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Manuel Jiménez Raya, University of Granada, Spain  
Borja Manzano Vázquez, University of Granada, Spain

Corresponding email address: [bmanzano24@ugr.es](mailto:bmanzano24@ugr.es)

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## **Case Pedagogy in Initial Teacher Education: An Analysis of its Contribution to the Development of Professional Competences for Autonomy**

**Manuel Jiménez Raya**, Department of English and German Philology, University of Granada, Spain. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5525-9122>

**Borja Manzano Vázquez**, Department of English and German Philology, University of Granada, Spain. <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7035-2034>

### Abstract

Case pedagogy is advocated in teacher education for autonomy as a teacher development strategy which can empower (student) teachers to understand and explore the implementation of pedagogy for autonomy. In an initial teacher education module implemented at the University of Granada (Spain), cases have become a crucial tool for promoting student teachers' professional development towards teacher and learner autonomy. One of the strategies used in the module engages student teachers in exploring the implementation of pedagogy for autonomy during their internship and writing a case narrative on their pedagogical intervention. The present paper analyses six cases developed by student teachers during their internship to examine the dimensions of professional competence towards teacher and learner autonomy identified by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017) that they developed during case construction. These dimensions include 1) developing a critical view of (language) education, 2) centring teaching on learning, 3) managing local constraints to open up spaces for manoeuvre, and 4) interacting with others in the professional community.

*Keywords:* case pedagogy, teacher autonomy, learner autonomy, teacher education, language education

Developing learner autonomy (LA) (i.e., “the ability to take charge of one’s own learning” [Holec, 1981, p. 3]) in classroom practice demands a reconceptualisation of language teaching and learning. It requires replacing a traditional approach, whereby the teacher is the main authority in the classroom, with a democratic approach which enables learners to take control over their own learning process and caters to their individual needs, abilities, and interests. In this respect, pre-service and in-service teacher education (TE) are vital to the development of autonomy in educational settings since they can assist prospective

and experienced teachers' professional development towards both LA and teacher autonomy (TA).

Different teacher development strategies and practices have been implemented in language TE for autonomy: seminars, workshops, group discussion, exchange of teaching experiences, cooperative/self-directed work, action research projects, pedagogical experimentation, and case pedagogy, among others (see Manzano Vázquez [2018] for a review on language TE initiatives for autonomy). Over the last years, case pedagogy is increasingly being advocated as a promising approach to TE for autonomy (see Jiménez Raya, 2011, 2021; Jiménez Raya & Vieira, 2015, 2018; Manzano Vázquez, 2014; Vieira, 2020) since the use of cases can help equip teachers and teachers-to-be with the knowledge, skills and competences necessary to implement pedagogy for autonomy (PA) in their classrooms. Cases can also encourage them to explore the complexity of teaching through pedagogical inquiry, thus enhancing their professional expertise and development.

In the module 'Teaching and learning English as a foreign language (FL),' developed in an initial TE MA implemented at the University of Granada (Spain), cases have become an essential tool for preparing pre-service teachers to foster LA in their teaching practice and explore their own autonomy as teachers. One of the strategies used in the module encourages student teachers to promote LA during their internship and write their own case narrative on its promotion. This paper aims to examine the role of case pedagogy in promoting student teachers' professional development towards TA and LA in the said module. Using the TA proposal by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017), which identifies four dimensions/conditions of TA, we analysed six cases developed by student teachers enrolled in the module to determine the dimensions of professional competence towards autonomy that the student teachers developed in case construction. These dimensions include: 1) developing a critical view of (language) education, 2) centring teaching on learning, 3) managing local constraints to open up spaces for manoeuvre, and 4) interacting with others in the professional community.

## **Literature Review**

### **Teacher Professional Development Towards Autonomy**

Teacher professional development towards autonomy is a complex, challenging process. Previous research (e.g., Nicolaidis, 2008; Özmen, 2012) has revealed that due to their 'apprenticeship of observation' (Lortie, 1975) many student teachers hold a traditional, teacher-centred vision of FL teaching when they begin to teach. After many years of

exposure to a specific pedagogical approach as learners, it is not easy for student teachers to challenge the assumptions, models and taken-for-granted practices about teaching they have developed. Borrowing Almarza's (1996) terms, the paradigm shift from traditional to autonomy-oriented pedagogies requires both a *cognitive change* (beliefs, attitudes, etc.) and *behavioural change* (teaching practices, strategies, etc.) in prospective teachers. TE programmes need to help student teachers recast their educational beliefs in line with a learner-centred view of teaching and gain the professional knowledge and competences necessary to implement PA. In this sense, the goal of language TE would be two-fold: the promotion of TA and the promotion of PA.

Regarding the former, people are active by nature and driven to persistently adapt to changes in the environment to be successful. According to deCharms (1976), we want to feel as though we initiate our own behaviour and are not 'pawns' of other people's commitments. Hence, unless teachers retain a sense of agency about why and how they might teach differently, the call for innovation will likely ring hollow. A teacher can be forced to use a particular curriculum, but they cannot be made to bring their best selves into their classroom. Indeed, our natural drive for agency over our own actions can frustrate outside attempts at pedagogical innovation (Jiménez Raya, 2014). Environments supporting autonomy allow for personal choice while providing structures that support individuals' effectiveness. Restrictions and other outside constraints are, in fact, a reality for all of us. Therefore, the aim of fostering autonomy and motivation to struggle for autonomy is not to create environments without regulations but to create structures that provide teachers with options and information that will support their own initiative.

Regarding the promotion of PA, overcoming internal resistances is also crucial. People grow comfortable with their beliefs, and these beliefs become their 'self' so much so that an individual's behaviour results from their beliefs (Pajares, 1992). The way we teach is characteristically determined by an unexamined collection of beliefs about teaching and learning. Indeed, we frequently feel threatened when our belief system is challenged, resulting in belief perseverance and theory maintenance.

TA is often examined in relation to LA, being considered as closely interconnected notions. In fact, we maintain that it is the same construct: personal autonomy. The literature on personal autonomy emphasises the idea that it is related to independence and authenticity of values and emotions that motivate the individual to act in the first place (Buss & Westlund, 2018; Killmister, 2017). The notion of TA is highly controversial in education. Paradoxically,

the development of autonomy is regarded as the “central pillar of democracy” (Aviram, 1993, p. 420) and as one of the main goals of education. The acceptance of autonomy as an educational ideal involves the acceptance of the importance of self-rule and agency in life. However, in education, the theory and practice of autonomy have often remained worlds apart (Jiménez Raya & Vieira, 2021; Manzano Vázquez, 2015).

A common definition for both TA and LA has been formulated by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017, p. 17) 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 empowerment and social transformation.” By providing a common definition for LA and TA, the authors stress the necessary interdependence between LA and TA in educational contexts. This definition also underlines the moral and political nature of TA in which teachers, in collaboration with learners, struggle for educational and social change. Regarding teacher development towards autonomy, Jiménez Raya et al. (pp. 71-73) identify four dimensions of professional competence towards both notions (see Appendix). The development of these competences requires (student) teachers to develop the disposition and the ability to question those educational practices in language education which are inimical to autonomy; to explore alternative educational practices which are more learner-centred and self-directed; to face potential contextual constraints to shape their pedagogical practices towards the encouragement of LA; and to undertake the development of LA as a collective endeavour involving the school, other teachers, and the learners themselves.

### **Case Pedagogy for Promoting Teacher and Learner Autonomy**

A teaching case is a “description of episodes of practice, a selection of reality, a slice of life, a story designed and presented as study material, an exercise, a puzzle, or a problem” (Shulman, 1992, p. 3). The majority of authors understand cases as narratives and descriptions of teaching that have been constructed specifically for use in TE. Cases typically describe complex situations for use in learning about professional practice. They generally include the perspectives and feelings of the case teacher/writer as they describe a series of classroom events, critical incidents, dilemmas, and so on. Cases are also supposed to be rich with detail and dialogue about the dilemmas, critical incidents and/or challenges reported (Shulman & Sato, 2006). They can also include reflective comments by the author and/or teacher and sample teaching materials. The value of a case resides in the extent to which it

successfully raises questions about critical issues in teaching; it is representative of classroom dilemmas, problems, or obstacles to encourage a rich educational discussion; otherwise, it is of little value as a case. As Shulman (2004, p. 479) puts it, “every case, in its particularity, derives its ‘case-ness’ from its connection to other cases and to organising theories and principles.”

Cases are frequently used to weave together learning about the knowledge, skills and dispositions that form part of teaching by creating the conditions for student teachers to practise ‘thinking like a teacher’ (Kleinfeld, 1992; Zeichner & Liston, 2013). Case pedagogy aims at drawing (student) teachers into the situated problems and roles that the case portrays. Case pedagogy is, therefore, more focused on specific situations than on general principles, findings, and rules.

Case pedagogy focuses on the activity of teaching itself; it is centred on the teacher who does it, the context in which the teaching takes place, and the pedagogy by which it is done. On working with a case, we enter the experience of others and make links to our own experience, using both as lenses through which to look at our future work. In doing so, we question pedagogical practices, look at them from various angles, uncover the personal theories they embody and confront those theories with alternative views. We wholeheartedly share the hope that Shulman enunciated about cases and case pedagogy:

I envision case methods as a strategy for overcoming many of the most serious deficiencies in the education of teachers. Because they are contextual, local, and situated—as are all narratives—cases integrate what otherwise remains separated...

Complex cases will communicate to both future teachers and laypersons that teaching is a complex domain demanding subtle judgement and agonizing decisions.

(Shulman, 1992, p. 28)

Teacher professional development is a continuous process that needs to be grounded on a critical understanding of the profession. It is more often than not about change: change in the teachers, in their beliefs and personal theories, and in their ideas of best practices. Furthermore, professional development requires a lifelong range of meaningful experiences from which to learn and grow as a teacher. Therefore, it is crucial that cases present specific dilemmas that raise questions and stimulate reflection. They provide the potential for making connections among the act of teaching and the cognitions and feelings that explain and motivate it. Case pedagogy is a TE strategy that speaks to “the potential that humans possess

for shaping not only the world, but themselves” (Eisner, 2004, p. 10). Some of the advantages of the use of the case method are: cases help (student) teachers discover what they know and believe about teaching and learning (Jiménez Raya & Vieira, 2015; Parker & Tiezzi, 1992); cases present an alternative to learning in the field (Vieira, 2021); cases help prevent learning pitfalls in the context of practice (Feiman-Nemser & Buchmann, 1985); cases act as a bridge between the abstract nature of principles and of teaching standards and classroom practice (Shulman, 1996; Shulman et al., 2002; Vieira, 2020); cases give (student) teachers “a stock of educational strategies for use in analogous problem situations” (Kleinfeld, 1992, p. 35); cases also illustrate approaches and encourage problem-solving (Carter & Anders, 1996; Serdar Tülüce, 2016).

Case pedagogy also changes the focus of learning away from the simple description of facts to the application of theory, concepts, and techniques to classroom practical, real-world problems (Jiménez Raya & Vieira, 2018). Hence it fosters experiential, active, responsible learning by involving (student) teachers in their own learning/development process (Hyeonjin & Hannafin, 2008; Vieira, 2020), while still conveying the message that teaching is highly complex, context-dependent, and reflexive (Merseeth, 1991; Zottmann et al., 2012).

Two main uses of case pedagogy have been identified (Jiménez Raya & Vieira, 2015):

- Case analysis and discussion<sup>1</sup>
- Case construction

### **Case Construction**

Case construction emphasises inquiry-based, pedagogical experimentation and narrative writing by those in training. It varies from case analysis in that the cases are designed, implemented and written by (student) teachers themselves. In the case of initial TE, they do it during their internship. Rosiek and Clandinin (2016) argue that one of the most important challenges teacher educators face is how to encourage prospective teachers to actively explore pedagogical alternatives to students’ learning difficulties and to the challenges posed by teaching. In fact, one of the challenges of TE is the provision of spaces

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<sup>1</sup> See Jiménez Raya & Vieira (2015, pp. 84-87) for more details on case analysis and discussion.

where student teachers can begin practitioner inquiry that will enable them to question, affirm and/or change how they know and what they know about language teaching.

Case construction provides student teachers with opportunities to reflect critically on their teaching experience and derive meaning from it, empowers them, and supports agency and self-initiated professional development. No doubt TE needs to offer information about pedagogical options but the biggest challenge is how to encourage the active exploration of creative solutions to students' learning challenges. Through case construction they are forced to focus on learning problems and plan interventions that are critically monitored. As one former student teacher wrote in her case: "I had to constantly reinvent myself."

The case is expected to have a particular focus. The question 'What is this a case of?' is crucial in helping student teachers narrow down the scope of their intervention. Having to decide the focus of the pedagogical inquiry develops the habit of interrogating the effectiveness of teaching practice and paying attention to learning problems. This should always be based on close observation of students' learning problems.

## **Methodology**

### **Context**

The work presented here is developed in an initial TE MA and, more specifically, in the compulsory module 'Teaching and learning English as a FL', and it is based on the approach implemented by one of the authors (Prof. Manuel Jiménez Raya) in the module. This module encompasses classes of two and a half hours held three times a week during 10 weeks. It takes place before the internship and covers the following topics: 1) PA in FL teaching; 2) methodological approaches to English Language Teaching; 3) teaching language skills, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar; 4) evaluation and assessment; and 5) curriculum development and designing units of work. PA is the most important topic as it is the methodological approach permeating and informing the module. Thus, the module is grounded on the framework for TA and LA formulated by Jiménez Raya et al. (2007, 2017).

The module is built on five basic pillars: constructivism, critical reflection (Farrell, 2015; Valli, 1997), pedagogical inquiry, pedagogy of experience (Jiménez Raya, 2017; Jiménez Raya & Vieira, 2015), and the notion of autonomy (understanding LA and TA as relational phenomena [Jiménez Raya et al., 2017]). It combines the discussion of theoretical issues with the use of various tools which aim to encourage student teachers to inquire into educational experience as a source of knowledge, reshape their pedagogical beliefs towards a

learner-centred conception of FL teaching, and reflect on and put into practice PA. The said tools include reflective tasks (e.g., questionnaires exploring student teachers' image of FL teaching and possible teacher selves), practical activities (e.g., designing an English lesson plan and learning activities which are autonomy-oriented and learner-centred), a portfolio to reflect on their beliefs about FL teaching and key aspects in the development of PA, and cases. In the module, student teachers engage in case analysis and case construction.

Student teachers are provided with different cases over the course of the module for case analysis and as examples of practical approaches to PA. For case construction, they are required to design, implement, evaluate, and report on a small-scale pedagogical intervention for the promotion of LA during their internship. The internship lasts six weeks and takes place either in a secondary school or a language school<sup>2</sup>. The development of the intervention must be negotiated with their school tutor, who may either give student teachers complete freedom to implement it or impose some restrictions on it (e.g., the number of lessons they have to develop it, the topic they need to focus on, the language focus, etc.). When this is the case, they are encouraged to accommodate to the demands of their tutor but also to do their best to navigate the 'space of possibility'. This notion is based on the suggestion by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017, p. 104) that maintains that teaching needs to be a context-sensitive, re[ide]alistic practice. Teaching should be inspired by our ideal view of *what it should be*, but schools and classrooms are full of constraints (*what is*). The space between reality (what is) and ideals (what should be) is the space of possibility. The basic idea is that 'every teacher can do something' even in the most adverse circumstances. Innovation takes place between reality and ideals.

Case construction is highly challenging for student teachers. It involves rethinking teaching, research skills, and writing. These in themselves are all highly demanding activities. Therefore, the support of the teacher educator is crucial. In our case, student teachers are informed on the very first day of the module that they will have to write a case as part of the module requirements and they are reminded about it on a regular basis. The actual development of the case takes place during the internship, but the writing oftentimes is done

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<sup>2</sup> Secondary schools are state schools for completing secondary education and are attended by teenage students (ages 12-18) while language schools are publicly funded schools providing language education at different levels and can be attended by teenage and adult students who voluntarily enrol on the courses.

right after the internship. They are explicitly told that the cases that we use for analysis of teaching practices can also be used as a source of inspiration for the development of their own case. In fact, in our experience the use of cases for analysis is crucial also for case construction. Nevertheless, to support them in this task, one session of the module is explicitly devoted to explaining case construction. This involves explanation of the steps involved in case construction, suggestions for case structure, and analysis of several cases developed by student teachers in previous years. The areas dealt with are:

- Finding a focus of inquiry for my case
- Designing the action plan and developing teaching materials (Focus, aims, context, action strategies, materials design, resources...)
- Implementing, monitoring, and evaluating action (observing one's action and students, collecting data, involving students, colleagues, supervisors...)
- Writing a narrative of experience

Student teachers are encouraged to write their case narratives in a personal style while combining a rigorous scrutiny of the experience on the basis of relevant theoretical knowledge and the data collected. The suggested structure for the case narrative/report is:

- Introduction: *What is it a case of? Why the focus?*
- Literature review (basic but relevant)
- Description of the experience: What? Where? Why? How?
- Evaluation of the experience (gains for learners and for student teachers, shortcomings, constraints...)
- Conclusion (overall evaluation and implications for future action)
- Appendix(es) (sample materials produced by students...)

Student teachers can contact their teacher educator at any time they feel they need support. In addition, they are encouraged to discuss their case with the professor before its implementation once they have drafted it. The feedback provided may involve suggestions on their plan, on data collection procedures and instruments, and the recommendation of relevant literature to help them become familiar with current developments of best pedagogical practices in the area of the case.

## **Participants**

Six cases developed by seven student teachers were purposely selected for this paper as they represent examples of good practices for the development of LA. It must be noted that the student teachers completing the module do not normally have any previous teaching experience, they usually hold a Degree in English Studies or in Translation and Interpretation and they enrol on the TE MA for two main reasons: 1) they consider that they need to receive specific training in teaching and 2) getting the master's degree is a compulsory requirement to work as FL teachers in the Spanish educational system.

### **Data Analysis**

The cases were first analysed independently by both researchers. The analysis was thematic and was based on examining the student teachers' development of PA and professional competences towards autonomy in their cases. On the one hand, the principles for the development of PA formulated by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017) were used to analyse the implementation of this approach in the student teachers' cases. These principles for PA include:

1. Responsibility, choice and flexible control
2. Learning to learn and self-regulation
3. Integration and explicitness
4. Autonomy support
5. Engagement and intrinsic motivation
6. Learner differentiation
7. Action-orientedness
8. Conversational interaction
9. Reflective inquiry
10. Formative assessment, assessment for learning and assessment for autonomy<sup>3</sup>

To examine the student teachers' development of professional competences towards autonomy, the four dimensions of professional competence towards TA and LA by Jiménez Raya et al. (2017) and their corresponding enabling conditions (see Appendix) were used. Once the cases were analysed to identify the development or not of the principles for PA and the professional competences towards autonomy, the findings were compared and discussed by both researchers to address potential disagreements in the analysis.

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<sup>3</sup> See Jiménez Raya et al. (2017, pp. 81-102) for more details on the principles.

## **Results and Discussion**

Table 1 includes the summary and analysis of each case. As can be observed in the table, the cases account for the student teachers' development of professional competences towards autonomy. For prospective teachers to innovate and explore the implementation of PA in their classrooms, it is essential that they develop a critical view of the teaching practices permeating language education, question their adequacy for the development of LA, and understand themselves as agents who can effect educational change. It was observed in this respect that the rationale for most of the cases stemmed from the student teachers' development of a critical view of language education. They adopted a critical stance towards the values and ends of the teaching methodology promoted by their school tutors. They were critical, among other aspects, of the emphasis on the study of grammar, the lack of attention to learner diversity, and the use of a teacher-centred approach in the classroom. This critical stance was especially evident in the case of Paula<sup>4</sup>. The main problem she observed during her internship was the learners' lack of motivation which she attributed to the "methodology used in the English classroom" which focused on the textbook, grammar, and exams. She was very critical of the adequacy of the textbook and the activities proposed: "we, as teachers, cannot only focus on the book because it normally does not attend students' needs and sometimes it fails to help students develop their language skills in a proper manner, as it happened in this case." Thus, through their pedagogical intervention, the student teachers wanted to act as agents of educational change by improving and innovating the established practices.

All cases promoted learner- and learning-centred teaching through cooperative and individual activities and tasks. This focus required the student teachers first to analyse the learners' characteristics, lacks, needs, and abilities to better adapt their teaching practice to these aspects. In the cases, they implemented different principles for PA (see Table 1) which were mainly aimed at encouraging the learners to play an active role and promoting their engagement in the learning process. Five out of the six cases focused on fostering the learners' willingness to assume different degrees of responsibility for their learning. Rebecca, for example, promoted the learners' self-management of the learning activities through learning stations. In the classroom the learners had different 'stations', i.e., areas where they

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<sup>4</sup> The data have been anonymised. The names provided are pseudonyms.

could find learning activities to practise the four language skills, grammar, and vocabulary. Rebecca gave them full control over learning by allowing choice of the activities they wanted to do, the order in which they completed them, and how (i.e., individually or in pairs). Several student teachers (Pablo, Juan, and Celeste) engaged the learners in correcting and evaluating their own and their classmates' work.

**Table 1**

*Cases: Summary and analysis*

Note. CV: Developing a critical view of language education; LC: Managing local constraints to open up spaces for manoeuvre; CTL: Centring teaching on learning; IO: Interacting with others in the professional community.

SUMMARY			ANALYSIS	
Case title, author, and context	Case rationale and objectives	Teaching approach and techniques implemented	Principles for PA implemented in the case	Professional competences towards autonomy identified in the case
<p>“Learning through learning stations”</p> <p>Rebecca</p> <p>(Language school, German language teaching, A2)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To promote a constructivist approach to FL learning and attend to learner diversity to challenge teacher-centred, transmissive classes; learners’ passive role; and the promotion of a unified model of learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Learning stations and self-correction</li> <li>▪ Questionnaire for learners to reflect on the implementation of learning stations and their learning experience</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Responsibility, choice, &amp; flexible control</li> <li>▪ Engagement &amp; intrinsic motivation</li> <li>▪ Learner differentiation</li> <li>▪ Conversational interaction</li> <li>▪ Reflective inquiry</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CV: Critical of the educational practices promoted: teacher-centred, transmission-oriented, and imposing the same learning pace on learners</li> <li>▪ CTL: Encouraging learners’ responsibility for and reflection on their learning</li> <li>Attending to learners’ different interests and learning pace</li> <li>Collecting and analysing learner data</li> <li>▪ IO: Discussing material production with school tutor</li> <li>Asking learners for feedback on the activity implemented</li> </ul>
<p>“The benefits of a reflective environment”</p> <p>Pablo &amp; Juan<sup>5</sup></p> <p>(2 secondary schools, English language teaching, grades 7-9)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To address learners’ lack of opportunities to reflect on their learning and assess teaching practice</li> <li>▪ To explore the benefits of reflection, self-assessment and peer-assessment for learner and teacher development towards autonomy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Project work</li> <li>▪ Learners’ and student teachers’ self-assessment and peer-assessment</li> <li>▪ Questionnaires for learners’ reflection on their learning</li> <li>▪ Learners’ assessment of the student teachers’ teaching practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Responsibility, choice, &amp; flexible control</li> <li>▪ Engagement &amp; intrinsic motivation</li> <li>▪ Learning to learn &amp; self-regulation</li> <li>▪ Action-orientedness</li> <li>▪ Reflective inquiry</li> <li>▪ Formative assessment, assessment for learning &amp; assessment for autonomy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CV: Critical of the lack of opportunities for learners to reflect on learning and assess teaching</li> <li>▪ LC: Managing constraints (time to implement the case) and finding spaces for manoeuvre</li> <li>▪ CTL: Encouraging cooperation, learners’ responsibility for the teaching-learning process and reflection on their learning</li> <li>Collecting and analysing learner data</li> <li>▪ IO: Inviting learners and a peer to help them (i.e., the student teachers) improve teaching and learning through feedback</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> Pablo and Juan asked to construct the case collaboratively. Their proposal was accepted.

<p>“Narrative case” Aitana (Secondary school, English language teaching, grade 7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To promote learners’ independence and improve their self-confidence and self-esteem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Individual learning (completing worksheets)</li> <li>▪ Providing learners with individual support and positive feedback and strengthening their self-efficacy beliefs</li> <li>▪ Developing strategies to overcome learning difficulties</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Responsibility, choice, &amp; flexible control</li> <li>▪ Engagement &amp; intrinsic motivation</li> <li>▪ Cognitive autonomy support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CV: Critical of her school tutor’s educational practices which promote learners’ teacher dependence</li> <li>▪ LC: Managing constraints: learners’ teacher dependence, lack of motivation and interest, low level of language proficiency, disruptive behaviour, lack of self-confidence</li> </ul> <p>Adapting her teaching to learners’ characteristics and the teaching practice by her school tutor but promoting LA</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CTL: Fostering learners’ self-esteem, responsibility for their learning and independence through strategy training</li> </ul> <p>Collecting and analysing learner data</p>
<p>“Teaching writing in a demotivated English classroom environment”  Celeste (Secondary school, English language teaching, grade 10)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To counteract the emphasis on grammar explanation and practice</li> <li>▪ To address learners’ lack of opportunities for language production</li> <li>▪ To enhance learners’ motivation and self-confidence in writing and provide them with writing strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Task-based approach (writing task; process approach to writing)</li> <li>▪ Self-correction and peer-correction</li> <li>▪ Learners’ self-evaluation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Responsibility, choice, &amp; flexible control</li> <li>▪ Engagement &amp; intrinsic motivation</li> <li>▪ Action-orientedness</li> <li>▪ Conversational interaction</li> <li>▪ Reflective inquiry</li> <li>▪ Formative assessment, assessment for learning &amp; assessment for autonomy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CV: Critical of the emphasis on grammar and the lack of opportunities for language production</li> <li>▪ LC: Managing constraints (limited time to implement the case; school tutor’s restrictions on the topic of the case) and finding spaces for manoeuvre</li> <li>▪ CTL: Encouraging cooperation and learners’ responsibility for their learning</li> </ul> <p>Collecting and analysing learner data</p>
<p>“Motivating students through the use of games in the English classroom”  Paula (Secondary school, English language teaching, grade 7)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To increase learners’ motivation through games</li> <li>▪ To practise past simple, review vocabulary and develop speaking skills</li> <li>▪ To promote cooperative learning and cater to learners’ needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gamification (games: detective game, ‘taboo’, ‘snakes and ladders’, ‘bingo’)</li> <li>▪ Cooperative learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Engagement &amp; intrinsic motivation</li> <li>▪ Learner differentiation</li> <li>▪ Conversational interaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CV: Critical of her school tutor’s educational practices (textbook- and grammar-based, exam-oriented, lack of attention to learner diversity) and learning materials (the textbook; demotivating and poorly communicative listening and speaking activities)</li> <li>▪ LC: Managing constraints: learners’ low level of language proficiency, her school tutor’s restrictions on the learning objectives of the case (need to focus on grammar and vocabulary), and his discouraging comments</li> <li>▪ CTL: Encouraging learner motivation and cooperation</li> </ul> <p>Attending to diversity</p>
<p>“Technology-based study methods: Quizlet”</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ To encourage learners to reassess their learning strategies by providing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Technology-enhanced learning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Responsibility</li> <li>▪ Engagement &amp; intrinsic motivation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CTL: Encouraging learners’ responsibility for and reflection on their learning</li> </ul> <p>Engaging learners in using Quizlet for language learning</p>

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Gerardo (Secondary school, English language teaching, grade 9)	them with alternative learning methods regarding vocabulary ▪ To strengthen learning- to-learn skills through technology and digital resources ▪ To raise learners’ awareness of the use of technology for learning vocabulary	▪ Creating a Quizlet- based folder for learning vocabulary ▪ Questionnaires for learners’ reflection on vocabulary learning and the use of Quizlet	▪ Learning to learn ▪ Reflective inquiry	Collecting and analysing learner data ▪ IO: Asking learners for feedback to improve teaching and learning
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Case construction led the student teachers to adapt language teaching to the learners' needs and lacks. This is the case of Paula and Aitana who focused on a more affective dimension of language learning due to the learners' lack of motivation and self-esteem. Five student teachers focused on enhancing learning awareness as they noticed that the learners lacked learning strategies and opportunities to reflect on their learning. By means of their cases, they fostered knowledge of and experimentation with strategies and resources to overcome learning difficulties and to improve language learning, and they involved the learners in reflection about different aspects of their language learning process (reasons for learning English, language skills, learning experience, task value concerning their learning, etc.).

Except for Paula, the student teachers collected and analysed learner data through different means: observation of the learners' performance and attitudes in the classroom, questionnaires, and teacher-learner interaction. The reason for collecting the data was two-fold: to evaluate the impact of the pedagogical intervention and to provide the student teachers with feedback to understand and improve teaching and learning from the learners' perspective. In this sense, the cases gave the student teachers the opportunity to promote a more democratic and collaborative culture in education by empowering the learners to have a voice in the educational process and by working with other members in the professional community on enhancing education. Rebecca, for instance, discussed material production for her pedagogical intervention with her school tutor while Pablo and Juan invited a peer and the learners to assess their teaching practice and give them feedback on how to improve it:

This experience has been very helpful to take on board the observer's comments, accept criticism and also to stand back and examine our teaching styles and methods. [...] The comments given by students have helped us to improve professionally, assess the quality of our materials, think about our teaching methodologies, and reflect upon how they could be adapted or improved. (Pablo and Juan)

Finally, it must be noted that implementing PA was not easy for some student teachers. They encountered different contextual constraints (see Table 1) which restricted their pedagogical intervention. However, they were able to manage them and shape their pedagogical choices to open up possibilities for LA. Aitana adapted her teaching to the teaching practice followed by her school tutor (individual work on worksheets), but she gradually gave the learners more independence and responsibility. Celeste and Paula had to

compromise between their school tutor's instructions and their wish for fostering LA. Paula was also discouraged rather than supported by her tutor when trying to implement certain learning activities. These restrictions led her to follow the textbook the first days. Nevertheless, due to the learners' boredom and lack of interest, "[she] soon realised that it had been a mistake trying to do things as [her] tutor wanted". Although she continued accommodating to the learning objectives set by her tutor, she decided to change her teaching practice and explore the use of games to motivate learners. At the end of the case, she understood constraints as integral to teaching, but acknowledged the feasibility of pedagogical change:

It is a fact that there are a lot of difficulties when trying to take care of students' needs, when trying to group students together or even when trying to make students talk in the foreign language, nevertheless, these difficulties cannot be taken as an excuse for not even making an attempt to improve the teaching and learning experience.

### **Conclusion**

TE for autonomy is a complex and defiant enterprise that poses several fundamental challenges. The first one is the daunting task of helping student teachers conceptualise teaching in different ways from those they experienced as students to help them overcome the apprenticeship of observation phenomenon observed by Lortie (1975). The second has to do with the challenge the enactment of new pedagogical approaches poses. Language TE programmes run the risk of being labelled as too theoretical. To avoid this, TE needs to help student teachers understand the multidimensional nature of the classroom and encourage them to think and to act as teachers. For this we need to find opportunities to encourage experimentation. This can be done during the internship most appropriately. The challenge for TE is to combine the disciplined theorising that contributes to the development of understanding of principles with the practical applications of teaching. Good teaching requires understanding of principles, judgement, and the ability to enact them. Effective TE should seek to enhance these capabilities accordingly. This can be achieved by encouraging pedagogical experimentation through case construction and writing that support the development of a deeper understanding of principles and practical knowledge as the cases presented show. Hence, case pedagogy can be strongly recommended as a powerful strategy

to overcome some of the limitations of field and clinical experiences to facilitate student teachers' professional growth.

In addition, case construction reflects an underlying vision of the student teacher as a professional capable of enacting consciously those pedagogical ideals that they hold dear. On the basis of the analysis of the six cases conducted for this paper, we strongly claim that case construction facilitates the development of professional competences and encourages a conception of teaching as an inquiry-oriented activity. It also provides opportunities for the development of vital teaching skills in learning to become a reflective teacher such as taking the initiative in their teaching practice, adopting a critical stance towards teaching, planning an intervention, and collecting data to look critically into its effects to check whether learning has been enhanced. Therefore, case construction encourages student teachers to think and to act like professional teachers that understand principles and exercise judgement in their application.

Finally, based on our experience and our analysis of cases constructed by student teachers, we can confidently claim that case construction helps student teachers expand their knowledge and skills, contributes to their professional development, and enhances their effectiveness with students. It also fosters self-development, autonomy, responsibility, reflection, and the scholarship of pedagogy, empowering student teachers to become protagonists in their professional development.

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## Appendix

### Conditions enabling the four dimensions of professional competence towards TA and LA (Jiménez Raya et al., 2017, pp. 71-73)

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#### ***A. Developing a critical view of (language) education***

*Am I willing...am I able...do I have the opportunity to...*

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- understand myself and my students as agents of educational and social change?
  - see teaching as an inquiry-oriented activity (as situations are often unique, uncertain and problematic)?
  - keep informed about approaches to language education and how they can promote learner autonomy?
  - realise the role of language education in promoting plurilingual/cultural competence?
  - be open and encourage learners' openness to linguistic and cultural diversity?
  - take a critical stance towards values and ends of language education in school curricula?
  - take a critical stance towards the educational value of syllabi, textbooks or other instructional materials?
  - encourage learners to be critical towards social and educational values and practices?
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#### ***B. Managing local constraints to open up spaces for manoeuvre***

*Am I willing...am I able...do I have the opportunity to...*

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- uncover constraints on autonomy (my own and the learners') and face dilemmas as integral to teaching?
  - challenge school routines and conventions (be subversive if necessary)?
  - compromise between tradition and innovation without losing my ideals?
  - shape pedagogical choices to open up possibilities for greater learner autonomy?
  - share my pedagogical beliefs and concerns with learners?
  - involve learners in finding creative solutions to problems that affect their learning?
  - accept disagreement and conflict as dimensions of classroom communication and decision-making?
  - articulate the personal aspects of learning (individual expectations, needs and interests) with the social/interactive nature of the classroom/school culture?
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#### ***C. Centring teaching on learning***

*Am I willing...am I able...do I have the opportunity to...*

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- foster the learners' self-esteem and willingness to assume responsibility for learning?
  - involve learners in reflection about language and the language learning process?
  - foster knowledge of and experimentation with language learning strategies (in and outside class)?
  - foster the self/co-management of language learning activities (planning, monitoring and evaluation)?
  - foster the negotiation of ideas and decisions with and among learners?
  - encourage co-operation and teamwork among learners?
  - find ways to enhance the formative role of [self-]evaluation and [self-]assessment (e.g., through self-evaluation and negotiation of assessment)?
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- 
- collect and analyse learner data to understand and improve teaching and learning (e.g., through observation, questionnaires, checklists, diaries, portfolios, interviews, etc.)?
  - encourage learners to collect and/ or analyse learning data to understand their learning?
- 

***D. Interacting with others in the professional community***

*Am I willing...am I able...do I have the opportunity to...*

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- share my theories, practices and concerns with significant members in the professional community?
  - invite others (learners, peers, mentors, etc.) to help me improve teaching and learning (e.g., through observation and feedback, material production, analysis of students' work, etc.)?
  - disseminate experiences and confront my voice with other voices in the professional community?
  - participate in public debate on issues regarding schooling and education in general?
-