjoy them. We notice this clearly with children, they are very expressive. But, teenagers do not say the things directly but we notice their engagement when they are more participative. Creativity is there when you have your topic, then you plan what to do in order they enjoy the class with creativity, they have fun(CR). I could create more dynamic activities that my students enjoy more and it was very useful to me.*

His students' scant language background made Tom tried many ways to teach, patiently, creatively, showing empathy in his lessons through his patient interaction and constant explanations. He developed the capacity to observe his audience, reflect on their characteristics, adapt his teaching to the context, innovate with his activities to attract the learners' attention,

manage the lesson, and make the language a meaningful experience for his learners. This setting supported him with the freedom to manage his teaching.

Example 13. Tom adaptation in secondary school

Every setting with specific conditions represented a different challenge for all the participants teaching English. At the secondary level, Tom reflected on the importance of observing the educational setting, understand its ethos, and considering the political, social and cultural implicit rules that exist. He related the importance of adaptation for being autonomous and achieve the personal and the learners' goals in the interview 2, in excerpt 10 below.

Excerpt 10. Tom interview 2. 25th April 2018

(AW) awareness

(TA) teacher autonomy

(AD) adaptation

(AG) agency

> *"During the practicum, I noticed two things: teacher autonomy is not totally freedom because you have to follow a programme and achieve specific objectives (A). However, our autonomy is very related to adopt and adapt the curricula to get the objective and to do the necessary activities (TA). So, our autonomy is very related to how well you adapt yourself (AD). Our autonomy is related to the degree to take decisions (AG), how well you adapt yourself to achieve the purposes in the classroom(AD), based on the objectives of the course and also, we cannot ignore the students. How receptive they are, based in our decisions, how autonomous we are based in the programme and the students, if the student paid attention and if they had fun and the most important, if they leant."*

The relevance of observation and reflection is evident in the case of Tom.

He was able to differentiate between freedom and a real learning-teaching experience. He concluded that adapting lessons is a key part of teaching that requires creativity and determination on reflective actions, or agency. Being a young teacher was not an obstacle to noticing the relevance of making the learners learn under good conditions for them, even though, they enjoyed their learning process. I consider Tom reflections evidence of development of teacher autonomy. Without knowing, he could recognise key factors in teaching autonomously and the interdependence with the learners. He understood his role as a motivator too.

Example 14. Tom when improvisation fails in secondary school

However, not all acts of improvisation resulted in good results. For instance, during the class observation 1 in secondary school, Tom reviewed a difficult topic in the text book that seemed not being of the interest of the audience. The students looked distracted and not very focused on the class, so he suddenly decided to change the rhythm of the lesson. Tom asked them to form teams of 5 members and go outside the classroom with their notebooks. The students did it noisily and without any order. Once outside, he asked them to stand in lines of five. He gave them the instructions for the game: the broken telephone or Chinese whispers. He gave a word to the last student of each line, they passed the word and the ones in front would write the word on their notebooks. When the group was totally out of control, Tom just ignored the situation and continued with the activity, but most of the students weren't collaborating. In a moment, all the learners were talking without paying attention. A total lack of control was observed outside the classroom. Finally, after some minutes of total mess, Tom decided to go back the classroom when the bell rang, indicating that the class was over.

When I asked him about his decisions in that lesson, he reflected about the loss of control with the number of teenagers in the classroom, as illustrated in excerpt 11.

Excerpt 11 Tom reflections after lesson 1. 18th January 2018

(E) emotional side

(R) reflection

> *I was very disappointed for my students' behaviour (E). The guys were so naughty during today's class. In general, it is a real challenge for all the teachers in the school to control them(R). The teenagers know that I don't have much teaching experience and they behave in the way they want without any care and consideration of me.*

Indeed, a group with 36 teenagers, 14 years old on average, is a real challenge for any experienced or not experienced teacher. Tom tried to improvise to catch the learners' attention in the activity. Instead of this, his efforts resulted in a real mess. Autonomous teaching was observed through his agency. However, the situation was out of control for his lack of teaching experience, and the shy initial identity he projected with the students. Little by little during the course, he observed the audience, and his presence acquired more determination, the activities challenged the learners' attention through guided competitions. His teaching development was undeniable at the end of the practicum, compared with these initial experiences that were an opportunity to learn and reflect on his teaching management.

Example 15. Tom, **freedom for autonomous teaching-learning in secondary school**

In the case of Tom, at the beginning it looked that the setting was very complex. However, his mentors gave him the freedom to implement his lessons in the way he considered suitable for the learners. The change was evident because Tom projected a confident attitude with his learners. He contextualised his teaching considering his audience's interests and needs. There is an illustration of his reflection in the excerpt 12 below.

Excerpt 12 Tom reflection

(TA) teacher autonomy

(OB) observation

(AG) agency

> *I had freedom to teach during my practicum (TA). But at the beginning my teaching was controlled by my supervisor who usually told me what to do. Then, she left me alone to decide on my activities(TA). During the process of the practicum I was developing my own activities, what I wanted to do, I developed my autonomous abilities(TA). I saw the children enjoyed the class a lot. Not as the beginning that there were apathetic and participated less (OB). The fact that I chose my activities according to their interests was useful (AG). The teachers say that there are very obedient groups but lazy. Some others are naughty but they work. I didn't feel with less authority because what happened to me happened to other teachers; after the classes I went to see another teacher and the problem is that the teacher is always behind the desk, and the students were doing whatever they wanted. The student is not controlled (OB). The new reforms protect the student a lot and damage the image of the teacher.*

Example 10. Tom' development at secondary school

In my first observation in this level, I felt so far from teacher autonomy in many senses. My participant Tom had to teach accordingly the textbook, a topic that was so hard for the audience. When he tried to implement a creative strategy to motivate his learners, his lack of group management and shyness did not help him succeed. As Richards (2013) mentions, due to novice teachers' lack of experience, creativity is not always possible in the classroom. It seemed he was lost in a group of more than thirty teenagers who disobey and ignored his instructions. That first lesson finished in entire chaos out of control, and Tom expressed his disappointment in the corridors informal chat. However, he also asked for teaching advise to improve this situation. I recognised the context was not easy even for an experienced teacher. During the following lessons, Tom planned more attractive activities to keep his learners busy and collaborating in the activities. He understood the characteristics of the young setting, and the mentor gave him the freedom to make his own decisions, through implementing creative activities. Creativity is not just

an innovative practice but also represents change and improvement in the practise, as Ollerhead and Burns (2015) affirm.

His shy personality was transformed into a friendly personality. He controlled the situations without complications and good agency with the teenagers. In the second observation, he tried strategies to improve the lesson but they were not successful. These efforts were part of his teaching process that demonstrated a real development in many senses. He developed many teaching capacities and supported by agency and creativity, and his learners responded with an engaged attitude.

Appendix I Dany, creative teaching at university

Dany was another key participant teaching English at university under supportive conditions including technologies in the classroom.

Example 17. Dany creative teaching at university

At university, Dany showed his autonomy through constant integration of the group into creative activities that were innovative and meaningful for the audience's learning. For instance, in the second lesson observed, his class opening was a video from the course book: reviewing how to start different types of conversations. Dany looked very confident, friendly and more relaxed than the previous observed session. They watched two parts of the story, then Dany emphasised the used structures into the conversations, using the board for explaining the new vocabulary. They watched the video again and then he elicited participation to identify more examples of ways to start a conversation. Dany called the learners by their names in a confident and comfortable learning atmosphere.

He complemented the lesson with a power point presentation that contained the structures of the topic. Then, he asked for 4 volunteers and arranged the rest of the group in two teams, naming them bananas and apples. He asked for other 4 volunteers. The first group were judges, checking the activity and the rules of the activity. The second group were competing, using the new vocabulary in an improvised one minute conversation. The learners had the freedom to use the structures in the way they decided. They took turns to talk for a minute, the judges check creativity, application of the vocabulary, and the length of the participation. All the group was involved in the activity with attention. The four volunteers participated each time and their team was supporting them with ideas so, everybody collaborated with this activity.

Every time they got a score, Dany drawn the correspondent fruit on their side of the board, motivating the competence with a sense of belonging to a team. Everybody looked engaged, they seemed enjoying the activity with the creative occurrences of the participants of each team. The learners had learning autonomy because the examples were their own creation. They participated confidently even though there were some pronunciation mistakes, Dany let them participate without interrupting them. Given the degree of difficulty to improvise the examples, the participation was not so smooth in some cases. However, Dany was very supportive encouraging them to participate. Their interventions were cleaver and funny, very imaginative. We all laugh

and clap spontaneously in the end of every team participation. One team had difficulties with the vocabulary, but they improvised and shifted to Spanish when it was necessary. Dany supported them with vocabulary without interrupting their intervention, just as a review feedback when they concluded their participation. In the end, Dany asked for questions and if they liked the activity, all the group in chorus answered: Yeees! And clapped spontaneously.

This lesson contained evidence of the capacities Dany developed during his practicum. His ability to manage the lesson in a way to make the learners participate, improvise dialogues with the target language, evaluate their performance, and collaborate in teams gave the lesson an autonomous nuance. Creative teaching with suitable agency were a clear evidence of this teacher autonomy.

In the end of the practicum, Dany reflected on the importance of creativity during his practicum, as shown in excerpt 13 during his second interview.

Excerpt 13. Dany interview 2. 24th April 2018

(BE) belief

(TA) teacher autonomy

(RE) reflection

> *"Creativity was 100% important in my practicum because the students get bored with the book and these kinds of activities that there are included (BE). The book has repetitive exercises. I complemented the lessons with role plays but differently, I used real life examples, I used sketches, different TV shows, websites, dynamics, games, competencies based on the contents in the book (TA). They said it was the first time a practitioner used these dynamics more than just working with the book. They learnt and enjoy their learning process. As a teacher, now I have a job and it is the same story, the book, the book, it is good as a guide, but the fact that you give a plus and more related activities helps a lot (RE). The practicum helped me in that sense. I could plan an activity I adapted new things. So, creativity is always there!"*

Dany not just considered creativity important, he demonstrated during his lessons that capacity to plan and apply attractive activities that guided with empathy and suitable agency were successful learning-teaching experiences. His determination to attract his learners' attention and make them participate in the activities resulted in clear evidence of his teacher autonomy.

Example 18. Dany creative use of technologies at university

In the end of his practicum, Dany expressed in the interview 2 his perception of being an autonomous teacher. He conceives it as a synonym of an innovative teacher able to connect with

his audience. He considers the use of technologies for teaching a suitable way to provide an updated teaching experience. Excerpt 14 includes a vignette with his opinion related to his concept of teacher autonomy. The analysis was done categorising different codes with regard to autonomy.

Excerpt 14. Dany interview 2, 24th April 2018

(IN) Innovation

(IT) Information technologies

(B) Belief

"*teacher autonomy is like* innovation*, and you can* surprise students using *you see*, other way of teaching, other way to develop in the classroom *(IN)*, I think dynamic methods work *(B) so, I think it is important… I'd like to part of the world we live what is happening around there and I'd like to take advantage of it. There are a lot of things like TV shows, or some apps or social networks that are actually that work for language teaching (IT)."*

He believes that dynamic teaching methods are useful to innovate and integrate the class. I observed him using a variety of teaching strategies to achieve integration. His creativity let him construct meaningful learning situations with the audience. Being a teacher with willingness to teach a foreign language with real use and application is facilitated with the use of internet. Dany developed this empathetic capacity very well. His selection of videos related to the topics in the curricula, showing real scenarios for the language were a good evidence of his empathy and interest for his audience's learning process.

Example 19. Dany motivation at university,

At the end of his practicum, Dany reflected he felt very motivated, very confident with this group, even though the age gap is not big with his students, they respect him and he feels so enthusiastic to teach. Excerpt 15

Excerpt 15. Dany interview2. 24th April 2018

(TM) teaching management

(MO) motivation

Regarding group control, I have found easy and practical ways to control the students and bring their attention back, like just counting: 1,2,3.. I am here(TM)!! Discipline is not a problem for me anymore. My group control is natural, friendly and the atmosphere is relaxed. The students showed respect to me and followed my instructions to develop the activities well. Their participation was dynamic and the students were engaged during the entire class, they liked my activities (MO).

Dany showed his teacher autonomy in a sense of being a teacher who observed, researched, motivated his audience with varied activities, and adapted is teaching to the setting. The setting was supportive, the conditions were optimal, even though the group was large, he was able to manage the situation.

Appendix J   Lucy and Liz; external factors that hampered TLA

Two participants had not opportunity to develop teacher autonomy during their practicum. Lucy was a participant teaching English in a primary school where the classes were book centred. The large groups and small classrooms without proper conditions were real constraints for her teaching. Liz's case is the biggest example of hampering TLA in the setting, especially for the mentor's attitude in the classroom, as explained below.

Example 20. Lucy, observation and reflection under difficult circumstances in primary school

Lucy, teaching English under complex circumstances, reflected on the changes she had as a teacher and the confidence she achieved during her practicum. It is worthy to mention that Lucy was teaching English in a group of 38 children, 10 years old in average in a classroom with just enough space for the blenches and an old desk in the front of the classroom. In the observed lesson 1, she started reviewing an exercise in the activity book. She stuck on the board colourful images she had printed related to the topic in the book.

The access to the back part of the classroom was not easy for the backpacks of the children left on the sides of the benches. The head teacher was in her sixties, with little patience and randomly controlling discipline when the noise was extreme in the classroom, shouting "shut up, the English teacher is working".

I was observing, sit in the back of the classroom, where the kids had a distracted behaviour or were playing with any object without being interrupted. Lucy wrote the new vocabulary on the board, asking the learners to guess the meanings and matching them with the corresponding image. It was difficult to hear Lucy's voice in that part of the classroom. However, in the end of the practicum her voice was stronger, also for controlling the children with a sudden "shut up". She started a drill to practice the new vocabulary. Her activities could not be different because she had to cover a textbook that the Minister of Education provides the children for free. She commented that the parents were angry and claimed the use of the book when they spent the time with other activities.

The contents and the level of English in the book were not accessible for the children that in many cases, this was their first contact with the language. She tried to explain the vocabulary and answer their doubts. The children in the back kept playing with their colour pencils, dictionaries,

or any object that was available. I saw the great efforts a teacher does when the learners are so far to achieve a foreign language under these conditions.

In excerpt 16, Lucy reflected in the end of her practicum on these changes

Excerpt 16. Lucy interview 2. 25th April 2018

(TD) teacher development

(AW) awareness

(C) capacity

"*I developed some autonomy, for example I think in the end I taught different, I talked different (TD). I changed many aspects in order to make my activities meaningful with each group. You need autonomy to be sure, to know what you are doing (AW). At the beginning I was so nervous, then in the end I did not feel so bad, without caring about what the others think of me (C). This autonomy helped me to improve my teaching (AW)."*

At the beginning, it was difficult as a researcher and as a teacher to understand the satisfaction Lucy found in her practicum. However, when considering the efforts done under such difficult circumstances, reflecting on the conditions, analysing her reflections, my first perception changed. Lucy was able to develop teaching capacities to manage a large group, even using the shut-up expression. She was aware of the role of the teacher, even though when she tried to be a motivator, the number of learners overcame her intention.

The aim of the lesson was imposed by the same setting, she covered that requirement of completing the sections of the text book assigned. Being a mother, a worker, and a student is indeed a complex context that Lucy faced with willingness, responsibility, and determination. Maybe, creativity had not much space to be included, but her capacity to observe and reflect on many teaching aspects gave her a real teaching experience.

In the picture 28, we can see the classroom where Lucy was teaching. Her efforts for explaining her audience something about the language, correcting the way to pronounce it, and controlling discipline at the same time were considerable. When you have a closer vision of a student teacher who is married with a son, working in the afternoon in a family business selling baked corn, and concluding her formal education, the perception changes. Analysing her personal circumstances and her practicum under difficult conditions is the moment when you understand the efforts behind autonomy, at least through small expressions of observation and reflection.

Picture 28. Lucy class observation 1. The crowded classroom. 19th January 2018.

Example 21. Lucy, freedom for teaching and imposition of controllers in primary school

The lack of suitable teaching conditions and the politics supporting teacher autonomy of the setting had an impact on the development of autonomy. Unfortunately, the foreign language is not always a priority in the curricula of state schools and as a consequence, the learners are not engaged with the class. This was the case of Lucy, who was alternated teaching with other student teachers in the state primary school where she taught English. In the end of her practicum, Lucy reflected on her teaching development greatly influenced by the setting conditions. Observation, reflection, empathy, made her recognise that she had teaching aims but the reality overcame them. Teaching 37 children who already knew that English is not in their formal grades is not desirable even for teachers with experience. She lived an experience that let her be aware of role and the multiple tasks of a teacher. She felt the importance to motivate the learners, even under difficult circumstances, as illustrated in excerpt 17.

Excerpt 17. Lucy interview 2. 25th April 2018

(TA) teacher autonomy

(O) observation

(R) reflection

(DC) difficult conditions

(MO) motivation

> *I liked to apply different activities in my practicum(TA) because I saw that the children worked well. I was noticing if the activity was giving good results during the class (O). I knew my students more so, I noticed some problems the children have (R). The teachers have some problems too, especially when the number of children in the classroom is big(DC). They have to take care of all of them, control them, talk to their parents, check their homework. In Mexico, to have from 37 to 45 children about 8 to 9 years old are common conditions(DC). Even though when you want to pay attention to them, help them in a personalised way under these*

conditions it is impossible! If they don't care or don't want to learn, it is impossible that you do something. You can motivate them to learn, that they engage with their own learning process. They already know that this subject (English) does not count in their grades so, they don't care about it (MO). You also notice they have learning problems(O) but you cannot demand a lot because they are not motivated to learn.

In her case, Lucy had a self-directed teaching experience, looking for ways to support her audience. However, these circumstances in the classroom represented great barriers for achieving real autonomy. She tried to support her learners in their learning process, motivate them to see the foreign language as an opportunity, but finally, she covered the sections of the book that she was in charge of.

Liz was a participant teaching English in a secondary under difficult circumstances. Her motivation was affected with the relationship with the mentor.

Example 22. Liz, the setting hampering creative teaching in secondary school

When traditional teaching practices are pervading the setting, teachers focus on the exclusive use of the textbook and final exams. The cognitive and affective results are impacted by these practices and beliefs of each settings. When the main aim is to finish answering the units contained in the book and the time is dosed exclusively for sections in the book, there is no place for creative teaching. This was the case of my participant Liz, teaching English to a second grade in a technical secondary. She sent me diary recorded reflections of her lessons where she emphasised her enthusiasm for teaching. However, she faced many differences with the head teachers because they controlled her teaching and limited her to just follow the book. Her agency was also controlled because the teachers scolded her in front of the learners and the students saw her as another student practicing her teaching with them. This was a constant comment during her daily reflections, emphasising the disappointing situation in front of her students. This constant situation diminished her motivation and engagement with her students, observed in her classes.

In the end of her practicum, Liz expressed her dissatisfaction with this teaching experience that was controlled and influenced by the lack of support of the mentors in the classroom, as illustrated in the excerpt 22 during the second interview in the end of her practicum.

Excerpt 18. Liz interview 2. A book obscuring creativity. 25th April 2018

(CO) controller

(MO) motivation

Sometimes in some activities I could be creative but, as everything is already in the book (CO), there were not many opportunities to be creative. I did not have the opportunity to use creativity in my lessons. I sometimes used videos or songs but because of the situation, I didn't feel motivated to be creative any more (MO).

Liz's lack of motivation had as a result a mechanical teaching, exclusively focusing on the book. According to her previous interviews and comments after the observed lessons, she had been abroad, her English oral production is smooth with good accent, her own perception of her teaching was of being a creative and autonomous teacher. However, this setting was not the best to support the development of her abilities as a teacher. Those limitations that the mentors used with her were real barriers for Liz's teaching development. Her emotional side was affected, even though she cried once she called me by phone after having differences with the teacher in front of the students. This case was a clear evidence of the big impact the setting has on teachers' development of their autonomy in the classroom.

Appendix K   Celia and Kate, freedom for teaching large classes. Two cases at preparatory school

Two participants taught English at junior high level or preparatory school in the same school with a year of difference. Celia was observed in the last phase of the study during January to May 2019. Kate was observed in the first phase in spring 2018.

Example 23 Celia and the conditions at preparatory school

In preparatory school, Celia was teaching English in second grade to 31 learners, 17 years old in average. She had not teaching experience more than the required in the previous teaching modules with short practices and microteaching in the classroom. They had a similar teaching experience, the lack of teaching tools in the classroom for teaching a foreign language was a characteristic in this setting. Celia had a challenging teaching with a large group of teenagers with a lesson during late afternoon. Her agency was developed in a way that let them control diverse situations with her learners that many times tried to behave in a naughty way. For instance, in the class observation 6, a student refused to work because he forgot the book. Celia invited him to work in pairs with a class partner, he argued he disliked that person so, Celia suggested him to take a picture of the exercise and work in his notebook alone. The tension in that moment was obvious and Celia solved the constrain with a suitable attitude, showing her agentive teaching presence without further discussions with this teenager. The student had not more pretexts to start working in the exercises and the class continued.

I observed the lessons in the back of the classroom with a big hole on the walls next to my bench. The same few learners were constantly participating in the class. The rest of the students were there in the classroom with many activities that distracted them. The English teacher in the group (mentor) was the same for Kate and Celia. His administrative activities avoided his presence in the classroom. Celia was a dynamic young teacher who prepared many activities for her lesson, sometimes assertive, such as in the competitions and games where the learners were integrated in teams or individually. In some other occasions, Celia selected materials that were complex and long for the learners, and resulted in a mess.

Celia developed agency in a suitable way for managing a large group of teenagers. Their short difference in age was not a barrier for having her audience respect in the lessons. Her dynamic classes were the evidence that Celia observed her setting and adapted her teaching with suitable activities to maintain the learners working the entire hour. She tried many strategies and her

agency was a constant observed even when the activities were not as successful as she planned. Her reflective actions encouraged her audience to engage with the activities.

Celia had freedom for teaching and in the last part of the course, the imposition of a text book Celia had freedom for teaching but the imposition to review the text book in the final part of her practicum changed the course of her teaching experience. Celia had total freedom to apply her planned lessons in the way she considered suitable. She used her own observation and criteria to manage the lessons in a suitable way for the learners. The absence of the mentor and the freedom this situation caused were opportunities for her teacher autonomy development.

Celia who considered her audience's need for preparing her lessons. These internal aspects in my participants were crucial to overcome teaching without supervision. The imposition of a controller (McGrath, 2000) almost in the end of her practicum was contrasting her creative teaching style with the rigorous work based on the book. The mentor argued the book was the guide for the learners to pass the final exam in the course. The impact the imposition of the book had on the setting was obvious, Celia felt pressed to cover the topics and the teenagers felt disappointed with the entire class focused on the book.

In her final reflection showed in excerpt 19, she recognised her teaching transformation due to the responsibility to be in charge of the group during the entire practicum.

Excerpt 19. Celia interview 2. 25th April 2019

(TA) teacher autonomy

(CO) controller

(OB) observation

> *Since the beginning, I could decide how to teach my lessons, following the programme, covering the topics, I chose the materials and activities I apply (TA). In the last two weeks, we implemented the book in the group so, I had to include the activities in the book during almost the entire class so, it was very difficult (CO). The students refused to use the book (OB). I had to include the use of the book in my lesson plans. Indeed, they didn't feel like doing the activities. They were familiar with my previous activities like playing, discussing in pairs, or working in teams, standing up and competing (OB). When the teacher gave me the book, we just had to answer the book, check the answers, sign them. They showed their annoyance with me in every class (OB).*

When her freedom for teaching finished, her teaching acceptance amongst the learners was obviously different. The classroom was transformed from a noisy to a quiet space during my observations. The audience looked tired and without much motivation during the lesson.

Example 24. Celia, observation and reflection at preparatory

In the second observed class, Celia printed a big reading about feminism. The learners were not interested in the topic, the participation was scant, and the reading was complex that they were not able to finish it during the lesson. In general, Celia was always trying new teaching strategies, observing the results, and designing lesson plans based on her observations and experience with her audience. Besides this, she asked feedback in return of my observations. Her desire to improve her lessons was obvious, she asked for suggestions, advice, and materials for improving her teaching.

Excerpt 20. Celia Interview 2. 26th March 2019

(TA) teacher autonomy

(OB) observation

> "*Since the beginning I could decide how to teach my lessons (TA), following the programme covering the topics but I chose the materials and activities based on observing my students (OB)*".

The freedom that Celia had in this preparatory helped her to observe and recognise the characteristics of her audience. She had that facility to select the materials and activities she noticed were attractive and useful for the learning process of her students. Her willingness was evident when we analyse the types of suitable activities she prepared for her audience.

In picture 29, we can see the setting where Celia taught. We can observe the conditions of the classroom and just a segment of the large group Celia taught.

Picture 29. Celia Observed class 5. A challenging setting. April 2019.

Appendix K

Example 25. Kate willingness and motivation in preparatory school

Kate had freedom to implement the type and number of activities she considered useful for her audience. Her students were almost presenting the admission exam for university so, they payed attention to English that has an important section in the exam. In the corridors, she mentioned the importance to be aware of the learners' progress because they had to understand the structure and use of the language to pass satisfactorily their exam.

I noticed that the exam was a central motivation for them during the lessons. However, instead of press the learners with mechanical practices, Kate planned very creative activities such as Chinese whispers, observed in the lesson 2. It consisted of sitting the learners in lines per team, writing sentences containing the grammar structure reviewed. The first learner read the sentence and whisper it to the student's ear behind the line, and so on until the last one who had to stand up and write the sentence on the board. These types of competitions and grouping the learners in teams worked well in that numerous group. The teenagers were participating and attentive to write the sentences correctly.

Unfortunately, Kate was not available to have the second interview in the end of her practice. But in the beginning, she gave her conception of teacher autonomy and her observed actions during my research underpinned her view, as shown in excerpt 21.

   Excerpt 21. Kate Interview 1. 26 February 2018

(BE) beliefs

(IN) innovation

   "teacher autonomy is when the teacher feels free to modify and adapt the lesson and the topic in order to provide the students a better way to learn (BE). And it is when the teacher presents a different way from the book, from the traditional lesson(IN)".

Her willingness to teach her students was observed through every lesson. Kate provided a variety of activities to practice the language that let her students participate and collaborate in every exercise.

Kate was conscious about her learners and their need to understand and learn grammar topics that resulted difficult for them. She was very dynamic in the sense of trying many creative activities that helped them to practice the topics. For instance, in lesson 3, she showed that empathetic attitude with her learners practising reported speech. They underlined the grammar point in a printed exercise, Kate asked them for further examples, looking for their creativity and invention with their free creations. Then, she indicated them to read the sentences again but converting the sentences into direct speech. This challenging activity was difficulty for the students so, she decided to use the board to give more examples to illustrate the differences between tenses. Her patient explanation was good, however, most of them did not understand. She patiently explained again the difference between both tenses with a sense of confidence with the learners. Some students were totally out of the activity and she ignored them for the moment. Then, with everybody's attention, she announced them it was time to practice the topic and showed them a paper ball. She asked them to sit in a circle and explained the game. Her agency was obvious, controlling this group of 30 teenagers. The paper ball contained many layers. Each paper layer had a written direct sentence, they threw the ball to a partner, and the one who received the ball had to convert the sentence into reported speech.

Appendix L   Improvisation at university. The cases of Cristina, Laura and Ellen

Christina, Laura and Ellen were teaching English at university level

Example 26 Christina and the lack of a mentor in the classroom

One of the characteristics I observed in Christina's lessons was her consistent need to improvise due to the mentor solicitude to stay longer in the classroom. She was a dynamic participant who achieved effective friendly agency in her group. In the end of her practicum, Christina related

teacher autonomy with a sense of agency to support the learners and adapt her efforts to help them during her practicum, as illustrated in excerpt 22.

Excerpt 22. Christina interview 2. 15th November 2018.

(AG) agency

(TA) teacher autonomy

"*teacher autonomy is the facility the teacher has to take decisions based on the students(AG), independently from the programme (TA), based on what he is teaching. If the program sets the book all the time, the teacher can decide on the best or convenient way for teaching(TA)*".

Christina's reflection is an evidence of her agency development process. Little by little she exercised her agency without being imperative or impose her will in the classroom. On the contrary, she was so friendly and empathic with her pupils. Her audience responded with compromise, participating in the activities with a responsibly attitude. She observed her students and looked for creative ways to develop the activities, showing that capacity to think and act in a reflective and convenient way for the audience.

Example 27. Christina improvisation at university

Christina was teaching English at university. I observed a young lively teacher who was engaged with her audience's learning process. In her case, Christina was in charge of on group of target language 1. In her first reflections, Christina recognised her nervousness for teaching young adults for the first time, as shown in excerpt 23. However, she was able to develop many skills that supported her teaching management.

Excerpt 23 Christina Personal reflection 14th to 17th August 2018

(E) emotional side

(BE) beliefs

(IM) improvisation

This was my first week working with young adults, I can say that I was really nervous (E) because I did not know if the students will accept that I will be practicing with them. I had a lot of questions on my mind, I thought that work with young adults will be very difficult, I did not know if they would like my activities(BE). I introduced myself with the students we started the topic about nationalities, the students were quiet, they did not want to participate and I felt so frustrated(E). The activities I

prepared went as planned, although they didn't take as much time as I expected so, I had to
improvise (IM) but I believe they did a good job given the fact that it was the first day (BE). The next
topic was adjectives and we made an activity in which students competed to get a signature, they
were more comfortable and so do I.

She planned her activities for one hour of the lesson but at least in three times, the head teacher arrived and said he could not stay in the second hour because of his extra administrative activities. Christina had to improvise and carry on with the lesson for the second hour, like happened in the class observation 4, where the teacher left the classroom and she decided to prolong the activity and make a review from a previous lesson.

In picture 29 we observe the lesson 4, where Christina included a game that integrated the entire group. As a result of that constant situation of being in charge of the group alone, she developed skills such as adaptation, improvisation, and spontaneity.

Picture 29. Christina Observed class 4. The fruit salad game. November 4th 2018

Christina's capacity to improvise in the classroom and adapt her efforts to the moment was visible. I observed constant good evidence that creativity supports thoughts and actions to adapt the teaching to sudden situations. Every time she decided on the type of activity that resulted beneficial to her audience. Her physical appearance made her look like another learner. Indeed, the difference in ages was not big with her students. This teaching situation looked as scaffolding under a confident atmosphere. Her learners expressed spontaneously the support and the useful activity they had with Christina. She helped them with difficult topics, to prepare their exams, and the most important amongst their comments, to understand the logical use of the language. She constantly used critical thinking to make the students reflect on the purposes of the foreign language.

Example 28. Laura improvisation at university

At university, Laura was another participant who also developed that capacity to observe her audience, and apply her agency in sudden decisions to improve the learning moment with

creative decisions. For instance, in the observed lesson 1, Laura prepared a game, bingo, to practice vocabulary of jobs. The learners were participating actively and she was supporting them individually with their queries. She observed they were tired and asked them to go out of the classroom for doing the following activity to continue practising vocabulary of jobs, forming two lines, one in front of the another. Then, she gave them 2 minutes to write two professions in a small piece of paper. She collected the papers in a pencil bag. They picked up a paper and the student in front had to guess the profession, just asking closed questions. Once they finished guessing all the professions, they went back to the classroom.

When the class was over, I asked Laura about this part of the class, because the lesson plan did not mention the activity was planned outside the classroom. In excerpt 24, we see the sudden decision she took, considering the participants in the classroom. This improvisation helped her to continue with the class in a smooth way, as she recognises in excerpt 24 below.

Excerpt 24. Laura reflection after observed lesson 1. 19th January 2018

(IM) improvisation

(OB) observation

(RE) reflection

> This spontaneous decision to take them outside the classroom was improvised (IM) because I noticed the students were very sleepy (OB) and I think the change of place and the air could help them to develop the activity with more energy (RE).

Laura showed an evident willingness for her lessons, preparing varied materials and sequenced activities. However, without her observation, reflection, and suitable decisions to adapt the activities to the moment, the results would not be the same. Her previous short teaching experience and personal motivation showed empathy with her learners to manage the lesson supporting the learners. Those constant decisions were observed also with short interruptions in the lesson to move and stretch their bodies, oxygenate their brains and continued with the activities.

Improvisation was also related to creativity for the need to improve the conditions and obtain a good result as illustrated with the examples below.

Example 29. Laura, freedom for teaching and imposition of controllers at university

With little previous teaching experience, Laura was able to develop an obvious capacity to develop her teaching. She was a very demanding teacher with herself and with her learners. For that reason, she showed some frustration when she realised that she had to entirely use the text book during the lesson and her learners were not as engaged as she would have expected.

For instance, in the observed lesson 1, Laura greeted the learners and gave them a photocopy with the difference between do & does. Laura walked around the classroom, answering questions individually and explaining patiently their doubts with examples. The students answered this exercises in pairs but discussing in Spanish most of the time. The exercise had three sections: Fill in the gaps, create questions for the answers they already have, and create the question and answer with regard to simple present in singular and plural forms. After 20 minutes with this activity, she noticed they were tired so she asked them to stand up and stretch their bodies.

The second activity was bingo, using vocabulary of jobs and professions. She showed many examples with some cards, the students repeated the pronunciation. They started the game, and there was a special mark for the winners of the game. As she notices they look tired, she organized a physical activity for a couple of minutes (singing the song head, shoulders, knees, and toes). The students look motivated enjoying the activity. Many spoke in Spanish but the entire group looked into the activity with energy. Classes like this were observed, and Ara was able to integrate extra materials in a suitable way with the contents of the book. The confidence the learners showed for asking her questions was obvious. In her reflection after the class observation, she expressed her strategies with this group, as illustrated in excerpt 25.

Excerpt 25. Laura class observation 1. 26th January 2018

(EX) expectations

(OB) observation

(AG) agency

> I waited for more interest from my students (EX), they are indifferent and don't show engagement in their learning process (OB). It is very important to observe my students and when they are tired or distracted, I apply these physical exercises to bring their attention back, oxygenate their brains, and make a smooth class (AG).

During the first part of the practicum, Laura had freedom from the setting to plan and implement her lessons in a way she complemented the contents of the curricula with creative activities. However, due to the requirement of 60 hours for the practicum and the exams calendar, the head teacher asked her to attend two hours every day but reducing her teaching on the book exclusively. Laura felt the pressure in her teaching and her disappointing attitude was observed

then in her lessons. She covered the indicated sections of the book just following the sequence of the topics and exercises without her initial motivation. In excerpt 26, Laura reflected on this imposition that changed her

Excerpt 26. Laura interview 2.

(E) emotional side

(BE) beliefs

> I felt frustration because apart of teaching every day for covering my hours in the practicum, now I have to focus all my efforts on the book(E). The head teacher thanks my efforts to bring extra materials to the classroom to practice, but she asked me just to cover the exercises on the book. I feel angry because I prefers to bring authentic and interesting material to the students(E). The students don't care about the book(BE), I observed the lack of freedom it implies in my classes. I feel angry and disappointed with these dispositions, the time to finish the book is over and my teaching interests too(E).

It looked Laura was so stressed by the fact of placing the fill in the book in the centre of her efforts. Her motivation was also affected. She believes the book is not attractive for her learners. During the last class observation, I noticed her irritability to teach just the book without extra materials. She was serious and the atmosphere felt tense, not as relaxed as in the beginning of the observations. The fact of spend the two hours reviewing the book and the lack of compatibility with her mentor gave the context a remarkable tension.

Example 30. Laura agency at university

Participants had the freedom to plan their lessons at university. Their process of teaching-learning was developed under good circumstances, supported by their mentors. In excerpt 27, Laura reflected about the degree of freedom she had in her practicum and her agentive teaching to cover her goals.

Excerpt 27. Laura Interview 2. 13 June 2018

(TA) teacher autonomy

(TM) teaching management

> "I think I could develop teacher autonomy because I had freedom to use the extra materials, the book, the way to conduct the class, use videos, the dynamics in pairs, groups (TA). Sometimes I could change the structure of the chairs in the classroom, instead of lines, clusters. Sometimes, I arrived

early and I could steak papers on the wall. I had this facility to modify things (TM) *that maybe in another school couldn't be possible"*.

One characteristic in Laura's lessons was that she was attentive to the response of her audience. As her lesson was at 7 a.m., her students were constantly sleepy, jawing, of distracted. One of the most common strategies Laura used was the implementation of short physical movements or routines with songs to come the attention back to the lesson. The way she suddenly decided to include these activities was friendly, not as an imposition. Her students did the movements with good attitude.

Example 31. Laura observation and reflection at university

Laura reflected on the importance of observing her audience. Her teaching was based on her learners' interests, not only the contents of the programme. Her ability to observe what she defined as problems, helped her determine her reasoned actions or agency towards better results in her lessons. Laura was one of the participants who had some teaching experience. She also had been studying abroad in an Anglophone country. These experiences let her observe better her learners. In excerpt 28, she related autonomy with that capacity to observe the audience and adapt the planned teaching.

Excerpt 28 Laura interview 2. 13th June 2018

(TA) teacher autonomy

(AG) agency

> *"being an autonomous teacher not only deals with, as I already mention, the content and the materials but also that you are able to solve any kind of problems or issues that you have in the classroom (TA). Maybe you see that the students are not getting what you try to explain and you have to figure it out right in the moment, what to do or what to change or what to adapt to solve that problem (AG). So, I guess we as teachers should be autonomous in that way."*

Observation is a key capacity to solve constraints while teaching. Laura developed this capacity evidently as observed in each lesson. However, a young teacher's emotional side can be affected by the lack of enthusiasm of the audience. Laura had a type of catharsis when we were talking in the corridors of the university a pair of times. She felt frustration to see her students' lack of engagement. I observed a lot of activities in her classes, many strategies that caught her audience's attention. Even though, after the last observation her students commented spontaneously that she is a good teacher who cared a lot about them with regard to explain and practice the topics but with little patience.

Example 32. Ellen, capacity for autonomous teaching learning at university

At university, Ellen was a participant with an incredible charism and empathy with his learners. She was teaching a group in the first semester and this experience was enriching her teaching learning as she reflected in the end of her practicum, as illustrated in excerpt 29.

Excerpt 29 Ellen interview 2. 10th November 2018

(E) emotional side

(TL) teaching learning

(TM) teaching management

(AG) agency

(RE) reflection

> *I enjoyed my class because my students formed a team and worked together (E), even when they had doubts and had to look for answers on the net or in a dictionary. I will miss them(E), because they have taught me many valuable things about group management and real class preparation, as well as improvisation(TL). I had to improvise and improve my lesson (TM) because I feel responsible of the students' learning. When they were distracted, bored or not very participative, I implemented strategies that brought their attention back (AG). I have learnt to observe the students, improvise, and adapt my lesson a lot (RE).*

This situated teaching Ellen mentioned, reflects the development of her teaching; she recognised she learnt a lot. In the corridors, she commented the teacher constantly asked her to cover the entire class. For that reason, she had to improvise and select suitable activities for the lessons. For instance, in the class observation 1, they reviewed vocabulary of the countries. Ellen used a power point presentation where she explained in Spanish that they will read some characteristics of different countries and the student had to guess the country in each slide. With the same presentation, she asked the learners the country of precedence of many famous people, their nationality, facts the students knew or could mention about these countries. The lesson was dynamic, the learners seemed engaged with the activity, Ellen was supportive, eliciting the vocabulary to develop these exercises. The integration in the lesson was observed and Ellen's manage of the teaching looked satisfactory.

Unfortunately, my access to her classes was blocked by the teacher after the second class observed. He scolded her for accepting collaborate in this study. I asked him permission for observing Ellen's classes, but his attitude was different with me. Collaboration was not in his plans

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and his attitude and decisions avoided to develop this case in a smooth way. Even though Ellen had to finish her teaching before the arranged dates. The mentor avoided more class observations. The setting can represent an opportunity for learning but not all the members of the staff follow these principles of the institution.

Appendix M   External factors that influenced TLA

Participant	Constraints	Mentoring in the classroom. Freedom for teaching.	Creative and agentive strategies (actions) to manage teaching and solve constraint	Examples of creative actions
George (kindergarten)	Difficult circumstances (not mentoring during teaching, large groups, hard schedules for the lesson, and hard conditions for teaching)	Freedom for teaching and NO mentor in the classroom	Application of creative teaching, creative techniques of group control, improvisation, reflections and research above his audience	Use of a puppet to promote children' participation, use of songs for starting and finishing the lessons, give examples through drawings children proposed
Mary (kindergarten)	Short lessons	Freedom for teaching and mentor in the classroom	Use of creative materials connected with meaningful topics her students proposed	Use of a puppet in conversations, team work for practising topics, use of songs for starting and finishing the lessons
Vicky (kindergarten)	Lack of motivation to work with very young learners	Freedom for teaching and mentor in the classroom	Use of varied creative materials and activities. Application of collaborative activities	Use of a puppet to hold short conversations, use of songs for starting and finishing the lessons
Lucy (Primary)	Mandatory use of a decontextualized book, large groups, lack of teaching conditions, personal issues	NO freedom for teaching and NO mentor's support in the classroom	Connected the learners with the language. Motivating learners	Printing colourful images related to the topics, grammar explanations, translations to see similitudes between mother and foreign language. Constant oral motivation for her pupils
Anne (Primary)	Large groups, lack of conditions for teaching, inconsistence in the sequence of her lessons	Freedom for teaching and NO mentor in the classroom	Organizing learner interaction during the activities	Team competitions, pair work to create sentences, games, short talks.
Tom (Secondary)	Large groups, mandatory use of decontextualized textbook, lack of teaching conditions	Freedom for teaching, mentor in the classroom	Creative teaching. Organizing interaction and collaboration amongst learners	Team competition, pair work to solve a puzzle, freedom to propose the learning output in the lesson
Liz (Secondary)	Large groups, mandatory decontextualized textbook, negative attitude of the mentor, as a consequence, affected professional identity and lack of personal teaching motivation.	NO freedom for teaching, mandatory textbook, mentor in the classroom hampering her development, scolding her in front of her learners	Following indications, adapting her teaching to the conditions and ethos of the school	Writing exercises using personal examples
Kate (Preparatory)	Large groups, lack of teaching conditions	Freedom for teaching and NO mentor in the classroom	Creative teaching, empathy, varied types of interaction and collaboration amongst learners	Competitions in teams, varied exercises complementing the topics
Celia (Preparatory)	Large groups, lack of teaching conditions	Freedom for teaching and NO mentor in the classroom	Creative teaching, varied types of interaction and collaboration amongst learners	Competitions in teams, varied exercises complementing the topics
Dany (University)	Large group, mandatory textbook	Freedom for teaching, use of a textbook, and mentor in the classroom	Creative teaching related to the course contents, constant use of technologies as creative teaching tool to illustrate the topics	Role plays, competitions, improvised conversations in pairs, pair games.
Laura (University)	Large group, mandatory textbook, presence of the mentor	Freedom for teaching, use of a textbook, and mentor in the classroom	Creative teaching, constant independent work for her audience, many games related to the topics. Freedom for the learners to work in the activities	Role plays, extra materials related to the text content, competitions, improvised conversations in pairs, pair games.
Christina (University)	Large group, mandatory textbook, freedom for teaching, not always with teaching supervision	Freedom for teaching and sometimes mentor in the classroom	Creative teaching, improvisation, personalised support during the lessons	Games, improvised conversations, role plays, meaningful written examples related with personal stories
Ellen (University)	Large group, mandatory textbook, freedom for teaching without the mentor's support	Freedom for teaching and NO mentor in the classroom	Creative teaching, constant use of technologies as creative teaching tools,	Competitions, role plays, collaborative exercises related to the contents

Appendix M

Appendix N   Relationship between managing teaching, agency and the impact of the setting

Participant	Initial teaching	Final teaching	Initial agency	Final agency	Freedom in the Setting	Result
George (kindergarten)	Without much group control	Clear teaching management	Shy agency	Confident agency	Freedom to teach and manage constraints	Development of TLA
Mary (kindergarten)	Shy directions	Friendly management of group	Friendly and shy agency	Confident agency	Freedom to teach and manage constraints	Development of TLA
Vicky (kindergarten)	Shy directions	Friendly management of group	Friendly and shy agency	Confident agency	Freedom to teach and manage constraints	Development of t TLA
Lucy (Primary)	Shy control, struggle with management	Manage of the group with strict methods	Shy agency	Confident agency	Controlled teaching just reviewing the textbook	Awareness of the role of the teacher
Anne (Primary)	Friendly management of group	Manage of the group with strict methods	Friendly agency	Confident agency	Total freedom for teaching without mentoring	Awareness of the role of the teacher
Tom (Secondary)	Shy control, struggle with management	Active teaching that maintained the group busy	Shy agency	Confident agency	Partial freedom for teaching	Development of TLA
Liz (Secondary)	Controlled teaching	Manage of the group with strict methods	Shy agency	Confident agency	Controlled teaching	Awareness of the role of the teacher
Kate (Preparatory)	Shy control, struggle with group management	Friendly management of group	Shy agency	Confident agency	Freedom to teach and manage constraints	Development of TLA
Celia (Preparatory)	Shy control, struggle with group management	Following the textbook and controlling the group	Shy agency	Confident agency	Freedom to teach and manage constraints	Development of TLA
Dany (University)	Timid teaching management	Active teaching that maintained the group busy	Shy and friendly agency	Confident agency	Freedom to teach and manage constraints	Development of TLA
Laura (University)	Good teaching management	Good teaching management, annoyance in the end for just covering the book	Confident agency	Confident agency	Freedom to teach complementing the textbook and manage constraints	Development of TLA
Christina (University)	Good teaching management	Friendly management of group	Confident agency	Confident agency	Freedom to teach complementing the textbook and manage constraints	Development of TLA
Ellen (University)	Good teaching management	Friendly management of group	Confident agency	Confident agency	Freedom to teach complementing the textbook and manage constraints	Development of TLA

Appendix O   Internal characteristics of autonomous teacher-learners

Internal characteristics of autonomous teachers	CAPACITY	STRATEGY
Personal attitude	Empathy	Affective bonds, extra practice to reinforce the topic, giving personal support,
	Willingness & motivation	Enjoying teaching, engaging with students' learning process
Capacity for creative teaching	Improvisation	Sudden changes to make the lesson smooth
	Adaptation	Consider the number of learners, conditions, responses of the students.
	Creative use of technologies	Use of videos, recorded songs, documentaries related to the contents.
	Creative materials and activities	Application of varied games, role plays, competitions
	Dynamic lessons	Variety of short and related activities
Knowledge of teaching	Observation and reflection their setting	Careful attention to the type of successful activities, the possibilities in the classroom, the cognitive level of the audience.
	Understanding their audience	Asking for feedback to the students, observing their responses in the lessons.
	Self-evaluation of their teaching	Asking for feedback to the mentor, supervisor, and observer.
	Activities supporting audience´s cognitive development, meaningful learning, and critical thinking	Compositions, creating role plays. Supporting scaffolding amongst learners. Questions, activities, and participation related to their personal experience.
	Supporting learner autonomy	Letting the students design their learning outputs.
Aspects or attitudes hampering their development	Lack of confidence	Motivated teachers to use creative teaching. Situated lesson plan to engage their learners.
	Worries about discipline	Application of creative strategies to manage teaching. Meaningful activities after observing, interacting, and understanding the students.

Glossary of Terms

Creativity: thinking and activity in language education that is novel, valuable, and open-ended, and helps to enrich learning in our students and ourselves

Identity: How individuals know and call themselves

Teacher agency: capacity to act within one's sphere of activity with professional intentionality and personal choice

Teacher autonomy: willingness and to be able to manage unfair teaching, developing a sense of professional (teacher) agency, engaged with supporting the development of learner agency in the students.

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