

# Learner autonomy and teacher autonomy

## Synthesising an agenda

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Despite a shift in the field of learner autonomy towards a consideration of the role of the teacher and ways in which learner autonomy is bound up not only with the learners' but also the teachers' own learning and teaching experiences and their beliefs about autonomy, the interrelationships between the concepts are still largely unclear. This is due in part to the relatively short history of work in the field which, despite the emergence of some consensus in defining the concepts, has revealed ever-increasing levels of complexity as the multifarious nature of the contexts, drivers and manifestations of autonomy, both teacher and learner, becomes ever more apparent. The chapters in this book have individually considered either discrete or interrelated elements of learner and teacher autonomy in language learning. The purpose of this concluding chapter is to attempt to draw together the various strands which emerge in the book as a whole, and offer a synthesis of the driving question which the book was intended to address, namely where and how, if at all, the concepts of learner autonomy and teacher autonomy relate to each other. In doing so, the chapter will necessarily clarify what is meant by these two concepts.

### Introduction

Certainly it is crucial to explore the teacher dimension in this broader field, given the increasing inclusion of particular and variable constructions of learner autonomy in the languages curriculum at school, college and university level around the world, driven by a host of political, economic, social and pedagogical changes (Lamb and Reinders 2005). As one example, the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages includes "raising the learner's awareness of his or her present state of knowledge; self-setting of feasible and worthwhile objectives; selection of materials; self-assessment" (Council of Europe 2001: section 1.5), and this shift towards learner autonomy is thus reflected in the curricula of many

European countries (Lamb forthcoming a). Similarly fundamental changes can also be perceived in the languages curricula of many countries around the world, such as China, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Japan.

Even when learner autonomy is not explicitly expressed as a curriculum objective, the demands of more recent modes of learning (distance learning, flexible learning, blended learning etc.) stimulated by the availability of new technologies require a consideration by the teacher of ways in which learners can assume responsibility for their own learning. The results of a national research project carried out by the School of Education and the Modern Language Teaching Centre of the University of Sheffield, into e-learning in languages, linguistics and area studies programmes in higher education, suggested a number of areas which needed further research, including the following: student experience and the development of autonomy in pedagogic practice; practitioner narratives, focused in particular on ways in which teachers' pedagogic beliefs articulate with new technologies; the nature of blending in blended learning, to explore the optimum relationship between independent and classroom-based learning; the development of learning communities, and how such development might be fostered; time and time-management; and the role of the e-tutor. (Lamb 2005)

Such radical shifts in understandings of the nature and processes of learning provide a new imperative to teachers to come to terms with its meaning and implications for teaching. There can also, of course, be considerable resistance to the development of learner autonomy as a result of any number of contextual constraints (Jiménez Raya, Lamb and Vieira 2007). These issues have hence provided the propelling force in much of what has been called teacher autonomy research. However, whether the extent to which such teacher development for learner autonomy necessarily implies teacher *autonomy* is not clear.

It is for this reason that the decision was taken at the AILA Symposium of the Scientific Commission on Learner Autonomy in Language Learning in Tokyo, 1999, to organise the next symposium (in Singapore in 2002) on the nature of teacher autonomy and its relationships with learner autonomy. It was already envisaged that the teacher needed to be autonomous, either in the sense of being 'free' to organise learning in new ways, or in the sense of having experience of the demands of learning autonomously (be it the learning of other languages, the learning of how to teach, or the self-management of one's own classroom practice), if s/he were to be in a position to facilitate the development of learner autonomy. Building on his earlier considerations of the role of the teacher in learner autonomy, this was pointed out by Little in 2000, when he stated:

(...) the development of learner autonomy depends on the development of teacher autonomy. By this I mean two things: (i) that it is unreasonable to expect

teachers to foster the growth of autonomy in their learners if they themselves do not know what it is to be an autonomous learner; and (ii) that in determining the initiatives they take in the classrooms, teachers must be able to exploit their professional skills autonomously, applying to their teaching those same reflective and self-managing processes that they apply to their learning. (Little 2000: 45)

However, as papers were submitted for the symposium, it became apparent that the idea that teacher autonomy (whatever it meant) and learner autonomy were closely bound together was contested. Some papers focused more on the role of the teacher in the development of learner autonomy, and some focused more on teacher autonomy as a concept separate and distinct from learner autonomy, whilst some did explore the interrelationships between the two concepts. For this reason, this chapter is structured to reflect these different emphases. It does not represent a historical perspective, or any notion of development from one phase of research activity to another. It simply attempts to map the field as it is reflected in the chapters of this book (and beyond) and as it relates to these particular constructs, highlighting issues for further consideration, in terms of both practice and research.

#### Learner autonomy and the teacher

Though there are many ways of defining learner autonomy (e.g. Benson 2001; Gremmo and Riley 1995; Jiménez Raya, Lamb and Vieira; Pennycook 1997; Sinclair 2000), it can be argued that research into learner autonomy in language learning gained impetus in the context of self-directed learning, of which the ultimate manifestation requires no teacher:

This term describes the situation in which the learner is totally responsible for all of the decisions concerned with his learning and the implementation of those decisions. In full autonomy there is no involvement of a 'teacher' or an institution. And the learner is also independent of specially prepared materials. (Dickinson 1987: 11)

This focus on the learning mode, which can be seen as learner control over the learning environment, a visible, external manifestation of autonomy (sometimes described as *independent* learning, e.g. Lamb 2006), was, however, complemented by a focus on a more internal, less visible construction of autonomy, in which *autonomous* learning involves a *capacity* for taking control, a knowledge of *how* to learn as well as the motivation *to* learn. Unlike self-direction as described above, however, this in no way suggests that learning takes place independently of the teacher (though of course it may); what it does suggest is that the teacher may need to refocus his/her teaching, supporting the development of the learners' autonomy

according to their individual needs, through an encouragement to reflect on their metacognitive knowledge and their beliefs about learning, and through strategy development (ibid.). In other words, whether working independently of the teacher or not, learners need to develop autonomy in this internal sense; indeed it can be argued that learners “need to be autonomous in order to be able to learn independently” (Lamb and Reinders 2005: 226).

The role of the teacher in the development of such learner autonomy has thus become an important area of research in this field (e.g. Breen and Mann 1997; Voller 1997). In this volume, for example, there are examples of research into the teacher’s role in the classroom. Macaro explores three dimensions of learner autonomy (autonomy of language competence, autonomy of language learning competence, and autonomy of choice) in order to identify the role played by the teacher in each dimension. Like Little (2007), he usefully reminds us that the ultimate aim of language learning is autonomous language use, which suggests the need to look further at ways in which learner autonomy articulates with theories of second language acquisition and communicative language teaching, linking into and building on research into constructivist understandings of language learning (e.g. van Lier 1996).

In the first part of his theory of Dynamic Interrelational Space (DIS), La Ganza in this volume explores the role of the teacher in the development of learner autonomy by analyzing teacher-learner relationships in the classroom. Here, the focus is on the dynamic nature of the relationship which offers scope to both teachers and learners to influence the way in which learning happens (or fails to happen), and offers inspiration to further research in different classroom contexts. In addition, it invites further research into the nature of agency in contexts of conflict as well as consensus, and the processes by which negotiation, compromise, and reflection may lead to collaboration and interdependence (Kohonen 1992).

In more independent modes of learning, the teacher may be perceived as a support to the learner who increasingly becomes autonomous (see Lamb and Reinders 2005, for a range of strategies for supporting independence through the development of autonomy). In self-access and distance learning, this has become evident in the role of the advisor or counselor (e.g. Bailly and Ciekanski 2006; Crabbe, Hoffman and Cotterall 2001; Gremmo and Castillo 2006; Kelly 1996; Mozzon-McPherson 2001; Pemberton, Toogood, Ho and Lam 2001; Reinders, Hacker and Lewis 2004; Riley, 1998; Voller, Martyn and Pickard 1999). In this volume, Cotterall and Crabbe describe their attempts to push forward their students’ independence by offering them access to a database of potential solutions to common problems which have been identified through research into advisor interviews. The opportunities provided by new technologies to support learners thus shift the role of the teacher/advisor once again: this can move into the area of

supporting language learning through the development of e-environments, e.g. the VELA development in Hong Kong (Toogood and Pemberton 2006) or the development of an Electronic Learning Environment (ELE) at the University of Auckland (Reinders 2006); or it can involve (on-line) support of individual or collaborative e-learning through a gradual exposure of the student to different ways of exploiting its opportunities (Gläsmann 2006; White 2003, 2006). Clearly such forms of learning and learning support will increase exponentially in the future; it is thus crucial that further research explores not only ways of enhancing learning but also sustaining motivation and developing relationships in virtual learning spaces, and the role of the ‘teacher’ in supporting this.

Fundamental to the development of learner autonomy are the beliefs about and perspectives on roles and responsibilities in teaching and learning held by both learners and teachers. In his chapter, Benson calls for further research into learners’ perspectives of their own learning and of how they direct it across settings and contexts, both within an institution and out of class. In doing so, he wishes to reconnect learner autonomy to autonomy in life, rather than to specific autonomous behaviours which the teacher may hope for. The significance of this chapter is that it reminds us that learners’ learning can be constrained by the teacher, leading to a lack of authenticity in learning which can disconnect it from real life. This disconnection is also usefully illustrated in this volume by Nicolaides’ chapter on student teachers’ beliefs about who should have control over teaching and learning processes, accessed in counseling sessions as part of their language learning programme. The striking contrast between beliefs about learning in the classroom and learning outside the classroom, suggests the need for learners to reflect on ‘real life’ learning experiences in order to enhance learning in general, and particularly in the formal context. Nicolaides’ example of Otávio in particular illustrates a perspective on knowledge which is unrelated to life when he states that the student ‘doesn’t know anything’, despite later describing how he learned English autonomously at home. These two chapters bring the question of teachers’ beliefs, and how, intentionally or unintentionally, they constrain learner autonomy, into sharp relief. In particular with regard to Otávio, we are forced to ask what kind of teacher he will become unless he reflects on his deep-seated constructions of learning.

These chapters also reveal the potential, for both practitioners and researchers, of listening to learners’ voices (see also Benson and Nunan 2002). Clearly they indicate the significance of contextual approaches (Barcelos 2001), not only in terms of how beliefs can only be understood in relation to a given context, but also in terms of how powerful the context is in shaping learners’ perceptions. If the classroom context can disempower learners to the extent that they think they do not know anything, then presumably it can also influence their beliefs in the other

direction, enabling them to develop a sense of responsibility for learning. Given the close links between such beliefs and motivation, and between motivation and the connectedness of institution-based learning to real life (e.g. Lamb forthcoming b), and between motivation and learning, such research has major implications for the way in which teachers may develop their teaching.

From the perspective of the chapters included in this section, it could be proposed that the central research question relates to the ways in which the teacher supports or, more than likely unintentionally, constrains the development of autonomous learning practices, both within and outside the classroom. If this is then to influence practice, there is also a need to consider how such research can most effectively be applied in order to support teachers to further develop different elements of learner autonomy. As this is likely to involve teachers in considering their own long-standing beliefs about the nature of learning, and in particular about the roles of teachers and learners, and being prepared to reflect on them critically, it could be argued that a further dimension of this research is to explore how it might support teachers in developing their own autonomy, if we consider teacher autonomy to be a capacity for “escaping from the treadmill” (Lamb and Simpson 2003) of our own unquestioned beliefs about how things should be done.

However, this last proposal moves us into the next section of this chapter, namely a focus on teacher autonomy as it manifests itself in this book.

### Teacher autonomy

Research into teacher autonomy in the field of second language education has had a short history. One of the first to discuss it was Little (1995), and in his references to responsibility, control and freedom he drew clear parallels with learner autonomy:

Genuinely successful teachers have always been autonomous in the sense of having a strong sense of personal responsibility for their teaching, exercising via continuous reflection and analysis the highest degree of affective and cognitive control of the teaching process, and exploring the freedom that this confers. (Little 1995 :179)

Further early attempts to define teacher autonomy were made by Smith (2000) and McGrath (2000) in the publication entitled *Learner autonomy, teacher autonomy: future directions* by Sinclair, McGrath and Lamb (2000). It became clear from these contributions to the field that the concept of teacher autonomy would be as challenging as that of learner autonomy.

In this volume, Smith and Erdoğan offer an overview of existing dimensions of this concept. Their distinctions between *teaching* (and teacher autonomy) and

*teacher-learning* (and teacher-learner autonomy), and between *capacity* and *freedom*, are significant in clarifying a concept which lacks immediate transparency. The extent to which teachers have the capacity to improve their own teaching through their own efforts (through reflective or research-oriented approaches) clearly indicates one conceptualisation of teacher autonomy. However, the freedom to be able to teach in the way that one wants to teach is also a manifestation of teacher autonomy (see, for example, Webb 2002). One may be autonomous in the sense of being capable of self-direction/self-development, or in the sense of being free of constraints. And both of these interpretations are different from those which relate to the notion of teacher-learning, where the focus is on the capability of making decisions regarding ones own professional learning needs, or indeed the freedom to do so.

These dimensions provide fertile ground for further exploration, and indeed build on a long history of generic research into reflective practice, action research, teacher thinking and conditions for successful teaching, including fields such as school improvement and management of change (see, for example, the work of Carr and Kemmis 1986; Day 1999; Hopkins 2001; Schon 1983; Stenhouse 1975). Specific to language learning, however, is an exploration of the constraints which impact on language teachers in particular. In this volume, Trebbi distinguishes between internal and external constraints, with the former equating to teachers' beliefs about language teaching and learning, and the latter relating to educational systems (the curriculum, examinations, etc). In his chapter, La Ganza explores this framework of constraints further by expanding his theory of Dynamic Interrelational Space (DIS) to include the teacher's dynamic relationship with his/her own past, with learners and other professionals, and with institutional and bureaucratic factors. Working within a different context, Sinclair (in this volume) examines the institutional constraints on the university lecturer in the UK with its intensive quality assurance regimes. Such constraints can challenge the professionalism of the teaching body, reducing it to a technicist enterprise. In terms of language teaching, this can be compounded by the variable status within institutions of language as a curriculum area.

Hand-in-hand with the consideration of constraints which exert control over the teacher goes the desirability of exploring ways of understanding the impact of such constraints on the facilitation of learners' learning, but this is an area of research which is as yet underexplored. Nevertheless, we do find work which attempts to support teachers in overcoming such constraints, whether they be internal or external. Sinclair's chapter offers a valuable example of a teacher finding her way through the maze of external controls and yet managing to achieve something of what she wishes to achieve. However, though constraints can be evident to the teacher, they may also be hidden from the teacher as a result of the existence of

impenetrable educational or social structures or indeed of the teacher's own socialization, and internalized in the teacher's belief system. Here there is resonance with political-critical conceptions of autonomy, with teachers being caught up in hegemonic practices in which power and ideology are embedded in the structures, attitudes, and commonsensical, taken-for-granted social arrangements of schools and other educational institutions (Gramsci 1992, 1994; Lukes 1974). Going even further than that, Foucault's work suggests that the school is characterised by a "disciplinary technology", designed to create "a docile body that may be subjected, used, transformed and improved" (Foucault 1977: 198).

Drawing a parallel between constraints on learner autonomy and constraints on teacher autonomy in a critical sense leads us to a pressing imperative, as the relationships between autonomy and motivation imply that teachers who perceive themselves as powerless to behave in an autonomous way may become disaffected, possibly leaving the profession (Lamb 2000). Action, in the form of self-empowerment, and further research into the effectiveness of different ways of achieving this, thus form an urgent agenda for exploration (see also Vieira et al. in this volume).

Whether beliefs can actually change is a question which needs to be explored further. It is first necessary to find effective ways of accessing them, a methodological question which is addressed in innovative ways by a number of contributors to this volume: Martinez explores what she calls student teachers' subjective theories by means of a research programme devised in Germany using verbal reports to make implicit theory explicit; Smith and Erdoğan find ways of accessing student-teachers' constructs through repertory-grid interviews; Hacker and Barhuizen make personal theories explicit to both researcher and teacher by using reflective journal writing. Whether they change or not over time, and what the process of change might be, is explored by Borg (2003) in his review article on teacher cognition described in Hacker and Barkhuizen's chapter, but clearly there is still a great deal to be learned about these processes and possibilities.

It has been argued that internalized constraints, whether their origins are internal or external to the teacher, may possibly be overcome through critical reflection, "an awareness of and an ongoing deconstruction of power relations" which

... obliges teachers to consider the origins and contexts of their own personal beliefs, theories and practices, and the implications of these on their relationships with their pupils. Underpinning it is an understanding of conflict and power relations, and a commitment to changing them. It is a difficult process, and as such, it needs to be developed throughout a teacher's career, in continuing professional development as well as initial teacher education. (Lamb 2000: 125)

This volume contains a number of chapters which offer ways forward in the stimulation of critical reflection. They mostly have in common some form of dialogue or

collaboration: where the teacher is already desirous of change, such dialogue or collaboration offers strength and support; where the teacher is still shackled by his/her beliefs, for example in the case of many student teachers undergoing a programme of initial teacher education, such opportunities can expose him or her to contrasting and challenging views of the world. Shaw (in this volume) describes how the ongoing dialogue made possible by regular meetings with colleagues enables them to escape the constraints of the timetable. Trebbi (also in this volume) describes the use of new technologies to allow "the sharing of experiences and reflective negotiation of meaning" in a teacher education course. A further example of a teacher education course specifically designed to challenge assumptions is provided by Smith and Erdoğan. There are also examples of practitioner enquiry (action research, evaluation studies, reflective writing) to bring about change: in some cases these describe research carried out by the author into his/her own practice (e.g. Cotterall and Crabbe; Sinclair; Smith and Erdoğan); in other cases the author is enabling (student-)teachers to carry out systematic professional development (e.g. Hacker and Barkhuizen; Reinders and Lewis).

Whether related to learner autonomy or not (and Shaw argues strongly in his chapter that in some contexts the drive towards learner autonomy can itself constrain teachers' freedom to act in the interests of their learners' learning), there is clearly a need for further empirical research to add flesh to the theoretical exploration of teacher autonomy in language learning. The chapters in this book offer a glimpse at the nature of this research, and the value of learning about the meanings of teacher autonomy in different contexts and the interventions which might support further professional development. We need to understand better how models of professionalism combine the different conceptualizations of teacher autonomy, and for this we can draw on generic work on professional development and teacher education. However, language teaching brings its own specific contexts for teaching, and its own challenges (globalization, English as a world language, motivation, interculturality etc) and these different contexts need to be further explored. Above all, research needs to keep the well-being and development of teachers and learners in its sights, investigating the ways in which teacher autonomy (and interventions designed to enhance teacher autonomy) impact on learning outcomes, motivation and professional satisfaction.

#### Learner autonomy and teacher autonomy

Given that work on teacher autonomy within the field of applied linguistics gained impetus from the work on learner autonomy, there has been surprisingly little exploration of the relationships between these two concepts. In some cases, the

two are seen to be inextricably interwoven. Thus, Thavenius (1999: 160) writes that an autonomous teacher by definition is one who promotes learner autonomy:

Teacher autonomy can be defined as the teacher's ability and willingness to help learners take responsibility for their own learning. An autonomous teacher is thus a teacher who reflects on her teacher role and who can change it, who can help her learners become autonomous, and who is independent enough to *let* her learners become independent.

Little (2000: 45), on the other hand, claims that teachers can only develop learner autonomy if they themselves are autonomous:

[...] the development of learner autonomy depends on the development of teacher autonomy. By this I mean two things: (i) that it is unreasonable to expect teachers to foster the growth of autonomy in their learners if they themselves do not know what it is to be an autonomous learner; and (ii) that in determining the initiatives they take in the classrooms, teachers must be able to exploit their professional skills autonomously, applying to their teaching those same reflective and self-managing processes that they apply to their learning.

Several chapters in this volume explore ways of supporting teachers in becoming autonomous with a view to enabling them to develop their own learners' autonomy. Martinez begins by accessing student teachers' subjective theories about the roles of teachers and learners, with a view to incorporating these perspectives into pre-service teacher education programmes in order to stimulate theoretical reconstruction and the development of new perspectives and, possibly, a commitment to learner autonomy. In their chapter, Smith and Erdoğan argue the need for a knowledge base for 'teacher education for the promotion of learner autonomy', and propose that an experiential approach, with teachers learning autonomously themselves, is the most effective way of supporting teachers in the development of a pedagogy for autonomy. Trebbi describes such an approach in Norway, with autonomous learning experiences planned into her course primarily through the construction of a virtual learning environment with open learning spaces. Vieira and her colleagues build on their ideologically driven work in teacher education in Portugal, in which they constantly strive "to articulate teacher and learner development into a common framework towards an ideal view of education as liberation and empowerment".

Experiential approaches, however, can only connect teacher and learner autonomy if fundamental beliefs about teaching and learning are surfaced, analysed and reflected on critically, and if this brings about any shift in these beliefs. Of course the case for critical reflection was also argued in the above section on teacher autonomy, where there was not necessarily any connection with the promotion of learner autonomy. So what is the difference when promoting a pedagogy for autonomy?

Zembylas & Lamb (forthcoming) have discussed the concept of personal autonomy in a historical perspective with reference to three views: the rational, the communitarian/feminist, and the critical/postmodern. The first two conceptualisations focus on autonomy as a technical or social action whereas the critical/postmodern interpretation suggests the *political* nature of autonomy. In considering the context of power relations, it demands a critical awareness of the complexities, constraints and possibilities manifested in those power relations, and an ideological commitment to deconstructing them and then reconstructing them into a more empowering, democratic environment for teaching and learning. In other words, any consideration of empowerment must embrace not only empowerment of the self but also empowerment of the other. To work towards empowerment of the self without regard for empowerment of the other would entail a reproduction of power structures rather than a radical re-visioning of the world as a more just place.

The suggestion, then, is that any relationship between teacher and learner autonomy is essentially political, since it entails both a (re-)claiming of and a shift in power. In other words, it necessarily implies a vision of education which is committed to "(inter)personal empowerment and social transformation" (Jiménez Raya, Lamb and Vieira 2007). Bringing together the different elements of freedom, capacity, reflection and political action which have emerged from the explorations above, it could be argued that there are three key components which are required in any teacher autonomy-learner autonomy relationship:

1. The teacher learns how to (and has, or claims, the freedom to) develop autonomously as a professional, through critical reflection
2. The teacher has a commitment to empowering his/her learners by creating appropriate learning spaces and developing their capacity for autonomy
3. The teacher introduces interventions which support the principles and values which underpin their own and their learners' autonomy

In order to make the link between these components, the teacher needs to reflect on his/her own autonomous learning behaviour and consider its implications for his/her learners' learning. The teacher's autonomous learning behaviour can take the form of his/her own language learning or his/her teaching-learning, and this teaching-learning can in part relate specifically to his/her development of his/her learners' autonomy. This can lead to a cyclical link between teacher autonomy and innovation towards the development of learner autonomy (see figure 1).

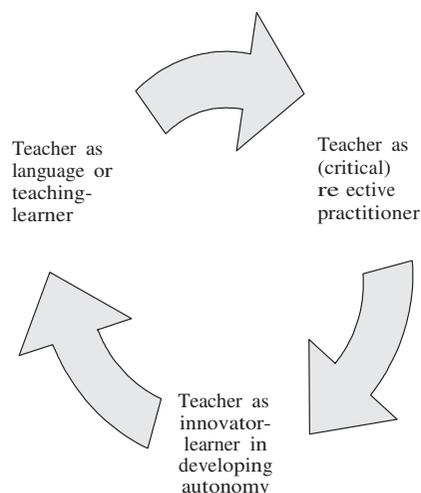


Figure 1.

The intensity of the relationship between learner autonomy and teacher autonomy as it emerges from this political vision of education is recognized by Jiménez Raya, Lamb and Vieira (2007) in their work on a pedagogy for autonomy, and encapsulated in their insistence on a common definition of the two:

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 empowerment and social transformation.

This is no easy definition to operationalise. It represents an ongoing struggle to create educational opportunities which are more socially just, and a necessity to be *resilient* in the face of opposition and frustration. As a response to stress, risk and adversity, resilience can be conceptualized in various ways, from a reactive to a proactive attribute (Winfield 1991). Wang (1997), for example, defines it as a proactive and assertive attribute:

Resilient individuals are characterised in the literature for being proactively engaged in a variety of activities; having well-developed “self-systems”, including a strong locus of control, high self-esteem, a clear sense of purpose, and healthy expectations; having the ability to successfully plan, change their environment, and alter their life circumstances; having strong interpersonal and problem-solving skills; and being capable of achieving learning success. (Wang 1997: 263)

Here Wang is writing about inner-city, disenfranchised youth who manage to achieve success in learning. However, such attributes could also be applied to teachers whose “sense of purpose” involves a commitment to a radical vision of education, and all of the tensions which this entails. They will enable the teacher to spot and create opportunities for moving closer towards the vision, “finding the spaces and opportunities for manoeuvre” (Lamb 2000: 127), rather than giving up and falling back into a comfortable conservatism. In other words they will enable the teacher to shorten the gap between reality and ideals.

Finding ways of exploring how such a pedagogical project manifests itself in different educational, cultural, national and local contexts, and the impact that such manifestations may have on learning, thus forms the crucial research agenda to push forward our understanding of the (inter)relationships between teacher autonomy and learner autonomy. Clearly there are intimately close connections with much work in areas such as the sociology of education, urban education and teacher education, and such connections must continue to be explored and exploited. However, we must not lose sight of the need to determine what distinguishes the particular *language* learning and teaching context within this vision of education, where the overall aim is to create an environment in which learners can become not only autonomous language learners but also autonomous language users. Through the continued exploration of appropriate research methodologies and methods, the publication of case studies and other forms of investigation, and the synthesis of the insights provided by these, the impact of different approaches to the facilitation of such pedagogical shifts, be it in pre-service teacher education or continuing professional development, internally or externally driven and managed, will form the agenda of much research in this field in the coming years.

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