# Fostering Autonomy, Generating Motivation and Shaping Identities in the Adolescent Language Classroom

## - An Experimental Research Project

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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January 2014

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# Declaration

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*For my sister Karen,*

*who ignited my interest in languages.*

# Acknowledgements

# ABSTRACT
# Fostering autonomy, generating motivation and shaping identities in the adolescent language classroom:
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## Máirín Kelly

This study is concerned with the concepts of learner *motivation, autonomy* and *identity* in adolescent language learning. It investigates whether the use of *intervention strategies* influences adolescent learners' autonomy and motivation in a language classroom setting. The intervention strategies in question are *delegation of material and task selection to the student* and *promotion of self-evaluation*. This study also reflects on the relationship between autonomy and motivation and the notion of *identity/self* in language learning.

Thirty-two students and one teacher participated in this study, selected from an all girls' secondary school in Ireland. The students were learning Spanish as foreign language. A quasi-experiment was designed which involved a treatment (18 students) and comparison (14 students) group. The teacher used intervention strategies to teach the treatment group, while continuing to use her traditional approach with the comparison group. This study predominantly used quantitative research methods, while qualitative research methods were used to collect data of a complementary nature. Quantitative data was collected via motivation and autonomy questionnaires, while qualitative data was elicited using goal-setting records, reflection records, individual interviews and classroom observations.

The results indicate that motivation and autonomy levels increased significantly among the learners who were exposed to the treatment for the duration of the experiment, thus suggesting that intervention strategies are effective as regards generating motivation and fostering autonomy. The findings suggest that engaging in autonomous learning practices allowed students to use the language as a vehicle to express self and identity. The findings also indicate that adolescent language learners should be given a greater input in the learning process and would benefit from the inclusion of these or similar intervention strategies in formal classroom settings.

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AAS    Adolescent Autonomy Scale

AMTB   Attitude/Motivation Test Battery

(E)LP    (European) Language Portfolio

FLA     Foreign language acquisition

IS      Intervention strategy

IS1     First intervention strategy

IS2     Second intervention strategy

L1      Native language

L2      Additional language

LLAS    Language Learning Autonomy Scale

LC     Leaving Certificate

SDT     Self-determination Theory

SLA     Second language acquisition

TY      Transition year

# Fostering Autonomy, Generating Motivation and Shaping Identities in the Adolescent Language Classroom

# 1. Introduction

Research in Foreign Language Acquisition (FLA) and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) frequently studies the psychology and sociology of the learning process with a view to improving it. Over the past four decades, both *learner autonomy* and *learner motivation* have become two focal points of language classroom research and practice, emerging as significant factors affecting Additional Language Learning (L2 learning). The term l*earner identity* is increasingly being linked to the concepts of autonomy and motivation in L2 learning.

Adolescents display a number of different roles or identities which are influenced by their family, friends, classmates and teachers. Adolescents' social identities tend to be complex, due to the fact that they are conflicting and dependent on context. For example, as a learner, an adolescent may wish to display an image of a diligent student to his/her teachers and parents, while preferring to display a relaxed or even rebellious attitude towards learning to his/her classmates and friends. Learning environments which encourage autonomous learning tend to increase levels of motivation because learners can personalise their learning experiences by incorporating materials, activities and goals into learning which appeal to their own interests. In this way, they are shaping their identities as L2 learners, integrating existing social identities into the classroom. Adolescence is a time of growth in which identities are shaped, thus it is motivating to give students more autonomy in the classroom, in order that they might explore their identities, thus making their classroom context more relevant to their personal interests.

This study investigates the influence of classroom *Intervention Strategies* (ISs) on the autonomy and motivation of adolescent language learners in an Irish secondary school. The ISs in question are *delegation of material and task selection to the student* and *promotion of self-evaluation*. Learner *motivation* and *autonomy* were examined in the context of the

acquisition of Spanish as a foreign language. This study considers the link between autonomy and motivation and the notion of *identity/self* in L2 learning in light of the findings of this and previous studies. A quasi-experimental design was used to examine the effects of the ISs on the student population. The experiment was carried out over a sixteen-week period and included both a treatment group and a comparison group in its design. It involved the administration of questionnaires and student reflection forms, as well as post-experiment interviews.

The following sections describe the research context and rationale, the research questions, and the organisation of the thesis.

## 1.1 The Research Context and Rationale

This study examines the influence of two ISs in the language classroom on both learner *autonomy* and *motivation*. This is significant for several reasons:

Firstly, over the past decade, a great deal of focus has been placed on the use of classroom strategies to either foster learner autonomy (Kato 2009; Hongyan and Hongying 2006) or to improve learner motivation (Bernaus and Gardner 2008; Guilloteaux 2007). However, such studies have not focused on how these variables are simultaneously affected following the introduction of ISs. Nor have they investigated the nature of their relationship following the implementation of ISs. Given the paucity of research in this area, a need exists for comprehensive studies of the effects of ISs on both autonomy and motivation.

Secondly, several researchers have chosen to concentrate on the relationship between learner autonomy and learner motivation and how both of these concepts are linked to identity/self (Ushioda 2011, Ushioda and Dörnyei 2009). This study also contributes to this particular debate by considering the link between autonomy, motivation and identity in L2 learning.

Thirdly, a great deal of existing research concentrates on tertiary education (Kato 2009; Wachob 2006). However, decreased levels of classroom engagement are of particular relevance among teenagers in secondary education (Guilloteaux 2007; Maehr and Anderman 1993). This study looks specifically at adolescent language learners in secondary education contexts and, as such, has potentially important implications for teachers and students with regard to enhancing the learning process within real language classrooms.

Fourthly, in addition to lower levels of  motivation being associated with secondary level settings in general terms, decreasing levels of motivation are especially challenging in language classrooms (Taylor 2013; Osborne 2005; Dörnyei 2003), thus suggesting that more should be done to generate motivation in second-level language classrooms in particular. The findings of this study could potentially have implications for language teachers and researchers in relation to addressing the apparent need to generate motivation in second-level language classrooms.

Fifthly, existing studies tend not to focus on FLA contexts where motivation is often regarded as more important than in SLA contexts, because of the fact that the former rarely allows for opportunities to communicate in the L2 outside of the classroom. The present study focuses on secondary level learners of Spanish in an FLA context who, unlike

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learners in SLA contexts, do not have opportunities to learn the language through direct exposure to it outside of the classroom and do not have frequent communication with the target community.

Finally, the present study also contributes to the ongoing debate regarding the ordinality of autonomy and motivation. While numerous studies have shown autonomy to produce positive motivational effects (Nakanishi 2002; Knowles 1995; Deci and Ryan 1985), others suggest that motivation affects the degree to which learners are prepared to learn autonomously (Ushioda 2011; Wachob 2006; Spratt, Humphreys and Chan 2002). Implications arising out of the present study with regard to the relationship between autonomy and motivation for researchers and practitioners are considered.

## 1.2 Research Questions

The following questions address the gaps in existing research in this field as highlighted in the previous section and were therefore chosen as the focus for this piece of research:

1. Do the classroom Intervention Strategies[1] influence learner *motivation* and, if so, how?
2. Do the classroom Intervention Strategies influence learner *autonomy* and, if so, how?

The first question deals with the effects of the ISs on *learner motivation*. It is addressed in this study by comparing motivation levels before and after engagement with the ISs of interest and again six months later. A detailed exposition of the approach taken and instruments used can be found in Chapter Three, and the results and implications of the findings are discussed in Chapters Four and Five. The second research question explores how the ISs affect *learner autonomy* with a similar approach employed.

In investigating how the ISs influenced students' motivation and autonomy, the two ISs were not looked at in isolation, but instead as an approach centred around their use which has six central aspects. These aspects were selecting materials, planning learning tasks, setting personal goals, evaluating learning, changes in the teacher's role and working in groups.

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[1] The two Intervention Strategies are *delegation of material and task selection to the student* and *promotion of self-evaluation*

## 1.3 Organisation of the Thesis

This thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter One provides the research context and rationale, the research questions, and an outline of the chapters of the thesis.

Chapter Two reviews literature relevant to the current study. The chapter begins by focusing on motivation in language learning and then reviews autonomy in language learning, followed by a review of literature linking autonomy, motivation and identity.

Chapter Three outlines the research design and methods used in this study, and describes how the study was carried out. More specifically, it describes the sampling method and research participants, the quasi-experimental procedure, and the data collection instruments. It also explains how the data was analysed and provides the results of the pilot study.

Chapter Four presents the results of the study. It begins by presenting the results of the quantitative data resulting from the motivation and autonomy questionnaires. Next, the results of the qualitative data resulting from the goal-setting records, reflection records, interviews and observations are presented. This is followed by the presentation of the individual profiles, consisting of students' quantitative and qualitative data. Finally, the chapter concludes with a summary of the results.

The results of the study are discussed in Chapter Five of the thesis. The discussion is divided into four parts and presented under the following headings: motivation and the ISs; autonomy and the ISs; identity, autonomy and motivation in language learning; and implications for language teachers and learners.

Chapter Six, the final chapter of the thesis, sums up the main findings and focuses on recommendations for future research.

# 2. Literature Review

The literature review is divided into three main sections: motivation in foreign/second language acquisition; autonomy in foreign/second language acquisition; and consideration of the link between language learner autonomy, learner motivation and learner identity/self in foreign/second language acquisition.

## 2.1 Motivation in Foreign/Second Language Acquisition

This section, which relates to learner motivation in L2 learning, is divided into three parts: a history of motivation theories in L2 learning; a history of motivational classroom strategies; and concluding remarks.

### 2.1.1 Motivation Theories in Language Learning

The abundance of literature and research on motivation in second and foreign language learning suggests that it has long been an area of great interest to researchers in this field (e.g. Guilloteaux 2013; Taylor 2013; Bowen 2012; Ushioda and Dörnyei 2012; Dörnyei 2009; Dörnyei and Ushioda 2009; Bernaus and Gardner 2008; Guilloteaux and Dörnyei 2008; Ushioda 2008, 2006; Deci and Ryan 2002, 1985; Deci 1975; Gardner and Lambert 1972, 1959 *etc.*). The study of language learners' motivation commonly attempts to rationalise why learners select, achieve and continue in various activities. The pioneers of such studies are Robert Gardner and Wallace Lambert, two Canadian social psychologists who began carrying out thorough and comprehensive research in the 1950s. Gardner and Lambert's (1959) study of the motivation of second language learners in a Canadian context was the first of its kind; it investigated and highlighted the significance of L2 (additional language) motivation, leading to the development of the *socio-educational model*.

Gardner's *socio-educational model* (2001, 1985) is comprised of four sections: social milieu, individual differences (intelligence, aptitude, motivation and situational anxiety),

SLA acquisition contexts, and outcomes. The socio-educational model (Figure 2.1) highlights the notion that languages are unique from other academic subjects because of the fact that learners consider target languages as a characteristic of the cultures associated with them (Chambers 1999). The model proposes that language learners' attitudes in the learning process are shaped and manipulated by cultural beliefs about the community associated with the target language.

**Figure 2.1** Socio-educational model of second language acquisition (Gardner 2010, p.8)
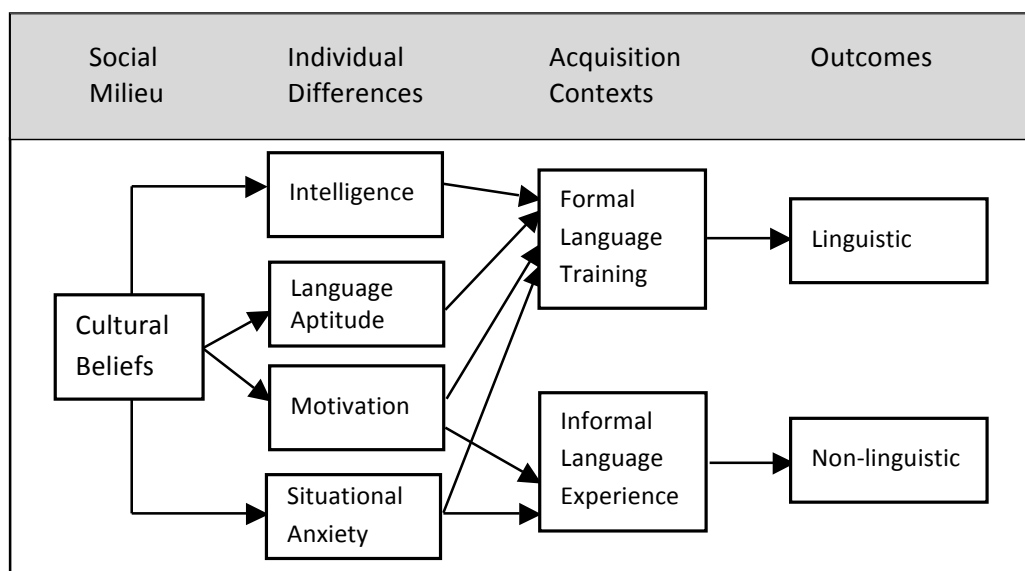


Using this model, motivation is explored from a social psychological perspective, meaning that it is viewed in terms of learner attitudes to target language cultures and people, focusing on the interaction of two key elements, integrative and instrumental motivations. *Integrative motivation* is based on the desire to socialise within the target culture (Gardner and Lambert 1972), while *instrumental motivation* originates from the desire to realise a goal, be it to gain job promotion, enhance career opportunities or to pass an examination (Dörnyei 2001; Ellis 1984). Gardner and Lambert (1959) suggest that successful language acquisition is less likely to be achieved when the learner is instrumentally motivated. However, subsequent findings conclude that instrumental motivation is a superior factor in language acquisition (Gardner and Lambert 1972). In order to measure learners'

motivational types and intensity levels, the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMTB) questionnaire was developed. The socio-educational model and AMTB were revised over the years by Gardner and his colleagues (Bernaus and Gardner 2008; Gardner 2000, 1985; Tremblay and Gardner 1995; Gardner and MacIntyre 1993; Gardner and Smythe 1981). The term "social milieu" was replaced with "external influences" (Gardner 2001) and a number of versions of the AMTB, originally used to identify the motivational types of English speakers learning French as a second language in Canada, were created. It was translated into other languages and adapted to form the mini-AMTB (Gardner and MacIntyre 1993).

For the most part, language motivation continued to be categorised as integrative or instrumental until the 1990s when Gardner and Lambert's emphasis on the social context within the socio-educational model became less relevant due to the fact that it was not considered particularly useful to language teachers. While the model allowed teachers to categorise their students' motivation into types (integrative or instrumental), teachers could not apply this information to enhance motivation in L2 classrooms (Dörnyei 1994). At that time, Gardner himself stated, "the old characterization of motivation in terms of integrative vs. instrumental orientations is too static and restricted" (Gardner and Macintyre 1993, p.1). Dörnyei (1994) suggests that the simplistic nature of the integrative-instrumental system, although one of the reasons for its initial popularity, ultimately led to its criticisms. It was criticised for ignoring cognitive features of motivation (Ushioda 2006; Lamb 2004; Williams and Burden 1997) and due to the fact that it was developed in a bilingual setting (Dörnyei, Csizér and Németh 2006; Ushioda 2006; Lamb 2004).

Researchers objected to the value of the socio-psychological approach (e.g. Dörnyei, Csizér and Németh 2006; Ushioda 2006; Lamb 2004; Williams and Burden 1997; Dörnyei 1994, 1990; Clément and Kruidenier 1983 etc.), pointing out that cognitive features of learning motivation (e.g. attention, information processing, memory *etc.*) were not taken into account (Dörnyei 1994) and that it did not promote foreign language learning. It was suggested that the social psychological approach was too widely defined to help language teachers create realistic parameters (Dörnyei 1990).

Others found fault in the model being developed in a bilingual setting in Canada (Dörnyei, Csizér and Németh 2006; Ushioda 2006; Lamb 2004) where students have ample opportunity to practise the language outside of the classroom and are, therefore, more likely

to have increased integrative orientation in comparison to learning situations where students do not have that opportunity. Ellis (1997) claims that the situation in Canada is unique due to the way that bilingualism and biculturalism are encouraged within that society. A comparative investigation, with research participants from contexts where multiculturalism is the norm and participants from contexts where multiculturalism is not the norm, found that integrative orientation appeared "only in multicultural contexts among members of a clearly dominant group" (Clément and Kruidenier 1983, p.72). In SLA (Second Language Acquisition) contexts, the target language is acquired through direct exposure to it or through formal instruction together with frequent communication with the target community (Dörnyei 1990). In FLA (Foreign Language Acquisition) settings, the target language is taught as an academic subject with little or no exposure to it outside the classroom. Dörnyei (1990) argues that integrative motivation is of more significance to learners in SLA contexts and it has correspondingly been argued that instrumental orientation may be more important in FLA contexts (Williams and Burden 1997) with both of these arguments serving to undermine the value of the socio-educational model. Although the appropriateness of using the AMTB in FLA contexts is a concern for many researchers (Dörnyei 2005, 1994, 1990; Lamb 2004; Root 1999), Gardner has employed the mini-version of the questionnaire as a research tool in that context to investigate the motivation of Spanish language learners in Spain (Bernaus and Gardner 2008). The mini-AMTB questionnaire is used to measure: integrativeness; attitudes toward the learning situation; motivation; instrumental orientation; language anxiety; and communication-related variables (willingness to communicate in English, perceived competence in English, frequency of communication in English and communication anxiety in English). In the case of the current study, the testing of motivational types took place in an FLA context. Thus, there were considerations as to the suitability of exploring motivation under the traditional integrative-instrumental system. While instrumental motivation was examined, the researcher opted to measure *intrinsic* rather than integrative motivation because of the fact that integrative motivation appears only in multicultural contexts where learners have clear opportunities to practise their L2 and interact with the community associated with the target language in their everyday lives (Ellis 1997).

Some equate an integrative and instrumental dichotomy with intrinsic and extrinsic forms of motivation (Noels 2001; Noels et al. 2000). The idea of intrinsic and extrinsic

motivations originates from Deci and Ryan's self-determination theory (1985, 2002). Under *self-determination theory* (SDT), *intrinsic motivation* refers to individuals completing tasks due to experiencing innate interest or joy in doing so; *extrinsic motivation* refers to the undertaking of something because it results in a separable outcome (Ryan and Deci 2000). Thus, learners engage in activities in order to achieve a goal (e.g. pass an exam) rather than for the satisfaction they experience in doing so. Like instrumental motivation, extrinsic motivation comes from the learner's desire to obtain an external reward, such as the recognition of peers and parents or the avoidance of punishment from an external source. Secondary school settings, by nature, are more likely to encourage extrinsic, as opposed to intrinsic, motivation (Brown 2006, 1990). In terms of intrinsic motivation, the willingness and eagerness to learn comes from an internal or personal sense of fulfilment in doing so, regardless of any external rewards; it differs somewhat from integrative motivation because of the fact that it does not simply relate to the learner's desire to become integrated into the target community, but rather to learner-internal factors because he/she regards language learning as a means of acquiring knowledge and satisfying his/her curiosity and interest. Extrinsic motivation has often been viewed as a factor undermining intrinsic motivation; some studies (Deci, Koestner and Ryan 1999; Deci 1975) have found that natural intrinsic interest in an activity is lost if the individual has to do it for extrinsic reasons. Flora and Flora (1999), on the other hand, argue that rewards in education do not diminish, and in some cases can even enhance, learners' intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic and extrinsic motivations overlap frequently and if tasks are intrinsic from their initiation (i.e. involve a degree of learner choice) then rewards can contribute to learning and internal satisfaction (Ushioda 2008; Ryan and Deci 2000). In FLA contexts, it is more appropriate to categorise motivation in terms of being either extrinsic/instrumental or intrinsic; it is not suitable to classify motivation as integrative in FLA contexts, given the lack of opportunity to communicate or mingle frequently with the target community.

Deci and Ryan's SDT (2002, 1985) is based on the relationship between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation and the basic psychological need for autonomy (Deci and Ryan 2008; Ryan and Deci 2000); it focuses on the extent to which an individual's behaviour is self-motivated and self-determined (Deci and Ryan 2002). SDT emphasises the importance of personal choice in order for learners to feel that completing tasks is intrinsically rewarding. SDT suggests that individuals have instinctive, psychological needs for autonomy,

competence and relatedness. The *need for autonomy* relates to the learner's need to experience choice and initiate his/her own actions; the *need for competence* refers to the need to thrive when faced with challenging tasks and to accomplish desired outcomes; and the *need for relatedness* refers to a social need relating to building mutual respect and relatedness with others (Baard, Deci, and Ryan 2004). The realisation of those needs (autonomy, competence and relatedness) depends on external factors that develop intrinsic motivation; factors that reduce the fulfilment of those three needs will decrease intrinsic motivation. Deci and Ryan (2002, 1985) hold that intrinsic motivation is linked closely to learner autonomy and argue that learner autonomy plays an important role in SDT. The relationship between SDT and Gardner's integrative-instrumental system was explored in a bilingual setting at a French-English university in Canada by Noels et al. (2000). They developed a language learning orientations scale to measure intrinsic and extrinsic motivations; in this study, they suggested that instrumental orientation was "highly correlated" with extrinsic motivation (Noels et. al 2000, p.77).

Some researchers, such as Ely (1986) and Gardner (1985), began to look not only at motivational *types*, but also at the importance of the strength or *level of intensity* of learners' motivation. Ely's study (1986) concluded that the learner's type of motivation positively predicted his/her level or strength of motivation. More recently, Gardner (2007) has gone on to propose that motivational types are not important and that it is of more value to concern oneself with the role motivation plays in enhancing language learning. In his study, Gardner (ibid.) concludes that the intensity level or strength of the motivation is more important in classroom L2 motivation.

During the mid-1990s in particular, the focus began to move away from simply classifying motivation into types as the traditional outlook of motivation from a macro perspective shifted to one of context and became increasingly situation-specific. Researchers such as Dörnyei (1994), Crookes and Schmidt (1991) and Oxford and Shearin (1994) began to question the importance of motivational types in classroom contexts. The notion of motivation as a static element of language acquisition changed and Dörnyei (1994) began classifying motivation into three levels: the language, the learner, and the learning situation levels. *The language level* refers to learners' motivational types (instrumental/extrinsic and intrinsic) and *the learner level* deals with factors affecting individuals' motivation, including the need for achievement, anxiety and self-confidence.

However, Dörnyei was mostly concerned with *the learning situation level*, which is made up of intrinsic and extrinsic motives and motivational conditions including course-specific, teacher-specific, and group-specific ones; up to twenty strategies were recommended to enhance motivation at this level. It was pointed out, however, that the strategies should be simply considered as "suggestions that may work with one teacher or group better than another" (Dörnyei 1994, p.280).

In the latter half of the 1990s, motivation came to be regarded as a process and the majority of subsequent research focused on classroom practices. Dörnyei and Ottó's *process-oriented model of L2 motivation* (1998) divided the process of motivation into three main phases: the preactional, actional and postactional stages.

> This [process-oriented] model organises the motivational influences of L2 learning along a sequence of discrete actional events within the chain of initiating and enacting motivated behaviour. (Dörnyei 2001, p.85)

*The preactional stage* relates to decisions that are made before acting; it involves goal setting and planning how to achieve those goals. It is influenced by intrinsic motivation and extrinsic/instrumental incentives.

*The actional stage* involves learners taking action towards achieving their goals; learners appraise and monitor their progress by comparing their actual performance to desired performance. Learners may then choose to take alternative courses of action to achieve goals and progress further.

*The postactional stage* requires learners to take a retrospective view of their actions, evaluating outcomes. Once the evaluation is carried out, it is followed by further planning and so, the learner begins the cycle of the three stages of the model again.

Dörnyei (2005) concedes that the model has its shortcomings due to the fact that it is challenging to separate the actional phase of a learning activity from that of the sequence of activities that comprise an entire lesson in actual classrooms. It is difficult to distinguish between the beginning and end of an actional process and likely that students will be engaged in more than one actional process at a time.

In the last decade (2000-2009), Dörnyei further investigated the learning situation level of language study, introducing a framework for teaching practices and motivational strategies (2001). As with Dörnyei and Ottó's process-oriented model (1998), this motivational framework operates under the pre-actional, actional and post-actional stages.

The model is made up of four key units: creating the basic motivational conditions; generating initial motivation; maintaining and protecting motivation; and encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation.

*Creating the basic motivational conditions* involves establishing a good teacher-student rapport, a pleasant and supportive classroom atmosphere, and a cohesive learner group that embodies appropriate group norms to pave the way for motivation generation.

*Generating initial motivation* involves "whetting the students' appetite by using strategies designed to develop positive attitudes toward the language course" (Guilloteaux 2007, p.118). It involves finding out what learners' goals are, the topics they would like to learn and attempting to incorporate them into the curriculum (Thansoulas 2002).

*Maintaining and protecting motivation* is achieved by promoting learner autonomy through a set of motivational maintenance strategies that increase learners' self-confidence and create learner autonomy with Dörnyei and Ushioda (2011) suggesting up to five approaches that teachers can avail of. In order to take responsibility for their own motivation and learning, learners also need strategies to deal with factors affecting their motivation such as lack of self-confidence, change of goals, or distractions (Noels, Clément and Pelletier 1999).

*Encouraging positive retrospective self-evaluation* refers to teachers providing effective and encouraging feedback and offering grades in a motivational manner. It also involves learners establishing short-term goals and reflecting on their development and accomplishments.

At the beginning of the twenty-first century, researchers began reconceptualising L2 motivation in the context of self (Ushioda and Dörnyei 2009). Dörnyei and Csizér (2002) called for a rethinking of the concept of *integrativeness* in a publication containing results from a large-scale, longitudinal research investigation carried out in Hungary. According to Dörnyei (2009), it was both these empirical findings and theoretical considerations that led to Dörnyei's *L2 Motivational Self System* (2005, 2009), which is made up of three dimensions: the Ideal L2 self, the Ought-to L2 Self and the L2 Learning Experience. This system will be described in detail in Section 2.3 below.

Ushioda (2001) finds that motivation can be stimulated either by future-related factors or by past/present L2 learning factors. Similarly, the *Ideal* and *Ought-to* L2 selves each relate to future motivational perspectives, while the *L2 Learning Experience* involves the

past and present of L2 learning and L2 related experiences. The Motivational L2 Self System requires that learners envision their future L2 selves, together with performing self-regulating practices, such as goal setting; as well as considering the positives in moving towards their ideal L2 selves, learners should consider the negatives of not doing so. Dörnyei's focus on motivation and the L2 self is currently becoming increasingly linked to *learner identity* and *learner autonomy* (Taylor 2013; Ushioda 2011; Dörnyei 2009; Dörnyei and Ushioda 2009; Eccles 2009; LaGuardia 2009; McCaslin 2009; Ushioda and Dörnyei 2009). Motivation, L2 selves and learner identities will be explored further in section 2.3 below.

### 2.1.2 Motivational Classroom Strategies

In the 1990s, researchers began proposing motivational strategies that could be employed in L2 classrooms (e.g. Dörnyei 1994; Oxford and Shearin 1994; Crookes and Schmidt 1991). These researchers claimed that there was a need for motivational strategies that could be put into practice by teachers in L2 classrooms. Oxford and Shearin (1994) emphasised the importance of setting learning goals and creating an enjoyable learning setting, while Dörnyei (1994) suggested thirty strategies for the three levels of motivation (language, learner, and learning situation). Crookes and Schmidt (1991) suggested that curriculum and syllabus design was important and that learning tasks and materials should be varied.

Gardner and Tremblay (1994) responded to Crookes and Schmidt's, Dörnyei's, and Oxford and Shearin's (1994) suggestions for classroom approaches to motivation, acknowledging that many of the techniques recommended might be useful. However, Gardner and Tremblay (1994) suggested that the proposed strategies would have to be tested in order to confirm their usefulness in generating motivation. Their call for the strategies to be put to the test led to Dörnyei and Csizér's (1998) investigation of Hungarian teachers of English and the motivational strategies which they had employed in their classrooms. The results of the study led to the development of the *ten commandments for motivating learners* (ibid.), a list of the ten most important motivational strategies (Table 2.1).

**Table 2.1** Ten commandments for motivating learners (Dörnyei and Csizér 1998)

| |
|---|
| 1 Set a personal example with your own behaviour |
| 2 Create a pleasant, relaxed atmosphere in the classroom |
| 3 Present the tasks properly |
| 4 Develop a good relationship with the learners |
| 5 Increase the learners' linguistic self-confidence |
| 6 Make the language classes interesting |
| 7 Promote learner autonomy |
| 8 Personalise the learning process |
| 9 Increase the learners' goal-orientedness |
| 10 Familiarise learners with the target language culture |

Since Dörnyei and Csizér's response to the call for evidence to support claims that specific strategies can be introduced into classrooms in order to enhance motivation, few additional studies have been conducted in classrooms in order to confirm these findings or investigate the influence of other recommended motivational strategies. Studies which have attempted to investigate motivational strategies include Cheng and Dörnyei (2007) and Guilloteaux (2007). Cheng and Dörnyei's study (2007) reproduced Dörnyei and Csizér's (1998) survey in order to investigate the range of classroom strategies that teachers use to motivate learners in an Asian context (Taiwan). The results indicated that motivational strategies such as "displaying motivating teacher behaviour", "promoting learners' self-confidence", "creating a pleasant classroom climate" and "presenting tasks properly", were transferrable across different cultures. Guilloteaux's study was also conducted in an Asian context, taking place in South Korea. The results indicated that "the language teachers' motivational practice is directly linked to increased levels of the learners' motivated learning behavior and their motivational state" (2007, p.i).

While there is a large body of literature promoting the use of classroom strategies in generating L2 motivation, much of what is written is theory based as opposed to evidence based (King 2011; Guilloteaux 2007; Cheng and Dörnyei 2007). Studies which have investigated the use of classroom strategies on learner motivation have tended to look at motivational strategies already employed in the classroom; however, it seems that there is scant research focusing on introducing motivational ISs into classrooms in order to assess their influence on motivation, a significant gap in the research which prompted this particular study.

Shaffer (2012) carried out a Language Portfolio (LP) study in Korea in order to examine the effectiveness of LPs in promoting self-regulated learning and enhancing motivation among seventy-three university students studying English as an L2. The participants were asked to keep an LP and made aware that the rationale behind doing so was for them to reflect on their learning throughout the academic year by assessing the usefulness of each element of their language study program and modifying it as necessary. The findings indicated that the LPs were effective in helping Korean university students reflect on the quality of their learning processes and that using the LPs promoted learner autonomy and increased students' motivation.

### 2.1.3 Concluding Remarks

Study in the field has shifted in direction over the past four decades. The literature of the past three decades has seen L2 motivation become more relevant to classroom practice, considering it as a situated process, and integrating it into FLA, as well as SLA, research. Continuing focus is being afforded to the learner's individual needs.

The history of L2 motivation has been described as having three distinct phases: the social psychological period (1959-1990), the cognitive-situated period (during the 1990s), the process-oriented period (1998-2000s). The shift towards reconceptualising L2 motivation in the context of self (2005 to present) can perhaps be seen as a fourth distinct phase.

In the *social psychological period*, motivational psychologists were more concerned with defining what motivation was rather than how this knowledge might be used by language teachers to motivate learners. During this period, researchers were concerned with classifying motivation into types and subtypes. While there is no doubt that the socio-educational model (Gardner 1985, 2001) was forward thinking in its time and has contributed significantly to the study of language acquisition, today it does not satisfactorily account for how motivation occurs in real language classrooms. Researchers are no longer concerned solely with classifying motivation; motivation is currently viewed as a variable of language learning which can be beneficially manipulated (Dörnyei and Ushioda 2011). The SDT (Deci and Ryan 1985, 2002), also developed during this period, has drawn fewer criticisms over the years than Gardner's model, due to its relevance in the study of autonomy as well as motivation.

The *cognitive-situated period* saw noticeable changes in the field of L2 motivation with pedagogical implications taken into account in the form of motivational strategies. While the research took a new direction, it did not shun the findings of the previous period because of the fact that the socio-educational model was "useful to characterize and compare the motivational patterns...and to draw inferences about important issues" (Dörnyei 2005, p.74). In this period, motivation was approached from a situation-specific standpoint and attention focused increasingly on motivational components that are specific to learning situations. Education friendly approaches emerged (Dörnyei 2001), which put the responsibility on teachers to use ISs in order to create and stimulate student motivation.

The *process-oriented period* moved toward regarding motivation as a dynamic and changing process that may fluctuate over time. The process-oriented model (Dörnyei and Ottó 1998) was put forward and self-regulating strategies were employed so that learners could manage the level of their own motivation. The focus shifted to finding strategies for learners to allow them to take responsibility for their own learning. Previously, teachers were expected to introduce strategies to improve teaching in an attempt to increase learners' motivation, but the process-oriented period held that motivation, especially intrinsic, could only truly be stimulated if learners initiated such strategies themselves.

The next significant period in L2 motivational theories was the *reconceptualisation of L2 motivation in the context of possible selves*. The L2 Motivational Self System (Dörnyei 2005) has moved toward focusing on learners as individuals with their own social identities. As previously stated, the relationship between motivation and L2 selves/identities will be explored further in Section 2.3.

Moving on to the literature which was reviewed concerning the history of motivational classroom strategies, the 1990s saw researchers recognise a need for motivational strategies that could be used in classrooms by teachers. Oxford and Shearin (1994), Dörnyei (1994) and Crookes and Schmidt (1991) recommended techniques (e.g. redesigning curricula, incorporating personal interests, setting personal goals etc.). The potential usefulness of the proposed strategies was acknowledged and Gardner and Tremblay (1994) recommended that they be trialled in classrooms. Following an investigation of motivational strategies employed by language teachers in their classrooms, Dörnyei and Csizér (1998) developed a list of ten motivational strategies which they considered most important for motivating learners. Few additional studies have been conducted in order to confirm these findings or

investigate other recommended motivational strategies. The results of a study by Guilloteaux (2007) in South Korea indicated that teachers' motivational practice is strongly connected to enhanced learner motivation.

Despite the fact that many classroom strategies for generating L2 motivation have been put forward over the years, few research studies have investigated their effectiveness. There appears to be a paucity of research focusing on introducing motivational ISs into classrooms in order to investigate their effectiveness in generating motivation.

## 2.2 Autonomy in Foreign/Second Language Acquisition

This section, which relates to learner autonomy in L2 learning, is divided into five parts: a history of autonomy in L2 learning; approaches to autonomy in L2 learning; the role of the teacher; teacher/learner training and concluding remarks.

### 2.2.1 Autonomy in Language Learning

While autonomy is traditionally defined as "the ability to take charge of one's own learning" (Holec 1981, p.3), Benson prefers to define it as "the capacity to take control of one's own learning" (2001, p.47). Autonomy can be described as a capacity that an individual possesses, but that he/she may choose not to exercise; it does not necessarily imply learning in isolation, without a teacher or learning outside the classroom. "The literature on autonomy published since 2000 exceeds the literature published over the previous 25 years" (Benson 2006, p.21), suggesting that, along with motivation, learner autonomy has emerged as a highly important and frequently researched aspect of L2 language education over the past three decades.

The development of adult education in Europe and the Council of Europe's *Modern Languages Project* (established in 1971) led to the documented study and practice of learner autonomy at CRAPEL (Centre de Recherches es d'Applications Pédagogiques en langues), a language research centre in Nancy University, France. Teacher-researchers at CRAPEL (where adults were given the chance to acquire a foreign language in a resources centre without teachers' guidance) practised and developed the notion of learner autonomy. While Yves Châlon has been described as "the father of autonomy" (Benson 2001, p.8) due

to his role in setting up a series of projects to implement and investigate autonomy at CRAPEL, it is Henri Holec (the centre's director until 1998) who is considered to have introduced autonomy to language learning (Benson 2006, 2001; Gremmo and Riley 1995). Holec's first publication on learner autonomy, a report to the Council of Europe (1980), outlined the ideological conditions on which it was based. Holec viewed autonomy as a learner attribute that requires learners to establish learning objectives, determine the content to be learned, select methods to use in learning, monitor learning and assess the whole process. Holec regarded autonomy as a capacity which should be developed through methodological skills (Cotterall 2008). Research on autonomy in the 1980s focused mostly on learners working without teachers and led to the development of numerous self-access centres (Allwright 1988). While autonomy was regarded by Holec (1981) as a learner attribute, Dickinson (1987) offered an alternative view of autonomy as a situation where learners are completely in control of making and implementing decisions concerned with learning.

The focus of research on autonomy in the 1990s shifted from the context of self-access centres, with researchers redirecting their attention towards classroom settings. Approaches to autonomy included resource, technology, learner, classroom teacher-based approaches (Benson 2001). Dam (1995) made the case that learners in classroom-based approaches acted independently and that autonomy could be incorporated into the classroom without the provision of self-access centres or formal training. The focus shifted to teachers as well as students and to improving the teaching process in order to enhance the learning process (Gremmo and Riley 1995). While Holec had previously presented autonomy from a methodological perspective, in the 1990s the psychological dimension of autonomy was introduced (Little 1991, 1995). Researchers began focusing on the psychology behind learner autonomy with particular attention given to exploring how learners use their innate ability to exercise autonomy. It was proposed that the more learners exercise their capacity, the greater the capacity becomes.

In the late 1990s, autonomy was divided into components, degrees and types (Littlewood 1999, 1997; Nunan 1997). Littlewood (1999) differentiated between proactive and reactive autonomy. *Proactive autonomy* involves learners establishing objectives, planning and choosing methods to achieve those objectives and evaluating the learning process. In terms of *reactive autonomy*, learners are not self-directed, but when a direction

has been instigated for them, they manage their resources autonomously in order to achieve their goal. It was argued that where reactive autonomy exists, it should be developed into proactive autonomy (ibid.).

At the beginning of the new millennium, in addition to the methodological and psychological perspectives of autonomy, Benson (2001) introduced *content* as a third dimension, proposing that learners should be given freedom in deciding what and where they learn, over and above deciding when and how they learn. Many supporters of learner autonomy argue that a degree of freedom in learning is necessary if learners are to develop autonomy (Trebbi 2008; Benson 2001; Fenner 2000, Van Lier 1996), while at the same time recognising that freedom in learning is not the same as autonomy. In relation to the three dimensions of autonomy (methodological, psychological and content), it has been argued that in order to develop an optimal learning environment, a combination of the three outlooks on autonomy is required and that as many perspectives as possible should be considered, not deeming one as superior to any other (Oxford 2003, Ribé 2003). The three dimensions of autonomy do not work independently of each other; they work interdependently (Benson 2001).

Recent literature continues to focus on autonomy in classroom settings (e.g. Fumin and Li 2012, Dam 2011, Kato 2009), while autonomy is becoming increasingly linked to *learner identity* and *learner motivation* (Taylor 2013; Ushioda 2011, 2006; Dörnyei 2009; Dörnyei and Ushioda 2009; Eccles 2009; LaGuardia 2009; McCaslin 2009; Ushioda and Dörnyei 2009). These links will be explored further in Section 2.3 below.

The concept of autonomy has been referred to and continues to be referred to by a number of different labels and terms. While the phrase "learner autonomy" was coined more than three decades ago (Holec 1981), it has not yet been universally applied by language researchers or educators. Several labels have been used in place of learner autonomy, some examples include "independent learning" (Brookfield 1981), "individualisation" (Riley 1986), "learner independence" (Sheerin 1991) and "self-direction" (Candy 1991). Leni Dam, well known within the field due to her innovative practices and model of autonomy "based on classroom and curriculum negotiation" (Benson 2001), acknowledges that her workshops have used various terms over the years including "differentiated teaching and learning", "getting the learners actively involved in their own learning", "awareness raising about one's own learning" and "taking

responsibility for one's own learning" (Dam 2008). Despite the use of differing terms, Dam states "the basic idea has all the time been teacher education for learner autonomy" (Dam 2008, p.20).

Little (1991, 1996), drawing on the work of psychologist Len Vygotsky, introduced *independence* and *interdependence* as attributes of the autonomous learner. *Independence* refers to learners taking responsibility for their own learning by setting learning goals, independently solving problems and making decisions about their learning, while *interdependence* refers to learners solving problems through collaboration with teachers and with other learners. The notions of independence and interdependence in learning originate from Vygotsky's (1978) *Zone of Proximal Development* (ZPD) theory. The ZPD is the difference between what a learner can do without help and what he/she can do with assistance. ZPD theory suggests that learners can reduce this distance through social interaction with more proficient peers. According to the ZPD theory, learners who are supported and guided by more competent peers when performing an action, learn to internalise the knowledge gained through this interaction and to self-regulate his/her own learning behaviour; this development is known as *internalisation* (Lantolf and Thorne 2007).

While Vygotsky's work is largely concerned with how individuals acquire knowledge and grow through social interaction, ZPD theory also suggests that learners reduce the distance between actual and potential development by independently solving problems. Commenting on the importance of individual development through both independent and interdependent problem solving, Lantolf and Thorne state "what one can do today with assistance is indicative of what one will be able to do independently in the future" (2007, p.210). According to Vygotsky's theory, learners make a transition from a state of interdependence to one of independence and then the cycle of moving from interdependence to dependence starts again, but at a higher level. Teachers are also involved in this scaffolding/support process due to the fact that they are responsible for setting the conditions in which students have the freedom to make decisions about their learning and because they offer their expertise and guidance to students while they engage in autonomous learning (Little 1991).

*Socio-cultural theory* (SCT) is a more recent development of ZPD theory, which looks at the process by which learners gain an ability to work autonomously through social

interaction and collaboration with more competent peers (Lantolf and Thorne 2007). The main principles of SCT informing the study of L2 acquisition are the ZPD, *internalisation* and *mediation/regulation* (ibid.). As previously stated, ZPD is the difference between the level of development currently acquired and the desired level of development. Also previously dealt with, *internalisation* is the process through which social interaction and imitation lead to competence and self-regulation. *Mediation* means that how a person acts and responds is affected by symbolic artefacts (such as languages, logic and rationality) as well as by material artefacts and technologies. *Internalisation* is the process through which social interaction and imitation lead to competence and self-regulation. SCT depicts language learners as agents actively participating in their own learning and regulating the time and effort expended in doing so (Lantolf and Pavlenko 2001). According to Aljaafreh and Lantolf (1994), *graduation* and *contingency* are elements of SCT. Support from peers or teachers should be *graduated*; in other words, support should only be provided when required because excessive assistance reduces the student's ability to become an autonomous learner. The level of support which peers or teachers provide the learner should be *contingent* on actual need; in other words, the level of assistance is dependent on how much the learner requires to effectively solve the problem at hand and should be withdrawn when the learner gains the ability to perform the task independently (ibid.).

Many authors, commenting on the history of autonomy, have described a great sense of confusion surrounding the area (Andrade and Evans 2013, Smith 2008; Benson 2006, 2001; Little 2006, 2002). Reflecting on how to define learner autonomy, Little states "[it is] widely confused with self-instruction... [and] notoriously difficult to define precisely" (2002, p.1). Smith (2008) suggests that the inconsistent use of terminology means that it is difficult to compile a definitive history of learner autonomy in L2 education. Andrade and Evans (2013) distinguish between *self-regulation* and *autonomy*, while acknowledging that the terms are frequently used interchangeably. They define self-regulation as learners willingly taking responsibility for their own learning and suggest that self-regulated learning is comprised of four categories: metacognitive, motivation, cognitive, and behaviour (ibid., p.12). Andrade and Evans describe autonomy as an elusive term, which reflects a wide range of learner characteristics and behaviours, including decision-making, choice, control, independence, capacity to learn, self-direction, self-awareness, active

learning, taking responsibility, strategic competence, motivation, metacognition, behaviour, reflection, goal-setting, time management, and self-assessment (2013, p.17).

In the current study, the term *learner autonomy* is defined as students self-regulating their learning by engaging in activities such as selecting learning materials, planning learning tasks, setting and evaluating goals, and reflecting on their learning.

### 2.2.2 Approaches to Autonomy in the Second-Level Language Classroom

Being given a choice in how they learn motivates learners (Dam 2011; Brophy 2009; Ushioda 2006; Good and Brophy 1994). In the context of secondary education settings, learners have very little freedom when it comes to choosing what to do because they have to follow curricular guidelines in order to prepare for national examinations (Dam 2011). The extent to which examinations influence the behaviour of language teachers and learners is referred to as "washback" (Wei 2014, Pan 2009). *Washback* can sometimes generate anxiety among teachers and learners, encouraging them to focus obsessively on examination related content, while ignoring/neglecting content that is not crucial to passing the examination (Cheng and Curtis 2004). The purpose of giving learners a say in choice of learning materials is to enable them to choose materials that are suited to their personal tastes (Murphy 2008; Thanasoulas 2000; Van Lier 1996). Despite the washback effect of state examinations on learners' ability to make choices in their learning, Thomson (2006) suggests that learners can still personalise their learning by adapting the material or by supplementing it with activities which make it possible for students to express their interests.

As well as giving learners choices in how they learn, if classrooms are to foster learner autonomy the focus must shift from teacher-centeredness to learner-centeredness (Farrell and Jacobs 2010). In the traditional teacher-centred classroom, teachers tend to be concerned with how they can teach learning content, while in a learner-centred environment; teachers are more concerned with how to encourage learners to learn the content (Dam 2011). One way to move towards a more learner-centred approach is to encourage real/authentic conversations in the classroom using the L2 (Dam 2001). Dam argues that autonomous classrooms allow for authentic and genuine communication in the

target language. Richards (2006) also asserts that real conversations can occur in classrooms which allow learners to express themselves.

Along with choice and learner centredness, evaluation is an important characteristic of learner autonomy (Littlewood 1999; Dam, 1995). Dam (2011) suggests that teachers sometimes avoid asking learners to reflect on what they have learned due to time constraints imposed by the syllabus, claiming that national examinations add to the time problem. This is consistent with Shohamy's (1997) assertion that the washback effect of testing causes teachers to experience anxiety and makes them reluctant to engage in activities which are not directly related to passing an examination. Setting learning goals supports the development of learner autonomy (Yang 1998; Wenden 1991), yet it is underutilised by many teachers (Dörnyei and Csizér 1998). Setting goals for themselves allows learners to evaluate their learning, reflecting on why goals were or were not achieved (Thanasoulas 2000).

Dam (2011, p.41) suggests that autonomy in the classroom involves a continuous cycle of looking back, planning ahead, carrying out the plans and evaluating the outcome, while at the same time cooperating with teachers and peers. In this process, learners accept and learn to take responsibility for their own learning, as the classroom focus shifts from teaching to learning. Learners are given choice in relation to content, materials, learning tasks and learning goals, while the teacher facilitates and supports them in these processes. Dam (2011) divides lesson time into three sections: teacher's time; learners' time; and together time. The majority of the lesson is dedicated to *Learners' time* which involves students managing their own learning. *Teacher's time* is used for introducing new activities and explaining to learners what is expected of them, with the aim of eventually reducing teacher's time as learners become more efficient at managing their own learning. *Together time* involves the entire class participating in presentations, reflections, evaluations and occurs at the end of the week or learning period.

To conclude, when it comes to fostering learner autonomy in the classroom, it is important to give students choice in their learning and promote self-evaluation. In the current study the responsibilities of selecting learning materials and planning learning tasks were delegated to learners. Learners were also responsible for setting goals, evaluating goal achievement and reflecting on their learning.

Sert, Adamson and Büyüköztükk (2012) carried out a study investigating the discrepancies between perceptions among adolescents towards autonomy in view of the European Language Portfolio (ELP) and the influence of the ELP and autonomy on the acquisition of English. The participants were 309 adolescents and eleven teachers from two private primary schools in Turkey. Results indicated that the students who did not employ ELP scored higher on an *Adolescent Autonomy Scale* (AAS) and *Language Learning Autonomy Scale* (LLAS) than those using ELPs. *The Language Learning Autonomy Scale* scores were important forecasters for English attainment. Sert, Adamson and Büyüköztükk (2012) contends that ELP use did not contribute to student AAS scores, LLAS scores or English attainment, thus these findings contradict existing literature which suggests that LPs and diaries promote the development of autonomy (Little 2002; Thanasoulas 2000). However, in that study, data collected via interviews and observations indicated that the students were not encouraged to engage in autonomous learning practices. In such a setting, the use or non-use of ELPs appeared to make little to no difference in terms of fostering autonomy and L2 attainment. However, Benson (2006) and Little (2002) claim that self-evaluation and reflection are effective in fostering autonomy.

### 2.2.3 Teacher Roles

"The growth of autonomy requires the stimulus, insight and guidance of a good teacher" (Little 2000, p.4). In traditional classroom settings, the teacher tends to direct students in their learning, while in an autonomous classroom the teacher relinquishes this control and moves from being an instructor to a facilitator of learning. According to Little (1990), autonomy is not another teaching method nor is it something that teachers do to learners. In other words, teachers cannot generate learner autonomy. Benson uses the term "fostering autonomy" to refer to "processes initiated by teachers, and uses the term "developing autonomy" to refer to "processes within the learner" (2001, p.110). In other words, teachers can create an environment which encourages autonomy, but ultimately it is learners who develop it by accepting the teacher's call for them to take responsibility for their learning. By taking responsibility for their learning, students usually take control of several processes that the teacher would traditionally have performed (e.g. setting learning goals, pacing lessons, evaluating learning, selecting learning materials *etc.*) (ibid.). The

development of autonomous learners is becoming increasingly important in L2 learning (Ushioda 2006). However, according to Murphy (2008), success depends on teachers building an environment where learners can self-regulate and exercise choice in their learning in order to become more autonomous.

Making the shift from a teacher-led to a student-centred learning approach requires a change in the role of the teacher. The teacher's role in an autonomous learning environment has been given numerous labels including "facilitator" (Voller 1997), "resource" (Voller 1997), "resource facilitator" (Fumin and Li 2012), "counsellor" (Voller 1997), "study guide" (Fumin and Li 2012), "manager" (Breen and Candlin 1980), "(classroom) organiser" (Fumin and Li 2012; Breen and Candlin 1980), and "learning regulator" (Fumin and Li 2012). All of these labels, or roles, involve the teacher shifting from the dominant position in the classroom so that students can move into the centre of learning. Voller views the teacher's role as threefold, suggesting that the teacher acts as facilitator, counsellor and resource to students in order to support them in an autonomous learning environment. Describing the teacher's role as a *facilitator*, Voller (1997) suggests that the teacher provides support for learning. As regards *counsellor*, Voller explains that this role is concerned with how teachers support learners using one-to-one interaction. The teacher's role as *resource* involves making his/her knowledge and expertise available to students. Thus, according to Voller (1997) it is the teacher's responsibility to guide, support and facilitate students in taking control of their learning and to make his/her expertise available to them.

In order to create a learning environment in which autonomy can be fostered, the teacher must choose willingly to relinquish control and share it with learners (Fabela-Cárdenas 2009). Although conceding power removes the teacher from the centre of learning, it does not diminish the importance of his/her role. Little (2002, 1991) describes learning in isolation as "autism" rather than autonomy, suggesting that the teacher's role remains crucial to successful learning in autonomous classrooms. Similarly, Benson argues that learning in isolation does not equate with learning autonomously, stating "to study languages in isolation from teachers and other learners, would not necessarily develop autonomy" (Benson 2001, p.13), while Andrade and Evans state "[autonomy] reflects a state of interdependence between teachers and learners" (2013, p.17).

The findings of a study by Fumin and Li (2012), which investigated teachers' roles in college English teaching in the context of learner autonomy, suggest that teachers play multiple roles in fostering learner autonomy such as *learning regulator*, *resource facilitator*, *classroom organiser* and *study guide*. They also recommend that teachers should take careful consideration of students' individual differences while enhancing their learner autonomy and conclude that the role that teachers play in fostering students' autonomous learning ability is crucial.

### 2.2.4 Teacher/Learner Training

There would appear to be little consensus on the role of training in the context of learner autonomy. While it is not difficult to find support for the use of learner training (e.g. Gholami and Biria 2013; McCarthy 1998; Dickinson 1992), there is a paucity of literature offering *specific guidance* to teachers and learners as to how training should be put into practice (Reinders and Baleikanli 2011). Dickinson (1992) claims that the majority of practitioners believe that learner training produces greater autonomy. The findings of a research study conducted by Gholami and Biria (2013), which aimed to find out whether explicit strategy training affects learners' autonomy, indicated that practising explicit strategy training did enhance autonomy among the cohort under investigation. However, many researchers suggest that formal training is not necessary when it comes to fostering and developing learner autonomy. For example, Dam states "when developing learner autonomy...learners can train themselves (2007, p.17). Holec (1981) goes a step further than Dam by claiming that it is not appropriate to train learners when the aim is to foster autonomy. Holec argues that teaching learners how to self-direct their learning would be disadvantageous, as the learning would no longer be self-directed. He believes that learners should train themselves through practice, stating "the basic methodology for learner training should be that of discovery...by trial and error he trains himself progressively" (1981, p.42). Little (1990) asserts that teachers do not make learners become autonomous, thus raising the question as to whether training learners to learn autonomously is a futile exercise. Rubin (1994) and Wenden (2001) encourage the use of strategy training in L2 learning. Thompson and Rubin (1996) carried out a study in which videos were used to examine the influence of strategy instruction on the listening comprehension skills of university students learning Russian. The data of a treatment group was compared to a

control group which was not exposed to the strategy instruction. The results indicated that students who were given strategy instruction performed noticeably better than those who did not receive such training, thus the results indicated that metacognitive strategies contributed to students managing their approach to listening.

Leni Dam, who successfully incorporated principles of autonomy into secondary school classrooms without explicit training (Benson 2006), expresses a dislike for the term "learner training" (Dam 2007). Dam believes that the term is confusing in the context of learner autonomy, asserting that learner training and fostering learner autonomy are not the same. Like Holec (1981), McCarthy also contends that autonomy and training are at odds, stating "training certainly does not entail autonomy" (1998, p.1).

### 2.2.5 Concluding Remarks

The study of autonomy in language learning has traditionally been associated with self-directed learning in self-access centres and learning in isolation. In the 1990s, while continuing attention was given to self-access, research also focused increasingly on how autonomous learning could be practically introduced into the classroom. The twenty-first century has seen a significant reduction in the focus on self-access within autonomy, whereas autonomy within the language classroom remains an area of growing interest.

Over the past three decades, learner autonomy has developed from a methodological (Holec 1981), a psychological (Little 1991) and a content (Benson 2006, 2001) perspective. These dimensions, however, are not distinct from each other. Although many of the early experiments investigated adults who did not attend classroom based courses, Little (1990) stresses that autonomy is not a synonym for self-instruction and that it does not limit itself to learning without a teacher. Autonomy concerns the learner's broad approach to the learning process, rather than a specific style of teaching or learning. In the classroom context, autonomy does not result in a redundancy of responsibility on the part of the teacher; teacher autonomy means the role of the teacher changing to one of a facilitator in order to foster and support learner autonomy (ibid.). At the same time, autonomy is "not something that teachers do to learners" (Little 1990, p.7); in other words it is "not another teaching method" (ibid., p.7). Learner autonomy does not mean that the teacher renounces all control over the learning process; it positions the learner as the focus of attention in

language learning education. Learners who lack autonomy have the capacity to develop it, given appropriate conditions and preparation (Benson 2001).

Although Holec (1981) treated autonomy as an attribute of the learner, the term was also used to describe learning situations (Dickinson 1987). Researchers in the field have also discussed whether the development of learner autonomy relies on corresponding teacher autonomy (Fumin and Li 2012; Benson 2001). It is generally accepted, however, that autonomous learners understand the purpose of their learning and hold themselves accountable for their own learning. They set learning goals, plan actions to achieve goals and systematically analyse and reflect on their learning (Little 2002; Benson 2001).

In an autonomous classroom the teacher concedes control and encourages autonomy, but ultimately it is learners themselves who must take responsibility for their learning by taking control of processes such as goal-setting, time management and evaluating learning (Andrade and Evans 2013; Benson 2001). Transitioning from a teacher-led to a student-centred environment requires a change in the role of the teacher. The teacher becomes a facilitator and resource to students, supporting them in an autonomous learning environment (Fumin and Li 2012; Fabela-Cárdenas 2009; Voller 1997).

There are contrasting views on the role of training in the context of learner autonomy. While Gholami and Biria (2013), McCarthy (1998) and Dickinson (1992) support the practice of training learners in how to behave autonomously, there is scant literature offering *specific guidance* as to how training should be put into practice (Reinders and Baleikanli 2011). However, many researchers suggest that training is not crucial to the development of learner autonomy (Dam 2007; Benson 2006; McCarthy 1998; Little 1990; Holec 1981).

Researchers are beginning to reconceptualise and link the roles of autonomy, motivation and identity in the learning process (Lamb 2011, Ushioda 2011, Ushioda and Dörnyei 2009); links between autonomy, motivation and identity are discussed in Section 2.3 below.

## 2.3 Learner Identity in Foreign/Second language Acquisition

This section, which explores the link between learner motivation and learner autonomy in L2 learning, is divided into five parts: identity in language learning, identity and adolescent learners, motivation and the L2 self; autonomy and learner identity; and the link between autonomy, motivation and learner identity/self.

### 2.3.1 Identity in Language Learning

Identity refers to how we relate to the social world (Norton 2000). The study of learner identity in L2 learning commonly attempts to understand how and why learners shape their social identities, how social identities evolve over time and also considers possible future identities (Norton and McKinney 2011; Norton 2000; Wenger 1998). The identity of the language learner is hypothesised as multiple, conflicting and evolving (ibid.). The conditions under which learners acquire an L2 are influenced by social relationships and values, and language identities are constructed and negotiated through L2 interactions (Cummins 1996).

Norton and McKinney (2011) contend that social relationships of power influence how students learn an L2. In the 1960s, Freire (2005, 1970) recommended a learning approach with a change in the identities of and relationship between teacher and student. Freire, being of South American heritage, compares the relationship between teacher and student in traditional pedagogy to that of the "oppressor" and the "oppressed" (2005, p.37). Referring to the European settlers as the oppressors and to the South American natives as the oppressed, Freire compares student and teacher roles to those of colonisers and the colonised. Commenting on the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed and the fear of the oppressed of gaining freedom, Freire writes "[t]he oppressed, having internalized the image of the oppressor and adopted his guidelines, are fearful of freedom. Freedom would require them to eject this image and replace it with autonomy and responsibility". According to Freire, freedom is gained through *praxis*, when learners recognise that they must take responsibility to create this change (ibid., p.45).

Freire refers to traditional pedagogy as the "banking concept of education" (2005, p.72), suggesting that it depicts the learner as having an "empty mind" which a teacher can pack with knowledge and information, much like money is deposited into a bank account

(2005, p.75). Freire, however, rebuffs this approach, arguing that the learner should be allowed the freedom to co-construct knowledge. He argues that this traditional approach stifles learner development and independent thinking, and he instead supports a mutual approach to education as a means of consciously shaping the person and the society. Learners, when adopting this mutual pedagogy, learn to overcome what Freire refers to as "limit situations" (2005, p.99). *Limit situations* are obstacles that challenge learners in their quest to become autonomous. As these situations are overcome, new obstacles will take their place, thus the quest to become a more autonomous learner is ongoing. Freire introduced the concepts of *dialogics* and *antidialogics*, suggesting that the former was a tool used to free the oppressed through the cooperation, organisation, cultural synthesis and unity, while the latter, in contrast, was used to invade, conquer, divide, dominate, and manipulate (1970, p.125). Freire suggests that dialogue leads to mutual trust between learners, peers and teachers and that it allows for critical thinking.

   With respect to the development of L2 learner identities, Cummins (1996) puts forward the concept of *interpersonal space,* a theory that refers to the distance, or space, between learners who interact with each other using an L2, a distance which is influenced by an individual's own communicative input. The notion of *interpersonal space* is similar to Vygotsky's (1978) concept of the ZPD which is defined as the distance between what a learner is able to do independently and what he/she can to with the assistance of more competent peers (ZPD was previously discussed in Section 2.2.1). However, the concept of *interpersonal space* extends the notion of the ZPD due to the fact that it incorporates power relationships in learning. Cummins's (2006, 1996) *interpersonal space* is characterised by the processes of *reciprocal negotiation* of identity and *collaborative generation of knowledge*. The negotiation of identities is reciprocal due to the fact that as students develop their identities, teachers also shape their own identities (Cummins 2006). *Collaborative generation of knowledge* refers to students and teachers collaborating within their *interpersonal space* to create knowledge (ibid.). Identities are complex, subject to change and continually evolve depending on knowledge and communication (Cummins 1996, 2006). According to Cummins (2006), there are two types of identity. The first type is described as static or as difficult to alter (e.g. race, gender etc.) while the other type is portrayed as open to alteration through experiences or through gaining knowledge.

Cummins (1996) asserts that *interpersonal space* should allow learners to freely shape and construct their identities rather than restrict them in doing so.

According to Norton and Toohey (2001), a learner's willingness to gain access to the target language community is reflected in his/her investment. *Investment* is a motivational concept which "signals the socially and historically constructed relationship of learners to the target language, and their often ambivalent desire to learn and practice it" (Norton 2000, p.10). *Investment* is related to Bourdieu's (1991) notion of *cultural capital* which refers to symbolic resources (such as knowledge and systems of thought) that different classes and groups acquire through socialisation. When learners invest in learning an L2 they do so in order to gain symbolic and material resources, thus increasing the value of their cultural capital (Norton 2013; Norton and McKinney 2011). As a learner "invests" in an L2, he/she also invests in his/her own identity (Norton 2013, p.53). Norton (2013, 2000) makes the case that a learner may be highly motivated, but, all the same, have little *investment* in the customs of a society or classroom, which they perceive, for example, to be racist or sexist.

Another concept that is relevant in identity and investment is the notion of the *imagined communities* with which learners aim to interact when acquiring a language (Norton 2013; Pavlenko and Norton 2007, Wenger 1998). "Imagined communities refer to groups of people, not immediately tangible and accessible, with whom we connect through the power of the imagination" (Kanno and Norton 2003, p.241). According to Wenger (1998), a learner may be affiliated with communities with which he/she does not communicate. Learners invest in such communities by using their imaginations and envisioning themselves interacting with these groups of people in future situations.

### 2.3.2 Identity and Adolescent Learners

Adolescents alternate between different identities in different situations without the need to worry about inconsistency (Taylor 2013). Teenagers, or adolescents, shape their identities within three principle relational contexts: parents, friends and classmates, and teachers (ibid.).

The first relational context, *parents*, may encourage or discourage identity exploration depending on parenting styles. Taylor (2013) suggests that authoritarian parenting styles discourage identity exploration and maturity, instead encouraging dependence on parental

guidance, while more democratic styles of parenting, in contrast, allow learners to express individuality and encourage genuine communication (ibid.). Parents have an enduring influence on their children's identities.

The second relational context is *friends and classmates*. According to Taylor (2013), unlike parents' influence on an individual's identity, the influence of friends is not maintained in the long term. However, during adolescence friends offer an important source of emotional support and mutual understanding. Due to the fact that teenagers interact with their friends in educational contexts, their friends influence educational goals and results. In classrooms where students do not have a pleasant or cooperative relationship, there levels of motivation could be reduced.

The third relational context is *teachers*. Adolescents spend a lot of time within educational settings, thus teachers have an influence on teenagers' identity development. The teacher is responsible for creating a supportive environment in which autonomy is fostered and, thus, identity exploration encouraged (Williams and Burden 1997).

Relational contexts tend to overlap in educational contexts due to the fact that, in classroom settings, adolescents are in the company of teachers, classmates and friends all at the same time. This kind of setting may lead to identity conflict because of the fact that learners intend to appear to be, or indeed genuinely are, hardworking to their teacher, while at the same time trying to give the impression to their friends and classmates that they are not interested in learning (Ishihara and Tarone 2009). These situations require negotiation by students in order to "maintain a balance of power, to avoid conflict and to ensure that learning took place" (Taylor 2013, p.112).

### 2.3.3 Motivation and the L2 Self

Motivation is in the process of being re-theorised in the context of *the L2 self* (Ushioda and Dörnyei 2009; Lamb 2009). Dörnyei (2005) developed the theory of "possible selves", representing learners' ideas of what they might become, what he/she would like to become, and what they are afraid of becoming. *Possible selves* act as *future self-guides,* motivating learners to close the gap between their current/actual self and future ideal selves (Dörnyei 2009). Envisioning a *feared possible self* can also be highly motivating as learners take action in order to avoid an undesired outcome such as failure or punishment.

Dörnyei's *L2 Motivational Self System* (2005) comprises three dimensions: the ideal L2 self; the ought-to L2 self; and the L2 learning experience. The *ideal L2 self* is the representation of the characteristics that a learner would ideally like to possess and the language learner that they would like to become. The *ought-to L2 self* is a representation of the characteristics that a learner feels he/she should possess and the language learner that he/she should become in order to avoid possible negative outcomes (Guilloteaux 2007). The ought-to self is heavily shaped by peers and external pressures. A learner's desire to lessen the difference between current selves and possible future selves is extremely motivating (Ushioda and Dörnyei 2009). The *L2 learning experience* is representative of the impact of characteristics of the setting in which learning takes place, including peers, teachers, curricula, experiencing failure/success. The *L2 Motivational Self System* "conceptualises L2 learning motivation within a self framework" (Dörnyei 2009, p.9), explicitly focusing on characteristics of the individual's self. Possible selves motivate learners because they are driven by future desires (MacIntyre, Mackinnon and Clément 2009). Possible selves promote learner autonomy as learners take responsibility for realising their dreams (Taguchi, Magid and Papi 2009).

While there has been a rethinking and re-conceptualisation of motivation in L2 learning and in the context of self (Ushioda and Dörnyei 2009), Dörnyei (2005) advises that, "the ideal self theory is still far from complete" (p.101). According to Ushioda (2011), rethinking motivation has involved looking at learners not as groups, but instead as individuals with their own unique and complex identities (discussed further in Section 2.3.5 below).

### 2.3.4 Autonomy and Learner Identity

Learners can develop any number of social identities to express themselves differently in different contexts and can develop collective as well as individual social identities (Eccles 2009). Brophy (2009) distinguishes between ascribed and attained identities. *Ascribed identities* are those forced upon learners by social circumstance or genetic makeup (e.g. sex, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status *etc*.). *Attained identities* on the other hand, are those echoing personalities and personal interests and are attained through

individualisation and choice (e.g. identifying as a fan of a football team, as a guitarist, a dancer, tomboy, lawyer *etc.*).

According to Taylor, "expressing yourself in a foreign language can...be an excellent tool for identity exploration" (Taylor 2013, p.15). "Language classrooms that seek to promote autonomous learning...encourage students to develop and express their own identities through the language they are learning that is, to be and become themselves" (Ushioda 2011, p.227). In classrooms where learner autonomy is not encouraged and real/authentic conversations do not take place, learners may be unable to express their identities or speak as themselves (Dam 2011; Legenhausen 1999; Seedhouse 1996). Using textbook dialogues in order to practise communicating in the L2 is unlikely to result in learners expressing their personal interests or social identities (Ushioda 2011). Freire (2005) proposes that genuine and authentic communication liberates learners and leads to equality among peers and teachers. Authentic classroom conversations mean that the teacher, as well as the students, is learning and, therefore, the students, as well as the teacher, are teaching. Real classroom dialogues between teachers and students allow learners to make the transition from being merely passive listeners to critical thinkers and co-constructors of their education. According to Freire (2005), dialogue cannot occur between two parties when one of the parties is clearly dominate or in charge, thus real dialogue can only take place in classroom environments that encourage autonomy. Authentic communication leads to trust and understanding between teachers and learners.

In relation to the analysis of classroom talk, Zimmerman puts forwards a social identity termed "transportable identity" (1998, p.90). *Transportable identity* refers to identities which are physical or cultural based characteristics (e.g. gender, race, ethnicity, religion) and are transportable from one context to another (Ellis 2012). The concept of transportable identity is brought into play when teachers encourage learners to speak as themselves and engage with them as people (Richards 2006). While some transportable identities are latent, they can be summoned naturally during authentic classroom conversations (Ushioda 2011). For example a student might reveal that he/she is an only child or a track runner or a fan of Japanese manga. Richards (2006) claims that some teachers may be unwilling to invoke transportable identities because they believe that this type of communication with students might result in chaos if the mechanisms of control become blurred. However, in his study, the teacher showed an interest in the students' personal interests and ideas about their

learning to which they appeared to respond positively. Murray (2011a, 2011b) suggests that giving learners the freedom to select their learning materials allows them to engage their transportable identities and supports identity construction and autonomy. Thus, by allowing students to make choices about their learning and encouraging them to pursue topics that interest them, teachers can invoke learners' transportable identities in the learning environment (Murray 2011a, 2011b).

### 2.3.5 The link between Autonomy, Motivation and Learner Identity/Self

Theoretical links between autonomy and motivation are well established (Ushioda 2011), but there is, as yet, little consensus on the exact relationship and, in particular, the question of which, if any, precedes the other. Although it was a motivational model, Deci and Ryan's (2002, 1985) SDT made explicit links between autonomy and motivation, listing autonomy as one of three instinctive psychological needs. They suggested that intrinsic motivation (by many researchers considered the most desirable type of motivation) could only occur through autonomous approaches to learning. Similarly, Dickinson (1995) asserted that motivation could be enhanced if learners took responsibility for their learning. Dam (1995) also suggests that learners are autonomous first and then become motivated, having encouraged the development of autonomous learning which in turn led to increased motivation among her students. Other researchers continue to argue that it is, in fact, autonomy which paves the way for motivation and not vice versa. Garcia and Pintrich (1996) make the point that autonomy fosters intrinsic goal orientation and Eccles, Wigfield and Schiefele (1998) argue that learners' motivation to participate in activities will only materialise if they are given choice regarding the learning content; in other words, learners will only be satisfactorily interested in learning activities if they engage in the practice of learner autonomy. Numerous studies have shown autonomy to produce positive motivational effects (Nakata 2006; Nakanishi 2002; Knowles 1995; Deci and Ryan 1985). Ushioda (1996), on the other hand, suggests that motivation is a pre-condition for autonomy. A study by Spratt, Humphreys and Chan (2002) supports Ushioda's claim. More than five hundred participants rated their perceived L2 motivation on a five point scale (ranging from "highly motivated" to "not at all motivated") and responded to questions relating to autonomous behaviours they had engaged in. The study concludes that

motivation affects the degree to which learners are prepared to learn autonomously and that teachers should make efforts to generate motivation before training students in the practice of autonomy. Similarly, Wachob (2006) and Walters and Bozkurt (2009) claim that learner autonomy can only be created if learners are already self-motivated.

The terms "self" and "identity" are sometimes used interchangeably in L2 literature (Taylor 2010). The term *self* appears to have an affiliation with the study of learner motivation, while the term *identity* seems to have a strong association with learner autonomy in L2 learning. Researchers have started to rethink and re-theorise L2 motivation in the context of self and identity (Ushioda 2011; Ushioda and Dörnyei 2009), while social identity has become a key characteristic of autonomy in language learning.

> L2 motivation research has been concerned more with idealised language learners as theoretical abstractions or bundles of variables, rather than with learners as uniquely complex individual 'people', with particular social identities, situated in particular contexts. (Ushioda 2011, p.222)

Reflecting on the reasons why teachers should promote learner autonomy, Ushioda states "because we want to motivate our students and shape their identities" (2011, p.230), reinforcing the link between motivation, autonomy and identity in L2 learning. Current thinking within the field theorises that autonomy and motivation are dependent on each other (regardless of the issue of whether one precedes the other), and the most recent literature on autonomy and motivation focuses on how these concepts are linked to *learner identity* (Ushioda 2011; Dörnyei 2009; Eccles 2009; LaGuardia 2009; McCaslin 2009). Researchers are becoming increasingly concerned with linking autonomy and motivation to identity, an exercise with which the study at the centre of this thesis also engages.

The cognitive-situated period in the study of L2 motivation examined individual aspects closely associated with learner autonomy, such as effort, goals and self-determination. During this period, Dörnyei (1994) proposed that the learning environment itself was made up of intrinsic and extrinsic motives. The strategies that he recommended contained practices associated with learner autonomy. For example, he suggested that teachers adopt the role of facilitator, involve students in the choice of learning materials and encourage learners to set goals for themselves. One of the strategies was even labelled "promote learner autonomy" (Dörnyei 1994, p.282), explicitly linking the idea of autonomy with motivational strategies.

During the process-oriented period, Dörnyei and Ottó's *process-oriented model* of L2 motivation (1998) integrated various research trends including activities associated with autonomy. It was recommended that learners set learning goals, plan actions to achieve goals and appraise the learning process. Similarly, Dörnyei's *L2 Motivational Strategies Framework* (2001) proposed that promoting learner autonomy, through a set of motivational maintenance strategies, would increase learners' self-confidence and increase motivation.

The latest theories and models relating to L2 motivation, for example *the L2 Motivational Self System* (Dörnyei 2009, 2005), focus on the learner's self-image, which is shaped by past, present and future experiences of L2 learning success. It is suggested that the role of the teacher is important in relation to the learner's determining of his/her L2 self image.

Commenting on adolescent learners, Dörnyei states "if students could freely choose what to do, academic learning for many would most likely feature low on their agenda" (2001, p.123). Falling levels of classroom engagement are commonly associated with second level learners or teenagers (Fonseca-Mora and Toscano-Fuentes 2007; Guilloteaux 2007; Thomson 2006; Brown 2006, 1990; Maehr and Anderman 1993); however, several researchers have chosen to focus on tertiary education, with young adults usually the focus of the research (Kato 2009; Wachob 2006). Taylor suggests that there is a link between identity development and low levels of motivation among adolescents, stating "adolescence is a turbulent period of identity exploration and also a period when students lose interest in school" (2013, p.6). Decreasing levels of motivation are especially challenging in language classrooms (Taylor 2013; Osborne 2005; Dörnyei 2003), thus suggesting that more should be done to generate motivation in second-level language classrooms. Harmer (2003) suggests that this can be achieved by giving adolescent learners a choice in how they learn, asserting that allowing them to take greater responsibility for their own learning can increase their motivation to learn. According to Thomson (2006), giving teenage language learners the opportunity to personalise their learning can be motivating. Thomson suggests that it is important to use materials that adolescent L2 learners find interesting in order to prevent them from becoming bored and disinterested and suggests that this can still be achieved in contexts where teachers are required to use specific textbooks by adapting the material or supplementing it with tasks that allow students to express themselves. Thomson

also claims that taking an interest in teenagers' opinions and interests generates motivation in the classroom.

According to Fonseca-Mora and Toscano-Fuentes (2007), adolescent learners rebel in the classroom as a way of expressing their own values and shaping their own identity. They suggest that acceptance is very important to teenagers and a supportive classroom environment can help them to gain self-acceptance from others. Taylor (2013) claims that L2 subjects are the most suited of all academic subjects when it comes to identity development and argues that identity processes and development are more multifaceted and complex during adolescence. A teenager's identity as a language learner can change depending on who they are interacting with. For this reason, they can appear participative and interested in learning when interacting with adults, while bored and apathetic when interacting with peers. Teenagers often have numerous identities. For example, learning a new language means learning a new identity and being an adolescent also means learning a new identity (Taylor 2013). According to Taylor (2013), the biggest influence that classmates have on an individual's academic identity is linked to how they perform academically when compared with others. Thus, some students put in a low level of effort because they prefer to fail as a result of expending little effort rather than due to intelligence. Bowen (2012) suggests that learner motivation increases in learning environments where failure is tolerated. Thus, changing the way in which students' learning is assessed could allow learners to focus on individual learning and reduce their fear of being judged by their peers.

The lack of interest in L2 learning experienced by adolescents appears to stem from a desire to express personal values and identity. Thus, personalising lessons through giving students choice could lead to an increase in learner motivation. In addition, speaking a foreign language can help students to develop and shape their identities further as it allows them to express themselves and explore their identities (Taylor 2010; Richards 2006). In L2 classroom contexts, learners will typically have many opportunities to express their views, share their interests and talk about themselves, thus allowing them to transfer existing L1 identities to their L2 selves (Taylor 2013).

Identities are not shaped in a vacuum and working in a group is a feature of the language classroom which can have a significant impact on how learners perceive themselves.

A positive group atmosphere can have a beneficial effect on the morale, motivation and self-image of its members, and thus significantly affect their learning, by developing in them a positive attitude to the language being learned, to the learning process, and to themselves as learners. (Hadfield 1992, p.10)

Vygotsky (1978) holds that peer interaction is an important part of the learning process and supports collaborative learning in small groups. He suggests that working effectively in groups by problem solving and collaborating with peers, helps students develop the skills that they need to become more independent and autonomous as learners. While Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) also support the idea of peer collaboration in fostering autonomy, they argue that it does not always happen naturally, stating, "peer affiliation of members does not necessarily occur automatically" (2003, p.19). They recommend that learners share personal information in order to learn more about one another and form cohesiveness in their group.

Long and Porter (1985) propose four arguments in favour of engaging in group work in the L2 classroom, suggesting that peer learning increases the number of opportunities to practise the language, improves the quality of student talk, individualises instruction and promotes a positive affective climate in the classroom. As regards the first argument, *group work increases language practice opportunities*, Long and Porter (1985) claim that one of the main reasons for low achievement in L2 classrooms is that learners do not have enough time to practise the target language, arguing that this could be resolved by working in groups because group work gives students more time for individual practice. Schultz (2001) also contends that group work provides students with more opportunities to speak their target language. The second argument is *group work improves the quality of student talk*, Long and Porter (1985) and Brisk (2010) claim that students speak more naturally in groups as they do not feel time pressure and therefore learn to communicate more efficiently. *Group work helps individualise instruction* is the third argument put forward by Long and Porter (1985). They assert that students in small groups can work on different sets of materials that suit their individual needs. With their fourth argument in favour of group work, *group work promotes a positive affective climate*, Long and Porter (1985) and Ellis (2012) argue that small groups are more accommodating to students, as they do not feel that they are being judged when they make mistakes.

According to Brophy (2009) a group that is seen as welcoming to some students may seem intimidating to others. McCaslin (2009) argues that in many classrooms which seek to

promote autonomy, involving students in making meaningful choices is not always possible in groups as personalities clash. This results in *struggle* as choice-making is not equitably distributed and learners seek interpersonal validation. McCaslin suggests that *struggle* might result in *negotiation* as learners attempt to problem solve and compromise in order to resolve their conflicts.

### 2.3.6 Concluding Remarks

The study of learner identity in language learning in concerned with the shaping and evolution of social identities which are negotiated through social interactions in an L2 (Norton and McKinney 2011; Cummins 1996; Wenger 1998). Relationships of power play an important part in the development of identities due to the way that they influence how students learn an L2 (Norton and McKinney 2011). There are two types of identity, *ascribed identities* and *attained identities*. *Ascribed identities* are not acquired by choice, but rather due to circumstance or inheritance (e.g. gender, ethnicity, social status *etc.*), thus they are difficult, or impossible, to modify. *Attained identities* are those echoing personalities and personal interests and are attained through individualisation and choice, for example identifying as a football fan or lawyer (Brophy 2009; Cummins 2006). A learner's motivation to get access to the target language community is illustrated by his/her level of *investment* (Norton and Toohey 2001; Norton 2000). *Investment* is linked to the concept of *cultural capital* (Bourdieu's 1991), a term which refers to symbolic resources that are gained through socialisation. Learners *invest* in L2 learning by acquiring symbolic and material resources, thus raising the value of their *cultural capital* and investing in their own identities (Norton 2013).

Adolescents have multiple identities that they may invoke depending on their situational context (Taylor 2013). Adolescent identities are usually formed within three main relational contexts: parents, friends and classmates, and teachers (ibid.). Teenagers spend a lot of time within educational settings, thus teachers and classmates affect how they develop their identities as learners. Classroom settings are likely to result in identity conflict due to the way that learners tend to take on different identities depending on the role of the person with whom they interact, for example teachers, classmates or friends (Ishihara and Tarone 2009). Students must negotiate these situations in order to preserve a

balance of power and to avoid conflict (Taylor 2013). Learners can develop a number of identities in different situations and can develop group identities over and above personal identities (Eccles 2009).

Motivation is in the process of being re-theorised in the context of *the L2 self* (Ushioda and Dörnyei 2009). Dörnyei's *L2 Motivational Self System* (2005) is characterised by three dimensions: the ideal L2 self; the ought-to L2 self; and the L2 learning experience. The *ideal L2 self* represents the qualities that a learner would have in an ideal world, the *ought-to L2 self* is a representation of the learner that he/she is supposed to develop into and the *L2 learning experience* symbolises the influence of peers, teachers, curricula and failure/success. Possible selves motivate learners and promote learner autonomy (MacIntyre, Mackinnon and Clément 2009; Taguchi, Magid and Papi 2009).

Language classrooms which support autonomous learning tend to encourage students to express their identities through authentic communication (Ushioda 2011). Authentic conversation allows students to communicate with their teacher as peers (Freire 2005). The term *transportable identity* denotes physical or cultural based qualities that are transportable from one environment to another such as gender and religion (Zimmerman 1998). *Transportable identities* are brought into play when learners have the confidence to communicate naturally during classroom conversations (Ushioda 2011; Richards 2006). Making decisions about their learning and engaging in topics that interest them, allows learners to develop the confidence to summon transportable identities in the learning environment (Murray 2011a).

*Self* and *identity* are sometimes used interchangeably in L2 literature (Taylor 2010). *Identity* is linked to learner autonomy, while *self* is linked to learner motivation in L2 learning. Researchers are increasingly linking social identity to motivation and autonomy in language learning (Ushioda 2011; Ushioda and Dörnyei 2009). This re-conceptualisation of motivation and autonomy in the context of identity has generated current theories which portray autonomy and motivation as interdependent concepts that are linked to *learner identity* (Ushioda 2011; Dörnyei 2009; Eccles 2009; LaGuardia 2009; McCaslin 2009). Language classroom settings produce an environment in which learners can express their opinions and share their interests with others (Taylor 2013). Collaborating with peers in such a context can influence to a great extent how learners see themselves (Vygotsky 1978). Identity acceptance from peers is very important to adolescents (Taylor 2013).

Classroom contexts do not always produce conditions that facilitate amicable group work. Such contexts may result in *struggle* if decision-making is not fairly distributed and, thus, learners do not attain the interpersonal validation that they seek.

# 3. Research Design and Methods

This chapter outlines the methodological approach taken in this research. The chapter has both a descriptive function and also attempts to justify the methodological choices made. The material is presented under five headings as follows: sampling; quasi-experimental procedure; data collection methods and instruments; data analysis; and the pilot study. Table 3.1 displays the timetable for tasks over the sixteen weeks in which the research was carried out. The shaded areas indicate when tasks took place.

**Table 3.1** Organisation and timescale of research tasks

| Task | Wk 1 | Wk 2 | Wk 3 | Wk 4 | Wk 5 | Wk 6 | Wk 7 | Wk 8 | Wk 9 | Wk 10 | Wk 11 | Wk 12 | Wk 13 | Wk 14 | Wk 15 | Wk 16 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Meeting with teacher | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Directing/guiding teacher | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Informed consent | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Background questionnaire | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Observations | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Motivation questionnaire | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| Autonomy questionnaire | ■ | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ |
| IS treatment | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ | ■ |
| Goal-setting record | ■ | | | ■ | ■ | | ■ | ■ | | | | ■ | | | | ■ |
| Reflection record | | | | ■ | | | ■ | | | | | ■ | | | | ■ |
| Interviews | | | | | | | | | | | | | | ■ | ■ | ■ |

Wk= week

The experiment lasted sixteen weeks and took place during the second half of the school year, ending in the last week of the academic year. Seven months after the experiment concluded, the treatment group participants responded to a follow-up survey involving the re-administration of the Learner Motivation and the Learner Autonomy questionnaires. By the time students were asked to complete the follow-up questionnaires, a three-month summer break had elapsed and the students were four months into the following academic year (fifth year). At the time of the follow-up survey, they had a different teacher for Spanish and were no longer engaged with the ISs as part of their classroom experience. The fact that the students had a different teacher for Spanish is unlikely to have affected the results of the follow-up questionnaire, as they would have covered the same materials and returned to the traditional approach regardless of who was their teacher.

## 3.1 Sampling

A sample can be described as "a small representative subset of the [relevant] population" (Francis 2004, p.7). Sampling is fitting when "research of a whole population is impractical" (Proctor 2005 p.70). In this case, a group of second level learners of Spanish was chosen as a subset of the relevant whole population, broadly defined as adolescent foreign language learners. According to Allwright and Bailey, the majority of classroom research can only be conducted on very small samples as "we so often have to rely on friendship networks" (1991, p.49). This was also the case in the current study since the researcher selected a secondary school based in her home county due to personal contacts. Thus, the type of sampling used in choosing the school was opportunity/convenience sampling, which according to Walliman "involves using what is immediately available" (2005, p.429). While Mackey and Gass (2012) point out that this opportunity sampling can be biased, it remains one of the most frequently used non-probability sampling procedures in L2 research due to its low cost and time requirements compared to probability sampling techniques (Dörnyei 2012; Mackey and Gass 2012; Dörnyei and Taguchi 2010).

Gathering information from a sample should give a good indication of the measurements of the population from which it is derived. While this piece of research used opportunity sampling in choosing the school, the sampling technique applied within the chosen school was quota sampling. Francis, commenting on quota sampling, notes "normally the population is stratified in some way and the [researcher's] quota will reflect this" (2004, p.13); hence, the selection of subjects lies with the researcher. The quota or attributes for this study, as identified by the researcher, were as follows: student participants were in *Transition Year* [2] (TY) and had studied Spanish since their first year of secondary level schooling. The research required that students were in TY, not only because it meant they had prior knowledge of the target language (Spanish), but also

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[2] *Transition Year* (TY) is an optional programme offered by most secondary schools in Ireland. TY is only available to students who have completed the first 3 years of secondary level study and attained the *Junior Certificate*. TY is intended to promote maturity and places emphasis on self-directed learning; participating students do not sit state examinations. http://ty.slss.ie/aboutus.html (accessed 16 November 2011) is an online source for detailed information on TY.

because they were not in a year that was sitting or preparing for national examinations[3]. Each of the students who participated in the study consented to take part and their parents/guardians also gave their permission for them to do so; the teacher also consented to participate in this study (see Appendix A to view consent forms *etc.*).

### 3.1.1 Participants

The participants in this study included thirty-two students and one teacher selected from an all girls' secondary school in Ireland. All of the student participants were female. According to Ryan (2009), significant gender variation is not common among secondary school learners with a greater consistency among attitudes toward L2 learning at this level. Commenting on this, Ryan states "the least significant gender differences are observed at the secondary level" (ibid., p.135). The research participants are discussed in greater detail in the sections below.

### 3.1.1.1 The Participating School

The participating school is located in the Republic of Ireland. It is an all girls' secondary level institute, which currently provides education to approximately one thousand students. The school teaches foreign language (French, German or Spanish) as a compulsory subject throughout the junior cycle and senior cycle stages of education. Although it is not mandatory to study a foreign language in order to obtain the Junior Certificate or Leaving Certificate qualifications, most secondary schools recommend, if not require, that students study an L2. The main reason for this is that many Irish universities and colleges require a pass in a foreign language for entry into a large number of courses. The school does not group its language students by ability, thus, L2 class groups consist of

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[3] Two sets of state examinations are taken at secondary level education in the Republic of Ireland: the *Junior Certificate* (JC) and the *Leaving Certificate* (LC) examinations. The JC examinations are taken at the end of the junior cycle stage and require a minimum of three years preparation. The LC examinations are the final examinations in the secondary school system and involve a minimum of two years preparation.

a mix of honours level and ordinary level[4] students. Permission to carry out the study was granted by the school's principal prior to commencement.

### 3.1.1.2 Students

The student participants were thirty-two secondary school students selected from TY, ranging in age from fifteen to sixteen years, who were learning Spanish as a foreign language. All students began learning Spanish in their first year of secondary level education and attended the same number of language lessons (three sessions per week). The sample was separated into a treatment group (n=18) and a comparison group (n=14). For privacy and anonymity reasons, each student was randomly assigned a Spanish female name as an alias for labelling research data. The treatment group received treatment in the form of two Intervention Strategies (*ISs)*, while the comparison group did not. The ISs in question (*delegation of material and task selection to the student* and *promotion of self-evaluation*) were introduced with the aim of investigating the effect on learner motivation and autonomy (see Section 3.2 below). The comparison group and the treatment group alike were asked to complete questionnaires, undergo observation and participate in one-on-one interviews. Treatment group participants also had to complete a goal-setting record and a reflection record (Section 3.3). The length of the average lesson was thirty-five minutes; therefore, a tight schedule was followed in the completion of forms. The teacher and researcher were available to clarify any questions that arose.

While students were given general instructions on how to complete forms, they were not given specific training in self-assessment or autonomy as such. This is in accordance with Holec (1981) and Dam (2007) who contend that teaching learners how to carry out self-directed learning is unhelpful when the aim is to foster autonomy, since the learning would not be self-directed (Section 2.2).

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[4] Leaving Certificate and Junior Certificate subjects are offered at two difficulty levels: ordinary/lower level and honours/higher level

A background questionnaire (Appendix B) was designed to verify that the groups were similar enough to compare in terms of demographics, the length of L2 study and exposure to the L2.

**Table 3.2** Student-participant groups: aliases and age

| Treatment Group (n=18) | | Comparison Group (n=14) | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Name/Alias** | **Age** | **Name/Alias** | **Age** |
| Ana | 16 | Adriana | 16 |
| Bibiana | 16 | Alba | 15 |
| Cristina | 15 | Alicia | 15 |
| Elena | 16 | Antonia | 15 |
| Esperanza | 16 | Blanca | 16 |
| Isabel | 15 | Camila | 16 |
| Juana | 16 | Carla | 16 |
| Leticia | 15 | Gabriela | 16 |
| Magda | 15 | Imelda | 16 |
| María | 15 | Olivia | 15 |
| Pabla | 16 | Paca | 15 |
| Paula | 15 | Pepa | 16 |
| Pilar | 16 | Roberta | 16 |
| Ramona | 15 | Tatiana | 16 |
| Salma | 15 | | |
| Silvia | 15 | | |
| Sofia | 15 | | |
| Yolanda | 15 | | |
| **Independent t-test** | | | |
| sample size (n) | 18 | | 14 |
| age mean (Mu; $\mu$) | 15.39 | | 15.64 |
| standard deviation (SD) | 0.502 | | 0.497 |
| age range | 15-16 | | 15-16 |
| t calculated | -1.43 | | |
| p value | 0.16 | | |

Independent t-test: $df$ =30, α = 0.05; H$_0$: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

The mean scores for age for the treatment (15.39, SD =0.50) and the comparison group (15.64, SD =0.50) were compared using an independent t-test ($p<0.05$). The results indicated that the groups could not be distinguished by age, t (30) = -1.43, p =0.16. The two groups were also alike in many other ways including class size (n=18; n=14), gender (female), their academic year (TY) and the L2 being learned (Spanish). Both groups began studying Spanish in their first year of secondary level study. As previously stated, the groups were of mixed ability, as it is not the practice of the secondary school in question to group its students by ability, and both attended three 35-minute Spanish lessons per week.

### 3.1.1.3 The Participating Teacher

One teacher from the participating school was involved in the research. Prior to commencing the study, the teacher was given detailed information as to what the research entailed, introduced to the research instruments that she would administer to students and given opportunities to raise questions or issues with the researcher. The teacher also met with the researcher to discuss her own role as a facilitator (making her knowledge available to learners, offering advice and supporting them in various tasks). One-on-one meetings took place before and during the treatment procedure in order to provide the teacher with details and instructions on implementing two ISs in the classroom. Handouts were provided with guidelines to remind the teacher how to implement the ISs. Opportunities for the teacher to ask questions and seek advice about the ISs were made available before and during the experimental research.

The researcher checked via observation that the treatment was correctly implemented and that the traditional teaching approach was not altered in the comparison group; feedback was provided to the teacher from the researcher. According to Frick, Barry and Kamphaus, the act of observation can itself change the normal behaviour of the subjects under observation, this is known as *reactivity* (2010, p.190).

### 3.1.2 Ethical Considerations

Since the study relates to the lives of learners within their classroom, it raises ethical issues, such as informed consent, confidentiality and anonymity. It is ethical to inform potential participants of the purpose of the research and to gain their agreement to their participation (Mackey and Gass 2012). The participants were notified of the research intentions and of the tasks they were required to complete. The freedom to pull out of the study at any time was assured. A written summary of the general purpose of the research was given to the principal of the school and the teacher participant agreed to take part in the study. Students and their parents/guardians also gave their consent before permission was granted to carry out the research during lessons and to administer research instruments (e.g. questionnaires) to collect data from students. Confidentiality of the data, participating students and the school was guaranteed. The principal of the school was assured that a copy of the completed research would be forwarded to the school at her request.

"The avoidance of harm...can be seen as the cornerstone of the ethical issues that confront those who undertake research" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2009, p.186). It was crucial to assure the students that their responses would be kept confidential. Student participants were assigned female Spanish names as aliases for labelling forms in order to protect their anonymity.

## 3.2 Quasi-experimental Procedure

Experimental research demands the administration of a treatment to a group of students (in order to test a hypothesis about a cause-and-effect relationship) and the conscious withholding of that treatment from another group. According to Mertler, while experimental designs are characteristically not fitting for classroom research, "quasi-experimental designs are quite appropriate" (2009, p.68); hence, the latter was applied in this study. The use of quasi-experimental design meant that some elements of true experimentation were omitted; in this case, the groups were not created through random assignment. It was not practical for the researcher to randomly divide the participants into groups for the purposes of experimentation due to the fact that the participating secondary school had already assigned pupils to particular class groups on the basis of the other subjects that they studied. It was, however, the researcher's responsibility to identify groups that were similar enough to compare. In this instance, the groups were non-equivalent in design, meaning that there was a comparison rather than control group. Commenting on non-equivalent design approaches in education studies, Trochim states "[w]e might pick two comparable classrooms…we try to select groups that are as similar as possible so we can fairly compare the treated one with the comparison one" (2006, p.1). Gribbons and Herman (1997) suggest that tests should be carried out before the treatment phase in order to ensure that the selected groups do not differ significantly. As previously stated, in this study, the students completed a background questionnaire to ensure that they shared similar demographics and language learning backgrounds, in terms of the amount of time they had been learning the target language, exposure to that language and other aspects. The two groups that were identified were alike in many ways including size, age, gender, the school year that they were in and, obviously, the foreign language being learned. Demographics relating to the groups were previously discussed in Section 3.1.1.

Malhotra (2010) makes the point that quasi-experiments often contain causal research elements with their primary objective being to gather evidence regarding cause-and-effect relationships. Cause variables and effect variables must be identified before we can carry out causal research. Explaining the difference between independent (or cause) variables and dependent (or effect) variables, Dietz and Kalof state:

> The dependent variable *depends* on changes in the independent variable...sometimes the dependent variable is called the response variable because it is responding to the independent variable. (2009, p.4)

In this case, the dependent/effect variables were *learner motivation* and *learner autonomy*, while the independent/cause variable was the *ISs*. Thus, the treatment in this experiment was the ISs, and their effects on motivational and autonomy levels were measured via survey, students' reflective comments, observation and interview. In investigating the impact of the treatment on learners' motivation and autonomy, the two ISs were not looked at in isolation, but instead as an approach centred around their use which has six central aspects. These were selecting materials, planning learning tasks, setting personal goals, evaluating learning, changes in the teacher's role and working in groups.

Both the treatment group and the comparison group were observed to ensure that the ISs were implemented with the treatment group and not with the comparison group. The teacher was asked not to depart from her traditional approach[5] to teaching with the comparison group and the researcher observed these lessons in order to ensure that this was the case in practice. This was particularly important as comparison groups are especially desirable if taught by the same teacher as the treatment group (*Carnegie Learning* 2001).

Both groups simultaneously covered content relating to the same learning objectives. However, learners in the comparison group did not select materials or plan learning tasks. Similarly, the comparison group did not assess their learning or set goals. Members of the comparison group were interviewed during the final week of the experiment (week sixteen) by the researcher to investigate their thoughts on the prospect of introducing the ISs in a hypothetical sense.

### 3.2.1 Implementation of Intervention Strategies

In this study, the treatment group and the comparison group followed the same syllabus for Spanish (see 3.2.1.1 below), the main difference being that the treatment group was taught with the aid of ISs while the comparison group was taught using the traditional approach.

The two ISs were implemented simultaneously. The first IS *(delegation of material and task selection to the student)* involved students selecting their own learning materials and planning learning tasks during class. The second IS *(promotion of self-evaluation)* involved students setting learning goals, evaluating their progress towards achievement and

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[5] The traditional approach involved the teacher teaching the L2 through direct instruction. Lessons were systematically structured around the content in language textbooks and learning was standardised, with students expected to simultaneously engage in the same learning activities and tasks.

reflecting on their learning. Learner motivation and autonomy were measured for each group on a pre- and post- basis[6] and also on an intergroup comparison basis, in order to investigate if the ISs affected these variables in the treatment group.

While neither the teacher nor the students received formal training in relation to using the ISs, the teacher-participant in this study was asked to read two articles: "*The changing role of teachers in the development of learner autonomy*" (Zhuang 2010) and "*Motivation and motivating in the foreign language classroom*" (Dörnyei 1994) in order to give her a greater awareness and understanding of autonomous learning and to familiarise her with what would be expected of her in relation to fostering autonomy. These articles recommend ways in which autonomy could be fostered. At the beginning of the experiment, the teacher explained to the students their new roles in the learning process, i.e. that they would select their own learning materials, set learning goals and evaluate their learning. Members of the treatment group were asked to work in groups of three for the duration of the experiment, pooling their selected materials together and planning and executing learning tasks as a threesome. Students were assigned to their group alphabetically using their Spanish aliases (Table 3.3).

**Table 3.3** Student groups (assigned alphabetically)

| Group | Members |
|---|---|
| Group 1 | Ana, Bibiana, Cristina |
| Group 2 | Elena, Esperanza, Isabel |
| Group 3 | Juana, Leticia, Magda |
| Group 4 | María, Pabla, Paula |
| Group 5 | Pilar, Ramona, Salma |
| Group 6 | Silvia, Sofia, Yolanda |

## 3.2.1.1 Delegation of Material and Task Selection to the Student

As argued in the previous chapter (Chapter Two), when it comes to fostering learner autonomy in the classroom it is important to give students choice in their learning (Murphy 2008; Thanasoulas 2000; Van Lier 1996).

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[6] "Pre- data" refers to data collected immediately before the ISs were introduced as treatment. "Post- data" refers to data collected during the closing days of the experiment.

> The autonomous learner must be able to make significant decisions about what is to be learned, as well as how and when to do it. Further, the autonomous learner is responsible for learning as well as lack of learning, so long as adequate opportunities are available in the setting. (Van Lier 1996, p.13)

According to Little (1991), schools are often reluctant to move towards fostering autonomy due to concerns that the curriculum limits them in doing so, while Benson (2001) asserts that national examinations often hinder teachers' freedom to plan activities as they are required to implement a predetermined curriculum. The school in the present study agreed to allow the students to participate in the experiment due to the fact that they were in TY, a programme described by Jeffers as "a flexible one, with schools having extensive autonomy to design their own programmes" (2002, p.47). However, the degree of flexibility exercised in TY depends on individual teachers and schools. For example, in the current study, the school did not permit students to select the learning *content* that they would cover or to digress from the curriculum for Spanish that they traditionally cover in TY. However, the school did agree to allow students to take responsibility for selecting their own learning materials and planning learning tasks (IS1), while following the curriculum.

The approach adopted for IS1 is based on Dam's (1995) model of autonomy used in Danish secondary schools, which involves following national curricula guidelines, while allowing students to exercise greater autonomy by making decisions about their learning. Approaches which involve students expanding on existing curricula, or designing their own, require the support of textbooks and other resources (Van Lier 1996). In the current study, the regular TY textbook (*Aventura Nueva 3* by Martín and Ellis 2010) was used as a guide for learning in the treatment group, that is, the language learning aims listed in the textbook formed the basis on which learners chose individual learning materials. Upon receiving a list of learning aims, students had the opportunity to view a number of materials, some of which the researcher and teacher provided and others which were found via students' own online searches. They were asked to select materials related to the predetermined learning aims, with the teacher on hand as a facilitator and advisor during this process. While students were encouraged to source their learning materials in a single session, they were permitted to search for additional materials at any time.

When individual students had selected materials, they pooled them together in groups of three. In this study, groups were responsible for planning how and when to use their

selected materials. The teacher offered support and facilitated students in this process. Since the students already had the textbook from which the language aims were derived, it gave them the opportunity to choose to use it as a skeleton or guide in planning learning tasks. Learners remained in their groups for the duration of the sixteen-week experiment and the teacher assisted them in the day-to-day learning process by making her knowledge available rather than directly instructing students.

It was hoped that giving the learners this degree of freedom in selecting learning materials would change the focus in the classroom from teaching to learning and from teacher to learner and help learners develop greater ownership of the learning process.

### 3.2.1.2 The Promotion of Self-evaluation

Once an action has been implemented to develop autonomy and improve motivation, it must be sustained to deter learners from becoming bored and disinterested (Thanasoulas 2002; Dörnyei and Ottó 1998). The second IS, *promotion of self-evaluation*, was employed to maintain existing learner motivation and to help learners develop self-confidence. Table 3.4 lists the actions that learners carried out in order to implement IS2.

**Table 3.4** Actions implemented toward promoting self-evaluation

| Tools | Action |
|---|---|
| **Goal-setting and evaluation record** | • Students set three personal learning goals and formulate plans to achieve those goals<br>• Students review progress made towards goal achievement<br>• Students reflect on what they will continue doing and what they will do differently with the aim of achieving their goals<br>• Students reflect on why goals were (or were not) achieved |
| **Reflection record** | • Students reflect on their learning by differentiating between what they have done and what they have learned<br>• Students reflect on usefulness of learning tasks/activities |

In order to promote self-evaluation, each student in the treatment group was asked to complete a *goal-setting and evaluation record* (see Section 3.3). The treatment group used the learning objectives listed in their textbook as a guide for setting personal learning goals. Students completed the Goal-Setting and Evaluation record in two sessions during class time (see Section 3.3.2). They were instructed to write their goals using "can-do

statements", the approach used in the development of European Language Portfolios by the European Commission and as a result by the Language Online Portfolio Project (Sudhershan 2012; Bruen and Sudhershan 2009). They reviewed their goals at a midway point, assessing their progress and considering whether they wanted to adjust their goals. Finally, students were asked if they had met their goals, the reasons why (or not), what they would continue doing and what they would do differently.

Students were also asked to complete a *Student Reflection Record* (see Section 3.3). According to Benson (2001), this record is used to support learners in differentiating between what they have done and what they have learned in an activity and to explain the significance of the activity in planning further work. The treatment group completed the record on four occasions over the sixteen-week duration of the experiment. The reflection records were used to enable learners to reflect on their learning and provide the researcher with insights from students as to the value of the ISs on the treatment group.

## 3.3 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

As we have seen, a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods were used to evaluate the impact of exposure to the ISs on the treatment group. The quantitative methods involved the administration of a motivation questionnaire and autonomy questionnaire. While the most substantial part of all data that was collected was quantitative, qualitative data was also collected via reflection records, goal-setting records, interviews and observations in order to obtain data of a complementary nature. The complementary nature of the qualitative data was exploited by means of triangulation.

### 3.3.1 Questionnaires

Student participants were required to complete two questionnaires: a motivation questionnaire and an autonomy questionnaire. Respondents and their parents/guardians were informed as to what the research would entail and informed as to when they could expect the questionnaires to be administered.

### 3.3.1.1 Learner Motivation Questionnaire

The Learner Motivation questionnaire (Appendix C) was used to investigate the first research question ("Do the ISs influence learner motivation and, if so, how?"). Adapted from the *Attitude/Motivation Test Battery* (Gardner 1985; Gardner and Smythe 1981) and Deci and Ryan's *Motivational Scales* (1985), both the treatment group and the comparison group completed a pre- and post- motivation questionnaire, which was used to investigate their motivational types (instrumental or intrinsic) and categorise their motivational levels (low/moderate/high) towards the L2. The motivation questionnaire was re-administered to the treatment group for a third time in a follow-up survey which took place seven months after the treatment phase concluded.

The Learner Motivation questionnaire contains eighteen items; items 1 to 8 relate to motivational *types* and items 9 to 18 relate to motivational *levels*. Out of the eight items in the questionnaire which address motivational types, items 1, 2, 3, and 4 were classified as indicators of intrinsic motivation, whilst items 5, 6, 7, and 8 represent instrumental motivation. The students responded to the items using six-point likert scales. The scaling points were as follows: "strongly agree" (SA); "agree" (A); "somewhat agree" (SWA);

"somewhat disagree" (SWD); "disagree" (D); and "strongly disagree" (SD). Burns and Grove claim that use of a neutral category in likert scales is controversial because "it allows the subject to avoid making a clear choice of positive or negative statements" (2011, p.187). In the current study, the neutral option was omitted from the likert scale, encouraging students to express an opinion.

As mentioned previously, the second function of the Learner Motivation questionnaire was to measure motivational intensity levels in relation to a student's motivation to learn Spanish, in terms of the amount of effort expended in learning the language. Ten multiple choice questions (items 9 to 18) were used to measure motivational levels. Responses given to the multiple choice questions were graded as 1, 2 or 3. The value "1" represented a low degree of motivation towards learning the L2; the value "2" signified a moderate degree and "3" indicated a high degree of motivation. The multiple-choice questions are used to distinguish learners with high motivational levels from those with low levels.

### 3.3.1.2 Learner Autonomy Questionnaire

Both the comparison and treatment groups completed the Learner Autonomy questionnaire (Appendix D). This questionnaire was employed to investigate the second research question ("Do the ISs influence learner autonomy and, if so, how?"). Both groups completed a pre- and post- autonomy questionnaire to investigate and categorise their levels (low/moderate/high) of autonomy in approaching the learning of the L2. The autonomy questionnaire was re-administered to the treatment group for a third time in a follow-up survey which took place seven months after the treatment phase concluded.

The Learner Autonomy questionnaire was adapted from those developed by Spratt, Humphreys and Chan (2002), and Gallacher (2004). The questionnaire contains dichotomous (yes/no) questions that were designed to measure the extent to which a student is an autonomous learner of Spanish. A "yes" response indicates that a learner is engaging in autonomous learning regarding a particular learning activity, while a "no" response signifies that a learner is not engaging in autonomous learning. The Learner Autonomy questionnaire was used to distinguish those with high autonomy levels from those with low levels.

### 3.3.2 Goal-Setting and Evaluation Record

The *Goal-Setting and Evaluation record* (Appendix E) is based on a goal-setting record developed by Iowa State University. The treatment group completed this record, which was used to support the implementation of the second IS (*promotion of self-evaluation).* The record contains three sections. The first invites students to state three personal learning goals and to formulate plans to achieve those goals. The second section asks learners to review their progress, adjust their goals (if necessary) and reflect on what they will continue doing or what they will do differently with the aim of achieving their goals. The third section allows respondents to reflect on why they are, or are not, achieving their goals and what, if anything, they will do differently in future. This page also features a progress feedback section for the teacher to complete in order to provide learners with feedback. The treatment group was encouraged to relate their goals to the learning content by using learning objectives listed in their textbook as a guide for setting personal learning goals. The learning aims for weeks one to seven were different to those for weeks eight to sixteen; therefore, students completed the Goal-Setting and Evaluation record in two sessions during class time.

In the first session, students were given the first set of learning aims (for weeks one to seven) to assist them in setting their personal learning goals. They completed the first page of the record in week one of the experiment, filled out the second page in week four and the third page in week seven. In the second goal-setting session, the treatment group was given the second set of learning aims (for weeks eight to sixteen) in order to set new learning goals. Students filled out the first page of the record in week eight, page two in week twelve and page three in the final week of the experiment (week sixteen). Learners were encouraged to state their goals in the form of "can do" statements.

### 3.3.3 Reflection Record

The *Student Reflection Record* (Appendix H), is based on one developed by the University of Hong Kong (Benson 2001, p.158). The record was used to support the implementation of the second IS (*promotion of self-evaluation).* The treatment group completed the record on four occasions (weeks four, eight, twelve and sixteen) over the sixteen-week period of the experiment.

### 3.3.4 Interviews

The interviews were carried out over the final three weeks of the experiment (weeks fourteen, fifteen and sixteen). They were open-ended and guided by the interview forms (Appendices H and I). The teacher and the entire student sample (n=32) participated in the interviews; each participant was interviewed on a one-to-one basis for approximately five minutes.

Each member of the treatment group (n=18) was asked to reflect and share her thoughts having experienced the ISs firsthand, while each member of the comparison group (n=14) was asked to offer her opinions and thoughts on the prospect of introducing the ISs in a hypothetical sense. During the interviews, each of the thirty-two student participants was asked to respond to seven questions designed to elicit their opinions on a number of topics relating directly to the ISs including: selecting learning materials; planning learning tasks; setting learning goals; self-evaluating; the teacher's role; and using with the IS approach in future.

The teacher was interviewed on a one-to-one basis during the final week of the experiment (week sixteen). She was asked to reflect and share her thoughts having experienced the effects of the treatment firsthand. The teacher was asked to give her opinion on the effectiveness of the approach and asked how she would feel about continuing with the approach in future.

## 3.4 Data Analysis

The Learner Motivation and Learner Autonomy questionnaires produced quantitative data, while the Goal-Setting and Evaluation record, the Student Reflection record, interviews and observations produced qualitative data. The following sections explain how this data was analysed.

### 3.4.1 Quantitative Data Analysis

The quantitative data was collected via the Learner Motivation and the Learner Autonomy questionnaire (see Section 3.3). This data was analysed using Microsoft Excel for Windows.

#### 3.4.1.1 Motivational Types

The result frequencies were calculated as percentages with data relating to motivational types analysed on a binominal level by combining the responses of the SA (strongly agree), A (agree) and SWA (somewhat agree) categories and the responses of the SD (strongly disagree), D (disagree) and SWD (somewhat disagree) categories, thus producing two general categories of "agreement" and "disagreement".

#### 3.4.1.2 Motivational Levels

Each student was categorised as having low, moderate or high levels of motivation based on their responses to the motivation questionnaire. In order to do this, responses given to the multiple choice questions were graded as 1, 2 or 3 with "1" representing a low degree of motivation towards learning the L2; the "2" a moderate degree and "3" a high degree of motivation. A student's overall score was marked out of 30 with 10 being the lowest possible score, the category 10-16 representing a low level of motivation, 17-23 a moderate level and 24-30 a high level.

#### 3.4.1.3 Autonomy Levels

Similarly, analysis of data collected using the Learner Autonomy questionnaire involved calculating result frequencies as percentages and categorising each individual

student as having low-level, moderate-level or high-level autonomy with 'yes' responses allocated '1' and 'no' responses '0'. A student's overall score was marked out of 14 with 0 being the lowest possible score, 0-4 representing low levels of autonomy, 5-9 a moderate level and 10-15 a high level.

### 3.4.1.4 Testing for Changes Over Time

The pre- and post- results for motivational type, level of motivation and level of autonomy were analysed for each group. In the case of the treatment group, post- and follow-up results were also compared. Paired t-tests were conducted to determine whether any differences observed between the pre- and post- mean values ($\mu$), or the post- and follow-up mean values were statistically significant at the 95% confidence level (p<.05).

### 3.4.1.5 Comparing Scores between the Two Groups

Paired t-tests are used to compare the difference between pre- and post- values of a single group or sample (Somekh and Lewin 2005). In this study, paired t-tests were carried out to compare pre- and post- conditions related to the treatment group; these tests compared pre- and post- autonomy and motivation. Independent t-tests are used to compare values between two groups relating to a single variable (Hatcher 2003). In this study, motivational types, levels of motivation and levels of autonomy were compared using their mean difference scores ($\mu d$). The mean difference scores were calculated by subtracting the pre- scores from the post- scores for each respondent. Preliminary tests for the equality of variances, or f-tests (p <0.05), were performed in order to determine if the variances of the two groups were statistically significant. In cases where the variances were equal in both groups, independent t-tests assuming equal variances were performed; otherwise, the researcher used a t-test assuming non-equal variances (Rosner 2011).

### 3.4.1 Qualitative Data Analysis

A content-based thematic approach was taken in the analysis of the qualitative data with the researcher engaging in repeated close-reading of the material and extracting key themes which emerged and which were related to the research questions (cf. Bruen 2013 and Ushioda 2013 for similar approaches). Once the themes had been identified, the

research attempted to ascertain the relative importance and prevalence of each theme, based primarily on the frequency of its occurrence in the data. This approach was used in analysing the Goal-Setting and Evaluation Records and the Student Reflection Records.

The interview data was summarised from audio recordings and analysed in terms of research questions 1 and 2 (Chapter One). Data was transcribed according to the topics that students were asked to discuss and recurring themes were then identified. Each group's data and data resulting from the teacher interview were analysed separately.

## 3.5 Pilot Study

A pilot experiment was carried out over a five-week period six months prior to the full-scale experiment, allowing for review and testing of the methodology for the full-scale study. Thus, in the pilot, a quasi-experimental approach was employed to investigate the influence of two ISs (*delegation of material and task selection to the student* and *promotion of self-evaluation*) on the levels of autonomy and motivation as well as motivational type of adolescent learners of Spanish as a foreign language.

Twenty-nine TY students from the same school that took part in the large scale study participated. They were aged between fifteen and seventeen and constituted a treatment group (n=13) and a comparison group (n=16). One teacher also participated and taught both groups prior to and during the pilot research project. While the students who participated in the pilot study did not partake in the current full-scale study, the same teacher took part in both studies.

The research instruments included a motivation questionnaire, an autonomy questionnaire, a goal-setting and evaluation record, and a reflection record. The treatment group received the ISs and both groups completed a pre- and post- motivation questionnaire to investigate their motivational types (instrumental or intrinsic) and categorise their motivational levels (low/moderate/high) towards the L2 (Spanish). Both groups also completed a pre- and post- autonomy questionnaire to investigate and categorise their levels of autonomy towards the L2. The treatment group and the comparison group followed the same syllabus for Spanish.

In terms of quantitative data analysis, the pre- and post- mean scores for motivational types were calculated for the treatment group and the comparison group. Table 3.5 shows the intergroup comparison for the students' motivational types.

**Table 3.5:** Intergroup comparisons of means for motivational types (n=29)

|  | Treatment group (n=13) | | Comparison group (n=16) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Intrinsic | Instrumental | Intrinsic | Instrumental |
| Mean (Mu; $\mu$) | 0.10 | -0.02 | -0.03 | 0.00 |
| SD | 0.36 | 0.07 | 0.13 | 0.00 |
|  | Independent t-tests | | | |
|  | Intrinsic | | Instrumental | |
| t calculated | 1.21 | | -1.00 | |
| p value | 0.25 | | 0.34 | |

Independent t-tests: α = 0.05; H$_0$: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

The treatment group's intrinsic motivation increased and the comparison group's decreased. Despite this, an independent t-test indicated that there was no significant difference between the treatment group's (Mu =0.10, SD =0.36) and the comparison group's (Mu =-0.03, SD =0.13) intrinsic motivation, t (14) = 1.21, p= 0.25. The treatment group's mean score for instrumental motivation also changed, but there was no significant difference found between the treatment group's (Mu =0.02, SD =0.07) and the comparison group's (Mu =-0.00, SD =0.00) instrumental motivation, t (12) =1.00, p= 0.34. Thus, these results indicated that there had been no significant change in the treatment group's motivational types following the use of the ISs. Despite a minor increase in the treatment group's intrinsic motivation, t-tests indicated that the ISs had not influenced motivational types.

Moving on to the analysis of the students' motivational levels, Table 3.6 shows the intergroup comparison.

**Table 3.6:** Intergroup comparisons of means for motivational levels (n=29)

|  | Treatment group (n=13) | Comparison group (n=16) |
|---|---|---|
| Mean (Mu; $\mu$) | 1.77 | -0.13 |
| SD | 2.05 | 0.62 |
| t calculated | 3.52 | |
| p value | 0.00 | |

Independent t-test: α = 0.05; H$_0$: $\mu_1$ = $\mu_2$

An independent t-test, (t (14) = 3.52, p= 0.00) showed that the treatment group's motivational levels (Mu = 1.77, SD =2.05) were higher than the comparison group's (Mu =-0.13, SD =0.62). Before the pilot experiment commenced, the treatment group participants in the low-level category of motivation outnumbered those in the high-level grouping. The post- treatment results indicated that there had been a statistically significant increase in motivation with the number of students in the high-level category outnumbering those in the low-level category.

The Learner Autonomy questionnaire was used to provide data on students' autonomy levels (low, moderate or high); Table 3.7 shows the intergroup comparison.

**Table 3.7:** Intergroup comparisons of means for autonomy levels (n=29)

| | Treatment group (n=13) | Comparison group (n=16) |
|---|---|---|
| Mean (Mu; $\mu$) | 0.46 | -0.06 |
| SD | 0.52 | 0.25 |
| t calculated | 3.34 | |
| p value | 0.00 | |

Independent t-test: $\alpha = 0.05$; $H_0$: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

An independent t-test (p<0.05) found that the treatment group (Mu =0.46, SD =0.52) had a greater change in autonomy levels than the comparison group (Mu = -0.06, SD =0.25). The difference was statistically significant, t (16) =3.34, p =0.00. While the treatment group participants did not show high levels of autonomy either before or after the experiment, their overall level of autonomy increased following the treatment. The comparison group's pre- and post- mean scores for autonomy levels, on the other hand, did not differ significantly with a minor decrease in a single student's level of autonomy. The t-test confirmed that the ISs had positively influenced *autonomy* by increasing overall levels.

With regard to the qualitative element of the pilot, the treatment group completed the Goal-Setting and Evaluation record as a tool for planning and evaluating strategies to achieve personal learning goals. With the exception of two students, the participants reported achieving their personal learning goals by the final assessment. Analysis of this preliminary data provided some indications that most students became more autonomous and reflective learners, and that planning, monitoring and evaluating their learning helped them to achieve their goals.

The treatment group also completed the Student Reflection record. The reflection form was used to gather students' written reflections regarding the IS treatment. Each student was asked to give a written account of how useful they found recent learning activities. The comments revealed that the treatment group began viewing the teacher's role more positively and that the teacher-student relationship improved with a greater feeling of trust between them. The enhanced motivation was frequently attributed as owing to the shift in the teacher's role from a formal instructor to an advisor and facilitator. In terms of autonomy, reflective comments indicated that learners had accepted responsibility for their own learning by actively planning learning tasks and taking initiative. In terms of motivation, the comments indicated that students had shown enthusiasm, goal orientation

and perseverance. The comments indicated that autonomy and motivation improved as a result of the treatment.

Interviews were carried out to probe the students' views on the ISs. While five students from each group had been randomly chosen to participate in interviews, regrettably only two students from the comparison and one from the treatment group partook. These students were questioned about their views on learners and teachers' roles in a classroom that supports learner autonomy. The treatment group student was asked to share her thoughts having experienced such a learning environment, while the comparison group students simply offered their thoughts on introducing the approach hypothetically. During the interview, the treatment group participant indicated that she was positive about her experience of gaining greater freedom in selecting learning materials and planning learning tasks. She also spoke positively about the role of the teacher and suggested that having greater control over learning was highly motivating. The two students from the comparison group who were interviewed spoke positively about the prospect of introducing greater autonomy and about the non-traditional role of teachers associated with its introduction. The interviews revealed that these students felt that they could become more motivated and independent learners in a non-traditional secondary school setting that offered them choice in learning materials, encouraged self-evaluation and where the teacher would take on a consultative role.

Thus, the pilot study provided some initial indications that the ISs had the potential to affect levels of learner autonomy and motivation and bring about a shift in the traditional teacher-student roles and relationship. The ISs selected involved the use of techniques that are closely associated with autonomous learning, such as setting learning goals, planning to achieve goals, self-evaluating and reflecting on the learning process. The students' interview and written responses in the pilot indicated that many were beginning to take responsibility for their learning.

In addition, on reviewing the construction and implementation of the pilot study as well as the process of analysing the data generated by it, it was felt that certain refinements would enhance the design for the main study.

Firstly, several minor changes were made to the research instruments, for example the phrase "There are no right or wrong answers" was inserted into the Reflection Record and

the Goal-setting and Evaluation Record in order to encourage students to feel free to give genuine feedback, whether positive or negative.

Secondly, in terms of sample selection, during the pilot study, the comparison group contained more students than the treatment group. It was decided instead that the larger of two groups would receive the treatment in the full-scale study in order to collect as much data as possible relating to students' opinions on the ISs.

Thirdly, the researcher took the decision to interview the entire student sample (i.e. all members of the treatment group and the comparison group) in the full-scale study, and a teacher interview was also included in the revised design. This decision was, again, taken in an attempt to collect as much data as possible relating to students' opinions on the ISs.

Finally, the researcher decided to re-administer two of the questionnaires (the Learner Motivation and the Learner Autonomy questionnaires) to the treatment group in a follow-up survey, in order to assess whether any gains observed following the treatment in levels of autonomy or motivation were maintained.

## 3.6 Concluding Remarks

This study involved a sixteen-week experiment that was carried out during the second half of the school year, concluding in the final week. The participants in this study included thirty-two students and one teacher selected from an all girls' secondary school in Ireland. One teacher from the participating school was involved in the research. All of the student participants were female. The student sample was separated into a treatment group (n=18) and a comparison group (n=14). The treatment group received treatment in the form of two ISs, while the comparison group did not. The ISs in question (*delegation of material and task selection to the student* and *promotion of self-evaluation*) were introduced with the objective of examining their effect on learner motivation and autonomy. The comparison group and the treatment group alike were required to complete questionnaires, undergo observation and participate in one-on-one interviews. Treatment group participants also had to complete a goal-setting record and a reflection record. Seven months after the experiment ended, the treatment group responded to a follow-up survey involving the re-administration of questionnaires. By that time, a three-month summer break had gone by, the students were four months into the next academic year, they had a different teacher for Spanish and they were no longer using the ISs.

This study used a quasi-experimental design in which the treatment was the ISs, and their effects on motivational and autonomy levels were measured via survey, students' reflective comments, observation and interview. The two ISs were implemented simultaneously. The first IS *(delegation of material and task selection to the student)* involved students selecting their own learning materials and planning learning tasks during class. The second IS *(promotion of self-evaluation)* involved students setting learning goals, evaluating their progress towards achievement and reflecting on their learning. Learner motivation and autonomy were measured for each group on a pre- and post- basis and also on an intergroup comparison basis, in order to investigate if the ISs affected these variables in the treatment group. While a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was used to evaluate the impact of exposure to the ISs on the treatment group, the qualitative data was of a complementary nature.

A pilot study was carried out prior to this large scale study which provided preliminary signs that the ISs could potentially have an effect on levels of learner motivation and

autonomy and result in a change in the traditional teacher-student roles. The students'
responses in the pilot indicated that many were starting to self-regulate their learning.

# 4. Results

This study examines the influences of two ISs on adolescent learners' autonomy and motivation in the context of the acquisition of Spanish as a foreign language. The ISs were *delegation of material and task selection (to the student)* and *promotion of self-evaluation* (Chapter Three). One teacher and thirty-two secondary school students participated in the study, which used a quasi-experimental design to estimate the causal impact of the ISs on the student population. This experiment was carried out over a sixteen-week period and comprised a treatment (18 students) and comparison (14 students) group. While the teacher used the ISs to teach the treatment group, she did not depart from her traditional approach with the comparison group.

The results presented in this chapter were derived from analyses of the data collected via questionnaires, reflections and interviews, in order to address the following research questions: 1) Do the ISs influence learner motivation and, if so, how? and 2) Do the ISs influence learner autonomy and, if so, how? The terms "pre-" and "post-" are used frequently throughout the results section. "Pre- results" refers to results derived from data that was collected immediately before the ISs were introduced as treatment. "Post- results" refers to results which were obtained from data collected during the closing days of the experiment. The experiment ended in the last week of the academic year and was followed by a three-month summer break. Two of the questionnaires (Learner Motivation and Learner Autonomy questionnaires) were later re-administered to the treatment group in a follow-up survey, in order to assess whether any gains observed following the treatment in levels of autonomy or motivation were maintained. The follow-up survey took place seven months after the experiment concluded, when the students were four months into the next academic year (fifth year), at which time they had a different teacher and no longer engaged with the ISs.

The results are presented in eight sections: 1) results of the Learner Motivation questionnaire; 2) results of the Learner Autonomy questionnaire; 3) results of the follow-up survey; 4) results of the goal-setting and evaluation records; 5) student reflections; 6) interviews; 7) researcher observations; and 8) student profiles. In order to respect confidentiality, the names of the research participants referred to are aliases.

## 4.1 Learner Motivation

The data presented in this section was obtained using the Learner Motivation questionnaire (Appendix C), which was employed to investigate the first research question ("Do the intervention strategies influence learner motivation and, if so, how?"). Adapted from the *Attitude/Motivation Test Battery* (Gardner 1985) and Deci and Ryan's *Motivational Scales* (1985), both the treatment group and the comparison group completed a pre- and post- motivation questionnaire, which was used to investigate their motivational types (instrumental or intrinsic) and categorise their motivational levels (low/moderate/high) towards the L2. The questionnaire contains eighteen items; items 1 to 8 relate to motivational types and items 9 to 18 relate to motivational levels.

### 4.1.1 Motivational Type

This section deals with the analysis of the students' type of motivation (intrinsic or instrumental). Intrinsic motivation is characterised by the learner's sense of fulfilment and satisfaction in learning an L2; it is associated with a deep-rooted personal interest in language learning. Instrumental motivation comes from the learner's desire to realise short-term goals (for example to pass an exam) or from learning for functional reasons, such as to obtain future employment.

To begin with, each group's results were analysed separately by comparing pre- and post- results. Next, the data was compared between the two groups, in order to measure the effect, if any, of the treatment. Table 4.1 features the eight items of the Learner Motivation questionnaire which address motivational types. Items 1, 2, 3, and 4 were classified as indicators of intrinsic motivation, whilst items 5, 6, 7, and 8 represent instrumental motivation.

**Table 4.1** Items of the Learner Motivation questionnaire relating to motivational types

| Item no. | Intrinsic Motivation Items |
|---|---|
| 1 | I love learning Spanish very much |
| 2 | I think learning Spanish is very interesting |
| 3 | Learning Spanish makes me feel satisfied |
| 4 | Learning Spanish is a challenge that I love to take |
| | **Instrumental Motivation Items** |
| 5 | Studying Spanish is important only because I'll need it for my future career |
| 6 | Studying Spanish is important because it will make me a more knowledgeable person |
| 7 | Studying Spanish is important because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job |
| 8 | Studying Spanish is important because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of a foreign language |

The students responded to the items using six-point likert scales. The scaling points were as follows: "strongly agree" (SA); "agree" (A); "somewhat agree" (SWA); "somewhat disagree" (SWD); "disagree" (D); and "strongly disagree" (SD).

### 4.1.1.1 Treatment Group

Table 4.2 shows the pre- and post- results regarding the type of motivation (intrinsic or instrumental) of the treatment group. The result frequencies are presented as percentages.

**Table 4.2** Treatment group: pre- and post- results for motivational types (n=18)

| | SA | | A | | SWA | | SWD | | D | | SD | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pre-% | Post-% | Pre-% | Post-% | Pre-% | Post-% | Pre-% | Post-% | Pre-% | Post-% | Pre-% | Post-% |
| Item no. | Intrinsic Motivation Items (1-4) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 5.56 | 11.11 | 16.67 | 11.11 | 11.11 | 22.22 | 55.56 | 44.44 | 11.11 | 11.11 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 2 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 5.56 | 16.67 | 22.22 | 50.00 | 61.11 | 27.78 | 11.11 | 5.56 | 0.00 |
| 3 | 5.56 | 5.56 | 16.67 | 22.22 | 16.67 | 22.22 | 38.89 | 38.89 | 22.22 | 11.11 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 4 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 11.11 | 5.56 | 11.11 | 16.67 | 55.56 | 44.44 | 22.22 | 33.33 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| | Instrumental Motivation Items (5-8) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | 5.56 | 5.56 | 33.33 | 33.33 | 11.11 | 22.22 | 16.67 | 11.11 | 22.22 | 16.67 | 11.11 | 11.11 |
| 6 | 5.56 | 5.56 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 16.67 | 27.78 | 33.33 | 27.78 | 44.44 | 38.89 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 7 | 0.00 | 5.56 | 27.78 | 22.22 | 16.67 | 11.11 | 11.11 | 27.78 | 38.89 | 27.78 | 5.56 | 5.56 |
| 8 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 50.00 | 50.00 | 11.11 | 16.67 | 27.78 | 27.78 | 5.56 | 5.56 | 5.56 | 0.00 |

SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; SWA= Somewhat Agree; SWD= Somewhat Disagree; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree

4.1.1.1.1 Results of the pre- questionnaire

The SA frequencies ranged from 0.00% to 5.56%, frequencies in the A category ranged from 0.00% to 50.00%, the SWA frequencies ranged from 11.11% to 16.67%, the SWD frequencies ranged from 11.11% to 55.56%, the frequencies in the D category ranged from 5.56% to 44.44%, and the SD frequencies ranged from 0.00% to 11.11%.

The SA frequencies suggest that the treatment group did not have a noticeable intrinsic or instrumental tendency. Intrinsic items 2 and 4 each had 0.00% frequencies for SA, and instrumental items 7 and 8 in the same category were also 0.00%. In relation to intrinsic motivation, 55.56% (ten students) of the group indicated that they somewhat disagreed with the statement "I love learning Spanish very much". Item 4 had a 55.56% response frequency in the SWD category, indicating that just over half of the respondents (ten students) somewhat disagreed that learning Spanish was a challenge that they enjoyed. As

regards instrumental motivation, 44.44% of respondents indicated that they disagreed that studying Spanish was important to them in terms of making them more knowledgeable. Seven out of eighteen students (38.89%) disagreed that studying Spanish was important to them in terms of being useful in getting a good job. Half of the group (50.00%) indicated that they agreed that other people would respect them more if they had knowledge of a foreign language.

The data was then analysed on a binominal level by combining the responses of the SA, A and SWA categories and the responses of the SD, D and SWD categories, thus producing two general categories of "agreement" and "disagreement". The total number of responses for the agreement categories (SA, A and SWA) was 27.78% for intrinsic motivation and 44.44% for instrumental motivation. The total number of responses for the disagreement categories (SD, D and SWD) was 72.22% for intrinsic motivation and 55.56% for instrumental motivation. While these results again indicate that the group did not have an obvious tendency towards either type, it does suggest that prior to the implementation of the ISs in the classroom, the students were more instrumentally than intrinsically motivated.

4.1.1.1.2 Results of the post- questionnaire

The SA frequencies ranged from 0.00% to 11.11%, frequencies in the A category ranged from 0.00% to 50.00%, the SWA frequencies ranged from 11.11% to 27.78%, the SWD frequencies ranged from 11.11% to 61.11%, the frequencies in the D category ranged from 5.56% to 38.89%, and the SD frequencies ranged from 0.00% to 11.11%.

The percentages for SA confirmed that the students did not have a noticeable tendency towards intrinsic or instrumental motivation. Item 1, which previously had a 5.56% response frequency for SA increased to 11.11%. This suggested that there was an increase in the number of students who strongly agreed that they enjoyed learning Spanish. Instrumental item 7 in the same category increased from 0.00% to 5.56%, indicating that there was an increase in the number of students who strongly agreed that studying Spanish was important as it would be useful in getting a good job.

The post- data was also analysed on a binominal level into an agreement category and disagreement category (Table 4.3).

**Table 4.3** Treatment group: Categories of agreement and disagreement for motivational types (n=18)

| | Responses of Agreement | | Reponses of Disagreement | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pre- % | Post- % | Pre- % | Post- % |
| Intrinsic | 27.78 | 36.11 | 72.22 | 63.89 |
| Instrumental | 44.44 | 50.00 | 55.56 | 50.00 |

The total number of responses for the agreement categories (SA, A and SWA) increased from 27.78% to 36.11% for intrinsic motivation and from 44.44% to 50.00% for instrumental motivation. The total for the disagreement categories (SD, D and SWD) decreased from 72.22% to 63.89% for intrinsic motivation and from 55.56% to 50.00% for instrumental motivation. These results obtained after that implementation of the ISs indicate that the group continued not to have an obvious tendency towards either type of motivation and remained more instrumentally than intrinsically motivated.

Paired t-tests (p<0.05) were then conducted to assess whether the difference between pre- and post- means for intrinsic and instrumental motivation was statistically significant (Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4** Treatment group: comparison of means for pre- and post- motivational types (n=18)

| | Intrinsic | | Instrumental | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pre- | Post- | Pre- | Post- |
| Mean (Mu; $\mu$) | 12.83 | 13.56 | 13.56 | 14.17 |
| standard deviation (SD) | 2.68 | 2.28 | 3.15 | 2.96 |
| | **Paired t-tests** | | | |
| t calculated value | -2.18 | | -2.65 | |
| t critical value | 2.11 | | 2.11 | |
| p value | 0.04 | | 0.02 | |

df = 17; α = 0.05; H$_0$: $\mu_d$ = 0.00

The results of the first t-test indicate that the post- mean (Mu =13.56, SD =2.28) was significantly greater than the pre- mean (Mu =12.83, SD =2.68) for intrinsic motivation t(17) =-2.18, p =0.04, indicating a significantly higher level of intrinsic motivation following the implementation of the ISs.

The results of the second t-test indicate that the post- mean (Mu =14.17, SD =2.96) was significantly greater than the pre- mean (Mu =13.56, SD =3.15) for instrumental

motivation t(17) =-2.65, p =0.02, again indicating a significantly higher level of instrumental motivation following the treatment. Thus, these results indicate that there was a significant increase in the level of the treatment group's instrumental and intrinsic motivation following the use of the ISs.

## 4.1.1.2 Comparison Group

Table 4.5 presents the pre- and post- results regarding the type of motivation (intrinsic or instrumental) of the comparison group. The result frequencies are presented as percentages.

**Table 4.5** Comparison group: pre- and post- results for motivational types (n=14)

| Item no. | SA | | A | | SWA | | SWD | | D | | SD | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pre-% | Post-% | Pre-% | Post-% | Pre-% | Post-% | Pre-% | Post-% | Pre-% | Post-% | Pre-% | Post-% |
| | Intrinsic Motivation Items (1-4) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | 14.29 | 14.29 | 28.57 | 28.57 | 14.29 | 14.29 | 21.43 | 21.43 | 7.14 | 7.14 | 14.29 | 14.29 |
| 2 | 14.29 | 14.29 | 21.43 | 14.29 | 14.29 | 28.57 | 14.29 | 7.14 | 28.57 | 28.57 | 7.14 | 7.14 |
| 3 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 35.71 | 35.71 | 14.29 | 14.29 | 7.14 | 7.14 | 28.57 | 28.57 | 14.29 | 14.29 |
| 4 | 7.14 | 7.14 | 35.71 | 35.71 | 14.29 | 14.29 | 0.00 | 14.29 | 28.57 | 21.43 | 14.29 | 7.14 |
| | Instrumental Motivation Items (5-8) | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 14.29 | 14.29 | 35.71 | 35.71 | 21.43 | 21.43 | 28.57 | 28.57 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 6 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 35.71 | 35.71 | 21.43 | 21.43 | 7.14 | 14.29 | 28.57 | 21.43 | 7.14 | 7.14 |
| 7 | 14.29 | 14.29 | 42.86 | 35.71 | 7.14 | 14.29 | 14.29 | 14.29 | 21.43 | 14.29 | 0.00 | 7.14 |
| 8 | 0.00 | 0.00 | 21.43 | 14.29 | 21.43 | 21.43 | 14.29 | 14.29 | 35.71 | 42.86 | 7.14 | 7.14 |

SA= Strongly Agree; A= Agree; SWA= Somewhat Agree; SWD= Somewhat Disagree; D= Disagree; SD= Strongly Disagree

4.1.1.2.1 Results of the pre- questionnaire

The SA frequencies ranged from 0.00% to 14.49%, frequencies in the A category ranged from 14.29% to 42.86%, the SWA frequencies ranged from 7.14% to 35.71%, the SWD frequencies ranged from 0.00% to 21.43%, the frequencies in the D category ranged from 7.14% to 35.71%, and the SD frequencies ranged from 0.00% to 14.29%.

Intrinsic item 3 had a 0.00% response frequency for SA, and instrumental items 5, 6 and 8 in the same category were also 0.00%. The comparison group had a total result of 35.72% in the SA category for intrinsic motivation. The highest response frequency (42.86%) was in the A category (item 7). This result indicates that six out of the fourteen

respondents agreed that it was important to study Spanish because it would someday be useful in getting a good job.

The comparison group's data was also analysed on a binominal level into an agreement and disagreement category. The total number of responses for the agreement categories (SA, A and SWA) was 53.57% for intrinsic motivation and 53.57% for instrumental motivation. The total for the disagreement categories (SD, D and SWD) was 46.43% for intrinsic motivation and 46.43% for instrumental motivation. As was the case with the treatment group, these results indicate that the comparison group did not have a noticeable tendency towards either type of motivation.

<u>4.1.1.2.2 Results of the post- questionnaire</u>

The SA frequencies ranged from 0.00% to 14.29%, frequencies in the A category ranged from 14.29% to 35.71%, the SWA frequencies ranged from 14.29% to 35.71%, the SWD frequencies ranged from 7.14% to 21.43%, the frequencies in the D category ranged from 7.14% to 42.86%, and the SD frequencies ranged from 0.00% to 14.29%.

The percentages for the SA category remained unchanged, suggesting again that the group continued not to have a strong tendency towards intrinsic or instrumental motivation. The data was again also analysed on a binominal level into an agreement and disagreement category (Table 4.6).

**Table 4.6** Comparison group: Categories of agreement and disagreement for motivational types (n=18)

|  | Agreement | | Disagreement | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Pre- % | Post- % | Pre- % | Post- % |
| Intrinsic | 53.57 | 55.36 | 46.43 | 44.64 |
| Instrumental | 53.57 | 51.78 | 46.43 | 48.22 |

The total for the agreement categories (SA, A and SWA) increased from 53.57 to 55.36% for intrinsic motivation and decreased from 53.57 to 51.78% for instrumental motivation. The total for the disagreement categories (SD, D and SWD) decreased from 46.43 to 44.64% for intrinsic motivation and increased from 46.43 to 48.22% for instrumental

motivation. These results again indicated that the comparison group did not have a noticeable tendency towards either type of motivation.

Paired t-tests (p< 0.05) were carried out to assess whether the difference between the pre- and post- means for intrinsic and instrumental motivation was statistically significant (Table 4.7).

**Table 4.7** Comparison group: comparison of means for pre- and post- motivational types (n=14)

|  | Intrinsic | | Instrumental | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Pre- | Post- | Pre- | Post- |
| Mean (M; $\mu$) | 14.14 | 14.36 | 14.14 | 13.86 |
| SD | 6.37 | 6.13 | 2.48 | 2.14 |
| **Paired t-tests** | | | | |
| t calculated value | -1.38 | | 1.00 | |
| t critical value | 2.16 | | 2.16 | |
| p value | 0.19 | | 0.34 | |

df = 13; $\alpha$ = 0.05; H$_o$: $\mu_d$ = 0.00

The first t-test indicates that the pre- mean (Mu =14.14, SD =6.37) does not differ significantly from the post- mean (Mu =14.36, SD =6.13) for intrinsic motivation, t(13) =-1.38, p =0.19. A second paired t-test indicates that the pre- mean (Mu =14.14, SD =2.48) does not differ significantly from the post- mean (Mu =13.86, SD =2.14) for instrumental motivation, t(13) =1.00, p =0.34. Thus, these results indicate no significant change in the levels of intrinsic and instrumental motivation for the comparison group during the period of time in which the ISs were being introduced to the treatment group.

### 4.1.1.3 Intergroup Comparisons

Table 4.8 shows a summary of the pre- and post- results regarding the type of motivation (intrinsic or instrumental) of the treatment and the comparison group.

**Table 4.8** Overview of results for motivational types (*N*=32)

|  | Intrinsic | | Instrumental | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Pre- % | Post- % | Pre- % | Post- % |
| Treatment group | 27.78 | 36.11 | 44.44 | 50.00 |
| Comparison group | 53.57 | 55.36 | 53.57 | 51.79 |

The comparison group's levels of intrinsic and instrumental motivation exceeded those of the treatment group in the pre- and post- results. The comparison group's intrinsic motivation increased by 1.79% (from 53.57 to 55.36%) while their instrumental motivation decreased by 1.78% (from 53.57% to 51.79%). The changes in the treatment group's motivational types only occurred in one direction, as intrinsic motivation increased by 8.33% (from 27.78% to 36.11%) and instrumental motivation by 5.56% (from 44.44% to 50.00%).

The treatment group's SA responses to item 1 increased from 5.56% to 11.11%, indicating that there was an increase in the number of students who enjoyed learning Spanish. The treatment group's SA responses to item 7 also increased (from 0.00% to 5.56%), indicating that there was an increase in the number of students who felt that knowledge of Spanish would be useful in getting a good job. In contrast to the treatment group's post- results, the comparison group's number of SA responses did not change.

Paired t-tests were conducted to assess whether the difference between pre- and post-means for intrinsic and instrumental motivation was statistically significant. The treatment group's t-tests indicate that the post- mean (Mu =13.56, SD =2.28) was significantly greater than the pre- mean (Mu =12.83, SD =2.68) for intrinsic motivation t(17) =-2.18, p =0.04; and the post- mean (Mu =14.17, SD =2.96) was also significantly greater than the pre-mean (Mu =13.56, SD =3.15) for instrumental motivation t(17) =-2.65, p =0.02. The comparison group's t-tests indicate that the pre- mean (Mu =14.14, SD =6.37) did not differ significantly from the post- mean (Mu =14.36, SD =6.13) for intrinsic motivation, t(13) =-1.38, p =0.19; nor did the pre- mean (Mu =14.14, SD =2.48) differ significantly from the post- mean (Mu =13.86, SD =2.14) for instrumental motivation, t(13) =1.00, p =0.34. These results indicate a significant increase in the level of the treatment group's instrumental and intrinsic motivation following the use of the ISs, while no significant change in the levels of the comparison group's intrinsic and instrumental motivation during the same period of time.

Independent t-tests (p<0.05) were then conducted to compare the two groups' motivational types (Table 4.9), in order to assess whether there was a significant difference between their mean difference scores (μd). The mean difference scores were calculated by subtracting the pre- scores from the post- scores for each respondent.

**Table 4.9** Intergroup comparisons of means for motivational types (n=32)

| | Treatment group (N=18) | | Comparison group (N=14) | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Intrinsic | Instrumental | Intrinsic | Instrumental |
| Mean difference ($\mu_d$) | 0.72 | 0.61 | 0.21 | -0.29 |
| SD | 1.41 | 0.98 | 0.58 | 1.07 |
| | Independent t-tests | | | |
| | Intrinsic | | Instrumental | |
| t calculated | 1.39 | | 2.47 | |
| t critical | 2.06 | | 2.04 | |
| p value | 0.18 | | 0.02 | |

Independent t-tests: *df* =24 (intrinsic); *df* =30 (instrumental), α = 0.05; H$_0$: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

The results of the first independent t-test indicate no significant difference between the treatment group's (Mu =0.72, SD =1.41) and the comparison group's (Mu =0.21, SD =0.58) intrinsic motivation, t (24) = 1.39, p= 0.18. As regards instrumental motivation, the results of a second independent t-test indicate a significant difference between the treatment group's (Mu =0.61, SD =0.98) and the comparison group's (Mu =-0.29, SD =1.07) mean scores, t (30) =2.47, p= 0.02. Thus, these results indicate that the increase in the treatment group's instrumental motivation following the use of the ISs was significant, while the increase in intrinsic motivation was not. In contrast to these results, the paired t-test relating to intrinsic motivation indicated a significant increase in the level of the treatment group's intrinsic motivation.

### 4.1.2 Motivational Level

In addition to assessing motivational type, the Learner Motivation questionnaire was also used to measure the intensity level of a student's motivation to learn Spanish, in terms of the amount of effort expended in learning the language. Ten multiple choice questions (items 9 to 18) were used to measure motivational levels (Table 4.10). Responses were graded as 1, 2 or 3. The value "1" represents a low degree of motivation towards learning the L2; the value "2" signifies a moderate degree and "3" indicates a high degree of motivation.

**Table 4.10** Items of the Learner Motivation questionnaire relating to motivational levels

| Items (9-18) | Scoring keys for responses | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | **1**<br>**Low-level motivation** | **2**<br>**moderate-level motivation** | **3**<br>**high-level motivation** |
| 9. I actively think about what I have learned in my Spanish class: | Hardly ever | Once in awhile | Very frequently |
| 10. If Spanish were not taught in school, I would: | Not bother learning Spanish at all | Pick up Spanish in everyday situations | Try to obtain lessons in Spanish somewhere else |
| 11. When I have a problem understanding something in Spanish class, I: | Just forget about it | Only seek help just before the exam | Immediately ask the teacher for help |
| 12. When it comes to Spanish homework, I: | Just skim over it | Put some effort into it, but not as much as I could | Work very carefully, making sure I understand everything |
| 13. Considering how I study Spanish, I can honestly say that I: | Will pass on the basis of sheer luck or intelligence because I do very little work | Do just enough work to get along | Really try to learn Spanish |
| 14. If my teacher wanted someone to do an extra Spanish assignment, I would: | Definitely not volunteer | Only do it if the teacher asked me directly | Definitely volunteer |
| 15. After I get my Spanish assignment back, I: | Just throw them in my bag and forget them | Look them over, but don't bother correcting mistakes | Always rewrite them, correcting my mistakes |
| 16. When I am in Spanish class, I: | Never say anything | Answer only the easier questions | Volunteer answers as much as possible |
| 17. If there were a local Spanish language TV station, I would: | Never watch it | Turn it on occasionally | Try to watch it often |
| 18. When I hear Spanish song on the radio, I: | Change the station | Listen to the music, paying attention only to easy words | Listen carefully and try to understand all the words |

## 4.1.2.1 Treatment Group

Table 4.11 presents the pre- and post- results regarding the treatment group's motivational levels. The result frequencies are presented as percentages.

**Table 4.11** Treatment group: pre- and post- results for motivational levels (*n*=18)

| Item no. | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pre- % | Post- % | Pre- % | Post- % | Pre- % | Post- % |
| 9 | 50.00 | 50.00 | 50.00 | 50.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 10 | 61.11 | 55.56 | 33.33 | 38.89 | 5.56 | 5.56 |
| 11 | 5.56 | 5.56 | 11.11 | 11.11 | 83.33 | 83.33 |
| 12 | 38.89 | 22.22 | 38.89 | 44.44 | 22.22 | 33.33 |
| 13 | 16.67 | 16.67 | 50.00 | 38.89 | 33.33 | 44.44 |
| 14 | 22.22 | 11.11 | 61.11 | 55.56 | 16.67 | 33.33 |
| 15 | 27.78 | 16.67 | 44.44 | 50.00 | 27.78 | 33.33 |
| 16 | 27.78 | 16.67 | 50.00 | 61.11 | 22.22 | 22.22 |
| 17 | 61.11 | 44.44 | 27.78 | 44.44 | 11.11 | 11.11 |
| 18 | 27.78 | 22.22 | 44.44 | 50.00 | 27.78 | 27.78 |
| **Totals** | **33.89%** | **26.11%** | **41.11%** | **44.44%** | **25.00%** | **29.44%** |

1 = Low-level category; 2 = moderate-level category; 3 = high-level category

4.1.2.1.1 Results of the pre-questionnaire

Responses frequencies pertaining to the low-level category ranged from 5.56% to 61.11%, frequencies in the moderate-level category ranged from 11.11% to 61.11%, and high-level response frequencies ranged from 0.00% to 83.33%.

The majority of responses (41.11%) pertained to the moderate-level category. The high-level category had the highest response frequency (83.33%) for a single item (item 11), indicating that fifteen of the students asked for their teacher's help immediately when having difficulty understanding something in class. The highest response frequency (61.11%) in the low-level category related to items 10 and 17. These results indicated that 61.11% of students would not bother learning Spanish at all were it not taught in school (item 10) nor would they watch a local Spanish TV station had they the opportunity to do so (item 17). The highest response frequency (61.11%) in the moderate-level category was item 14, indicating that eleven of the respondents would only do an extra Spanish assignment if the teacher asked them directly to do so

4.1.2.1.2 Results of the post-questionnaire

Following the implementation of the ISs, the total percentage of high-level responses increased from 25.00% to 29.44%. The percentage of moderate-level responses also increased from 41.11% to 44.44%, while low-level responses decreased from 33.89% to 26.11%. The moderate category continued to have the highest number of responses.

Out of ten items, low-level responses stayed the same for three items (items 9, 11 and 14), and decreased for the other seven items. The changes to low-level responses only occurred in one direction, as the responses frequencies to three items went down and none went up. Moderate-level responses stayed the same for two items (items 9 and 11), increased for six items (items 10, 12, 15, 16, 17 and 18) and decreased for two items (items 13 and 14). High-level responses stayed the same for six items (items 9, 10, 11, 16, 17 and 18) and increased for the other three items (items 12, 14 and 15). There was no decrease in high-level responses for any of the items.

For moderate-level responses, the single biggest increase took place regarding item 17 (would watch a local Spanish language station occasionally) with an increase of 16.66% (from 27.78% to 44.44%). The single biggest increase for high-level responses took place regarding item 14 (would definitely volunteer to do an extra Spanish assignment), which

also increased by 16.66% (from 16.67% to 33.33%). The single biggest decrease in low-level responses took place regarding item 12 (just skim over Spanish homework) with a decrease of 16.67% (from 38.89% to 22.22%).

Individual students were also categorised as having low-level, moderate-level or high-level motivation, depending on their responses to the questionnaire. A student's overall score was marked out of 30 with 10 being the lowest possible score. Those students scoring between 24 and 30 points were categorised as displaying a high level of motivation, a moderate level required a score of between 17 and 23, and finally, a low level score was that between 10 and 16. The treatment group's pre- and post- total scores are shown in table 4.12.

**Table 4.12** Treatment group: pre- and post- scores for motivation (*n*=18)

|  | Total Score out of 30 | | Category of Motivation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Pre- | Post- | Pre- | Post- |
| Ana | 16 | 17 | Low | Moderate |
| Bibiana | 21 | 22 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Cristina | 24 | 24 | High | High |
| Elena | 19 | 20 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Esperanza | 21 | 21 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Isabel | 16 | 18 | Low | Moderate |
| Juana | 12 | 16 | Low | Low |
| Leticia | 24 | 27 | High | High |
| Magda | 14 | 16 | Low | Low |
| María | 24 | 24 | High | High |
| Pabla | 18 | 18 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Paula | 20 | 20 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Pilar | 21 | 24 | Moderate | High |
| Ramona | 16 | 17 | Low | Moderate |
| Salma | 17 | 17 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Silvia | 20 | 24 | Moderate | High |
| Sofía | 21 | 21 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Yolanda | 20 | 20 | Moderate | Moderate |

Low-level: 10-16; moderate-level: 17-23; high-level: 24-30

The results indicated that the number of students in the low-level category of motivation decreased from five to two students after the treatment. The three students who moved out of the low-level category (Ana, Isabel and Ramona) moved into the moderate category. Pilar and Silvia moved out of the moderate category into the high category, increasing the number of students in the high-level category from three to five. Previously, the number of students with low levels of motivation had outnumbered those with high levels. While ten of the students' scores increased (Ana, Bibiana, Elena, Isabel, Juana,

Leticia, Magda, Pilar, Ramona and Silvia), only five of them (Ana, Isabel, Pilar, Ramona and Silvia) moved up into a higher category. The changes only occurred in one direction, as ten students' levels of motivation went up and none went down.

A paired t-test (p<0.05) was conducted to determine if the treatment group's motivational levels were significantly higher or lower following the treatment (Table 4.13).

**Table 4.13** Treatment group: comparison of means for pre- and post-motivational levels (*n*=18)

|  | Pre- average score out of 30 | Post- average score out of 30 |
|---|---|---|
| Mean (Mu; $\mu$) | 19.11 | 20.33 |
| SD | 3.43 | 3.29 |
| | **Paired t-tests** | |
| t calculated value | -3.61 | |
| t critical value | 2.11 | |
| p value | 0.00 | |

df = 17; α = 0.05; H$_o$: $\mu_d$ = 0.00

The t-test results indicate that the post- mean (Mu =20.33, SD 3.29) was significantly higher than the pre- mean (Mu =19.11, SD =3.43) for motivational levels, t(17) =-3.61, p =0.00, thus indicating that there was a significant increase in the treatment group's levels of motivation following the use of the ISs.

## 4.1.2.2 Comparison Group

Table 4.14 presents the comparison group's pre- and post- mean scores for motivational categories.

**Table 4.14** Comparison group: pre- and post- results for motivational levels (*n*=14)

| | 1 | | 2 | | 3 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item no. | Pre % | Post % | Pre % | Post % | Pre % | Post % |
| 9 | 21.43 | 21.43 | 35.71 | 35.71 | 42.86 | 42.86 |
| 10 | 35.71 | 28.57 | 42.86 | 57.14 | 21.43 | 14.29 |
| 11 | 21.43 | 28.57 | 50.00 | 42.86 | 28.57 | 28.57 |
| 12 | 35.71 | 35.71 | 42.86 | 42.86 | 21.43 | 21.43 |
| 13 | 21.43 | 21.43 | 57.14 | 57.14 | 21.43 | 21.43 |
| 14 | 35.71 | 21.43 | 35.71 | 50.00 | 28.57 | 28.57 |
| 15 | 42.86 | 42.86 | 42.86 | 42.86 | 14.29 | 14.29 |
| 16 | 35.71 | 28.57 | 42.86 | 50.00 | 21.43 | 21.43 |
| 17 | 42.86 | 35.71 | 42.86 | 50.00 | 14.29 | 14.29 |
| 18 | 35.71 | 28.57 | 57.14 | 62.29 | 7.14 | 7.14 |
| **Totals** | **32.86%** | **29.29%** | **45.00%** | **49.29%** | **22.14%** | **21.43%** |

1 = Low-level category; 2 = moderate-level category; 3 = high-level category

4.1.2.2.1 Results of the pre-questionnaire

Responses frequencies pertaining to the low-level category ranged from 21.43% to 42.86%, frequencies in the moderate-level category ranged from 35.71% to 57.14%, and high-level response frequencies ranged from 7.14% to 42.86%.

At the beginning of the study, the majority of responses pertained to moderate-level motivation, with a frequency of 45.00%. The moderate-level category also had the highest response frequency (57.14%) for individual items (item 18). This result indicated that eight of the students only paid attention to the easy words when listening to Spanish songs. The highest response frequency (42.86%) in the low-level category related to items 15 and 17. These results indicated that six of the respondents would leave corrected assignments in their bag and forget about them (item 15) and that the same number of students would never watch a local Spanish TV station, had they the opportunity to do so (item 17). The highest response frequency (42.86%) in the high-level category related to item 9, indicating that six of students actively thought about what they had learned in Spanish class.

4.1.2.2.2 Results of the post-questionnaire

The comparison group's post- questionnaire data indicates that high-level responses decreased from 22.14 to 21.43%. While low-level responses also decreased (from 32.86% to 29.29%), the percentage of moderate-level responses increased from 45.00% to 49.29%. The moderate-level category continued to have the highest response frequency (62.29%) for individual items (item 18).

Out of ten items, low-level responses stayed the same for four items (items 9, 12, 13 and 15), increased for one item (item 11) and decreased for the other five items. Moderate-level responses stayed the same for four items (items 9, 12, 13 and 15), increased for five items (items 10, 14, 16, 17, and 18) and decreased for one item (item 11). High-level responses decreased for one item (item 10) and stayed the same for the other nine items. There was no increase in high-level responses for any of the items.

The biggest increases took place regarding item 10 (would pick up Spanish in everyday situations were it not taught in school) and item 14 (would only do an extra Spanish assignment if asked directly by the teacher) which increased from 42.86% to 57.14% and from 35.71% to 50.00% respectively.

The comparison group students were also categorised as having low-level, moderate-level or high-level motivation, again depending on their responses to the questionnaire. Table 4.15 presents individual students' scores out of 30 and their categories of motivation (low/moderate/high).

**Table 4.15** Comparison group: pre- and post- scores for motivation (*n*=14)

|  | Total Score out of 30 | | Category of Motivation | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Pre- | Post- | Pre- | Post- |
| Adriana | 15 | 14 | Low | Low |
| Alba | 23 | 22 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Alicia | 20 | 21 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Antonia | 17 | 17 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Blanca | 23 | 23 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Camila | 18 | 19 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Carla | 21 | 22 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Gabriela | 24 | 24 | High | High |
| Imelda | 16 | 16 | Low | Low |
| Olivia | 21 | 21 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Paca | 11 | 13 | Low | Low |
| Pepa | 13 | 13 | Low | Low |
| Roberta | 15 | 15 | Low | Low |
| Tatiana | 28 | 29 | High | High |

Low-level: 10-16; moderate-level: 17-23; high-level: 24-30

While the overall scores of seven of the students (Adriana, Alba, Alicia, Camila, Carla, Paca and Tatiana) changed in the post- results, these changes did not constitute a change in their categories of motivation.

A paired t-test (p<0.05) was conducted to determine if the comparison group's motivational levels were significantly higher or lower at the end of the period of time in which the treatment group were engaged in the experiment (Table 4.16).

**Table 4.16** Comparison group: comparison of means for pre- and post- motivational levels

(*n*=14)

|  | Pre- average score out of 30 | Post- average score out of 30 |
|---|---|---|
| Mean (Mu; $\mu$) | 18.93 | 19.21 |
| SD (S) | 4.75 | 4.74 |
|  | Paired t-tests | |
| t calculated value | -1.30 | |
| t critical value | 2.16 | |
| p value | 0.22 | |

(df = 13, α = 0.05, H$_0$: $\mu_d$ = 0)

The results indicate that the post- mean (Mu =19.21, SD 4.74) was not significantly higher than the pre- mean (Mu =18.93, SD =4.75) for motivational levels, t(13) =-1.30, p =0.22. These results indicate that there was no significant change in the comparison group's levels of motivation at the end of the time period in which the treatment group were engaging with the ISs.

### 4.1.2.3 Intergroup Comparison

Table 4.17 shows a summary of the pre- and post- results regarding the level of motivation (low/medium/high) of the treatment and the comparison group.

**Table 4.17** Overview of results for motivational levels (n=32)

|  | Treatment group | | Comparison group | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Pre- % | Post- % | Pre- % | Post- % |
| **Categories of motivation** |  |  |  |  |
| Low-level category | 27.78 | 11.11 | 35.71 | 35.71 |
| Moderate-level category | 55.56 | 61.11 | 50.00 | 50.00 |
| High-level category | 16.67 | 27.78 | 14.29 | 14.29 |
| **Response frequencies** |  |  |  |  |
| Low-level responses | 33.89 | 26.11 | 32.86 | 29.29 |
| Moderate-level responses | 41.11 | 44.44 | 45.00 | 49.29 |
| High-level responses | 25.00 | 29.44 | 22.14 | 21.43 |

The majority of students in both groups were categorised as having moderate-level motivation in pre- and post- results. The number of treatment group students categorised as having low-level motivation decreased from 27.78% to 11.11%, while the moderate category increased from 55.56% to 61.11% and high-level motivation increased from 16.67% to 27.78%. Despite the fact that there was a change in the comparison group's distribution of responses, there were no changes in their categories of low-level (35.71%), moderate-level (50.00%) or high-level motivation (14.29%) at the end of the treatment group's intervention period.

The treatment group's high-level responses increased from 25.00% to 29.44%, while the comparison group's decreased from 22.14% to 21.43%. The results indicate that there was no increase in the comparison group's high-level responses to any of the individual

items of questionnaire, while there was no decrease in the treatment group's high-level responses for any of the items.

For three items, item 9 (actively think about what has been learned in class very frequently), item 10 (would try to obtain Spanish lessons elsewhere if it were not taught in school) and item 17 (would try to watch Spanish TV stations often if available), the comparison group showed higher results, both pre- and post-, than the treatment group. The comparison group also showed a higher result (28.57%) for item 14 (would definitely volunteer if the teacher wanted someone to do an extra assignment) in the pre- results, however, the post- results showed that there was no change in the comparison group's result while the treatment group's increased from 16.67% to 33.33%.

There are three items, item 12 (making sure everything is understood when it comes to homework), item 13 (trying hard to learn Spanish) and item 15 (rewriting assignments, correcting the mistakes), where the score of the comparison group did not change, while that of the treatment group increased. For item 12 the comparison group's score remained at 21.34%, while the treatment group's result increased by more than 11% from 22.22% to 33.33%. Item 13 also saw an increase of more than 11% (from 33.33 to 44.44%) for the treatment group while the score for the comparison group again remained unchanged at 21.43%. The treatment group's score increased by more than 6% (from to 27.78% to 33.33%) regarding item 15, while the comparison group's remained unchanged at 14.29%.

Paired t-tests were conducted to assess whether the difference between pre- and post-means for motivational levels was statistically significant. The treatment group's t-tests indicate that the post- mean (Mu =20.33, SD =3.29) was significantly greater than the pre-mean (Mu =19.11, SD =3.43), t(17) =-3.61, p =0.00. The comparison group's t-tests indicate that the post- mean (Mu =19.21, SD 4.74) was not significantly higher than the pre- mean (Mu =18.93, SD =4.75) for motivational levels, t(13) =-1.30, p =0.22. These results indicate a significant increase in the treatment group's motivational levels following the use of the ISs, while no significant change in the motivational levels of the comparison group during the same period of time.

An independent t-test (p<0.05) was conducted to compare the two groups' motivational levels (Table 4.18), in order to determine if there was a significant difference between their mean difference scores (μd). The mean difference scores were calculated by subtracting the pre- means from the post- means for each group.

**Table 4.18** Intergroup comparisons of means for motivational levels (n=32)

| | Treatment group (n=18) | Comparison group (n=14) |
|---|---|---|
| Mean difference ($\mu_d$) | 1.22 | 0.29 |
| SD | 1.44 | 0.83 |
| | Independent t-tests | |
| t calculated | 2.32 | |
| t critical | 2.05 | |
| p value | 0.03 | |

Independent t-tests: *df* =28; α = 0.05; H$_0$: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

The results of the independent t-test indicates that there was a significant difference between the treatment group's (Mu =1.22, SD =1.44) and the comparison group's (Mu =0.29, SD =0.83) levels of motivation, t (28) = 2.32, p= 0.03, indicating that the increase in the treatment group's levels of motivation, following the use of the ISs, was significant.

## 4.2 Learner Autonomy

This section presents data obtained using the Learner Autonomy questionnaire (Appendix D). This questionnaire was employed to investigate the second research question ("Do the intervention strategies influence learner autonomy and, if so, how?"). Both groups completed a pre- and post- autonomy questionnaire to investigate and categorise their levels (low/moderate/high) of autonomy in approaching the learning of the L2.

### 4.2.1  Autonomy level

The 14 items of the Learner Autonomy questionnaire contained dichotomous (yes/no) questions that were designed to measure the extent to which a student is an autonomous learner of Spanish. These items are listed in table 4.19. A "yes" response indicates that a learner is engaging in autonomous learning regarding a particular learning activity, while a "no" response signifies that a learner is not engaging in autonomous learning.

**Table 4.19** Items of the Learner Autonomy questionnaire

| Items |
|---|
| 1.   Do you revise what you have learnt regularly? |
| 2.   Do you use a dictionary when you do homework? |
| 3.   Do you read newspapers/magazines/web pages in Spanish? |
| 4.   Do you send emails or write letters in Spanish? |
| 5.   Do you watch movies/TV shows in Spanish? |
| 6.   Do you listen to Spanish songs? |
| 7.   Do you practise Spanish with friends? |
| 8.   Do you participate in class? |
| 9.   Do you ask questions if you do not understand? |
| 10. Do you try to work out the meaning of words you do not understand? |
| 11. Do you note down new words and their meaning? |
| 12. Do you make suggestions to the teacher? |
| 13. Do you take opportunities to speak Spanish? |
| 14. Do you discuss learning problems with classmates? |

#### 4.2.1.1 Treatment Group

Table 4.20 presents the treatment group's pre- and post- results for autonomy levels. The result frequencies are presented as percentages.

**Table 4.20** Treatment group: pre- and post- results for autonomy levels (*n*=18)

| | Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Item no. | Pre- % | Post- % | Pre- % | Post- % |
| 1 | 38.89 | 50.00 | 61.11 | 50.00 |
| 2 | 72.22 | 72.22 | 27.78 | 27.78 |
| 3 | 11.11 | 22.22 | 88.89 | 77.78 |
| 4 | 16.67 | 16.67 | 83.33 | 83.33 |
| 5 | 22.22 | 22.22 | 77.78 | 77.78 |
| 6 | 55.56 | 55.56 | 44.44 | 44.44 |
| 7 | 16.67 | 55.56 | 83.33 | 44.44 |
| 8 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 9 | 94.44 | 100.00 | 5.56 | 0.00 |
| 10 | 88.89 | 94.44 | 11.11 | 5.56 |
| 11 | 83.33 | 77.78 | 16.67 | 22.22 |
| 12 | 33.33 | 55.56 | 66.67 | 44.44 |
| 13 | 44.44 | 66.67 | 55.56 | 33.33 |
| 14 | 72.22 | 94.44 | 27.78 | 5.56 |
| **Totals** | **53.57%** | **63.10%** | **46.43%** | **36.90%** |

Yes = some/a degree of autonomy; No = no degree of autonomy

4.2.1.1.1 Results of the pre-questionnaire

The "yes" responses frequencies ranged from 11.11% to 100%, and the "no" frequencies ranged from 0.00% to 88.89%. The majority of responses (53.57%) were "yes" responses, with "no" responses making up 46.43% of total responses. Item 8 had the highest result frequency (100.00%), with each of the 18 respondents choosing the "yes" response, indicating that all of the students participated in class. There were also high percentages of "yes" responses for items 2, 9, 10, 11 and 14. These results indicated the following: 72.22% of the students used a dictionary when doing homework (item 2) and discussed learning problems with their classmates (item 14); 83.33% of learners noted down new words and their meaning (item 11); 88.89% of the group tried to work out the meaning of words that they did not understand (item 10); 94.44% asked questions if they did not understand something in class (item 9).

In relation to "no" responses, item 3 had the highest result frequency (88.89%) with fifteen of the students choosing the "no" response for this item. This result indicated that these fifteen students did not read articles/webpages in Spanish. There was also a high percentage of "no" responses for items 4, 5 and 7. These results indicated that 83.33% of the students did not send emails/letters in Spanish (item 4) or practise Spanish with friends (item 7) and 77.78% of the group did not watch movies/TV shows in Spanish (item 5).

4.2.1.1.2 Results of the post-questionnaire

Following the implementation of the ISs, the total of "yes" responses increased from 53.57% to 63.10% and "no" responses decreased from 46.43% to 36.90%, indicating that "yes" responses continued to have the highest frequency.

Out of fourteen items, "yes" responses stayed the same for five items (items 2, 4, 5, 6 and 8), increased for eight items (items 1, 3, 7, 9, 10, 12, 13 and 14) and decreased for one item (item 11). The single biggest increase took place regarding item 7 ("practising Spanish with friends") with an increase of 38.89% (from 16.67% to 55.56%). There were also considerable increases recorded regarding item 12 ("making suggestions to the teacher"), item 13 ("taking opportunities to speak Spanish") and item 14 ("discussing learning problems with classmates"). Item 12 increased by 22.23% (from 33.33% to 55.56%), item 13 also increased by 22.23% (from 44.44% to 66.67%) and item 14 increased by 22.22% (from 72.22% to 94.44%). The only decrease took place regarding item 11 ("noting down new words and their meaning"), with a decrease of 5.55% (from 83.33% to 77.78%).

The data analysis also involved categorising each individual student as having low-level, moderate-level or high-level autonomy, depending on their responses to the autonomy questionnaire. "Yes" responses were graded as 1 and "no" responses were graded as 0. These number values were then added up, in order to produce a student's total score out of 14. A high level of autonomy required a score between 10 and 14, a moderate-level score was between 5 and 9, and finally, a low-level score was that between 0 and 4. The treatment group's pre- and post- total scores are shown in table 4.21.

**Table 4.21** Treatment group: pre- and post- scores for autonomy (*n*=18)

|  | Total Score out of 14 | | Category of Autonomy | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Pre- | Post- | Pre- | Post- |
| Ana | 8 | 10 | Moderate | High |
| Bibiana | 7 | 10 | Moderate | High |
| Cristina | 7 | 7 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Elena | 9 | 10 | Moderate | High |
| Esperanza | 5 | 5 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Isabel | 7 | 8 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Juana | 5 | 7 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Leticia | 10 | 10 | High | High |
| Magda | 6 | 6 | Moderate | Moderate |
| María | 8 | 11 | Moderate | High |
| Pabla | 7 | 9 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Paula | 7 | 9 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Pilar | 9 | 10 | Moderate | High |
| Ramona | 12 | 12 | High | High |
| Salma | 4 | 7 | Low | Moderate |
| Silvia | 8 | 9 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Sofía | 10 | 11 | High | High |
| Yolanda | 6 | 8 | Moderate | Moderate |

Low-level = 0-4; moderate-level = 5-9; high-level = 10-14

The results indicate that the number of students in the high-level category increased (from three to eight), while the number of students decreased in the low-level (from one to zero) and moderate-level (from fourteen to ten) categories. The pre- results indicate that one student (Salma) was categorised as having a low level of autonomy; this student moved into the moderate category in the post- results. Three of the students (Leticia, Ramona and Sofía) were categorised as having high-level autonomy in the pre- results. The post- results indicate that five additional students (Ana, Bibiana, Elena, María and Pilar) moved into the high-level category also. The moderate-level category continued to have the highest number of students even with a decrease from fourteen to ten students, due to the fact that four students moved up to the high level category. While the overall scores of thirteen of the students increased in the post- results, only six of those students (Ana, Bibiana, Elena, María, Pilar and Salma) moved up into a higher category.

A paired t-test (p<0.05) was used to compare the pre- and post- results in order to determine if autonomy levels were significantly higher or lower following the treatment (Table 4.22).

**Table 4.22** Treatment group: comparison of means for pre- and post-autonomy levels (n=18)

|  | Pre- average score out of 14 | Post- average score out of 14 |
|---|---|---|
| Mean (Mu; $\mu$) | 7.50 | 8.83 |
| SD (S) | 2.01 | 1.89 |
| | **Paired t-tests** | |
| t calculated value | -5.22 | |
| t critical value | 2.11 | |
| p value | 0.00 | |

df = 17; α = 0.05; H$_0$: $\mu_d$ = 0.00

The t-test indicates that the post- mean (Mu =8.83, SD 1.89) was significantly greater than the pre- mean (Mu =7.50, SD =2.01) for autonomy levels, t(17)= -5.22, p =0.00, thus indicating that there was a significant increase in the treatment group's levels of autonomy following the use of the ISs.

**4.2.1.2 Comparison Group**

Table 4.23 presents the comparison group's pre- and post- results for autonomy levels.

**Table 4.23** Comparison group: Pre- and post- results for autonomy levels (*n*=14)

| Item no. | Yes | | No | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pre- % | Post- % | Pre- % | Post- % |
| 1 | 28.57 | 28.57 | 71.43 | 71.43 |
| 2 | 85.71 | 85.71 | 14.29 | 14.29 |
| 3 | 7.14 | 7.14 | 92.86 | 92.86 |
| 4 | 7.14 | 7.14 | 92.86 | 92.86 |
| 5 | 14.29 | 14.29 | 85.71 | 85.71 |
| 6 | 57.14 | 57.14 | 42.86 | 42.86 |
| 7 | 7.14 | 7.14 | 92.86 | 92.86 |
| 8 | 100.00 | 100.00 | 0.00 | 0.00 |
| 9 | 71.43 | 78.57 | 28.57 | 21.43 |
| 10 | 71.43 | 78.57 | 28.57 | 21.43 |
| 11 | 78.57 | 57.14 | 21.43 | 42.86 |
| 12 | 14.29 | 28.57 | 85.71 | 71.43 |
| 13 | 21.43 | 28.57 | 78.57 | 71.43 |
| 14 | 14.29 | 14.29 | 85.71 | 85.71 |
| **Totals** | **41.33** | **42.35** | **58.67** | **57.65** |

Yes = some/a degree of autonomy; No = no degree of autonomy

4.2.1.2.1 Results of the pre-questionnaire

The "yes" responses frequencies ranged from 7.14% to 100%, and the "no" frequencies ranged from 0.00% to 92.86%. The majority of responses (58.67%) were "no" responses, with "yes" responses making up 41.33% of total responses. Item 8 had the highest result frequency (100.00%), with each of the 14 respondents choosing the "yes" response, indicating that all of the students participated in class. There were also high percentages of "yes" responses for items 2, 9, 10 and 11. These results indicated the following: 85.71% of students used a dictionary when doing homework (item 2); 78.57% noted down new words and their meaning (item 11); 71.43% asked questions when they did not understand (item 9) and tried to work out the meaning of words (item 10).

In relation to "no" responses, items 3, 4 and 7 had the highest result frequencies (92.86%) with twelve of the students choosing the "no" response for these items. These results indicated these twelve students did not read articles/webpages in Spanish (item 3), did not write letters in Spanish (item 4) or practise Spanish with friends (item 7). There was also a high percentage of "no" responses for items 1, 5, 12, 13 and 14. These results indicated the following: 85.71% of the students did not watch TV/movies in Spanish (item

95

5), make suggestions to the teacher (item 12) or discuss learning difficulties with friends (item 14); 78.57% of the group did not take opportunities to learn Spanish (item 13); 71.43% did not regularly revise what they had learned (item 1).

4.2.1.2.2 Results of the post-questionnaire

Following the implementation of the ISs, the total of "yes" responses increased from 41.33% to 42.35%  and "no" responses decreased from 58.67 to 57.65%, indicating that "no" responses category continued to have the highest frequency.

Out of fourteen items, "yes" responses stayed the same for nine items (items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 14), increased for four items (items 9, 10, 12 and 13) and decreased for one item (item 11). The single biggest increase took place regarding item 12 ("making suggestions to the teacher") with an increase of 14.28% (from 14.29% to 28.57%). Item 9 ("asking questions if not understanding") and item 10 ("trying to work out the meaning of words") each increased by 7.14% (from 71.43% to 78.57%), item 13 ("taking opportunities to speak Spanish") also increased by 7.14% (from 21.43% to 28.57%). The only decrease took place regarding item 11 ("noting down new words and their meaning"), with a decrease of 21.43% (from 78.57% to 57.14%).

The comparison group students were was also grouped into categories of autonomy (low/moderate/high). Table 4.24 presents individual student's scores out of 14 and their categories of autonomy (low/moderate/high).

Table 4.24 Comparison group: pre- and post- scores for autonomy (*n*=14)

|  | Total Score out of 14 | | Category of Autonomy | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Pre- | Post- | Pre- | Post- |
| Adriana | 6 | 7 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Alba | 2 | 2 | Low | Low |
| Alicia | 7 | 7 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Antonia | 5 | 5 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Blanca | 5 | 5 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Camila | 4 | 5 | Low | Moderate |
| Carla | 10 | 11 | High | High |
| Gabriela | 5 | 4 | Moderate | Low |
| Imelda | 6 | 6 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Olivia | 6 | 6 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Paca | 10 | 10 | High | High |
| Pepa | 5 | 5 | Moderate | Moderate |
| Roberta | 5 | 4 | Moderate | Low |
| Tatiana | 5 | 6 | Moderate | Moderate |

Low-level = 0-4; moderate-level = 5-9; high-level = 10-14

The results indicated that, while the scores of six of the students (Adriana, Camila, Carla, Gabriela, Roberta and Tatiana) differed in the post- results, only three of those students (Camila, Gabriela and Roberta) moved into a different category. Gabriela and Roberta, who had been categorised as moderately autonomous, moved into the low-level category in the post- results. Camila, moved from the low- to the moderate-level category. The moderate-level category continued to have the highest number of students, even with a decrease from ten to nine.

A paired t-test (p<0.05) was conducted to determine if the comparison group's autonomy levels differed on the post- tests (Table 4.25).

Table 4.25 Comparison group: Comparison of means for pre- and post- autonomy levels ($n$=14)

|  | Pre- average score out of 30 | Post- average score out of 30 |
|---|---|---|
| Mean (Mu; $\mu$) | 5.79 | 5.93 |
| SD (S) | 2.12 | 2.34 |
| Paired t-tests | | |
| t calculated value | -0.81 | |
| t critical value | 2.16 | |
| p value | 0.43 | |

(df = 13, α = 0.05, H$_o$: $\mu_d$ = 0)

The t-test indicates that the post- mean (Mu =5.93, SD 2.34) does not differ significantly from the pre- mean (Mu =5.79, SD =2.12) for autonomy levels, t(13) =-0.81, p =0.43, indicating that there was no significant change in levels of autonomy for the comparison group over the period of time in which the treatment group were engaged in the experiment.

## 4.2.1.3 Intergroup Comparisons

Table 4.26 Overview of results for autonomy levels (n=32)

|  | Treatment group | | Comparison group | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Pre- | Post- | Pre- | Post- |
| **Categories of autonomy** | | | | |
| Low-level category | 5.56 | 0.00 | 14.29 | 21.43 |
| Moderate-level category | 77.78 | 55.56 | 71.43 | 62.29 |
| High-level category | 16.67 | 44.44 | 14.29 | 14.29 |
| **Result frequencies** | | | | |
| "Yes" responses | 53.57 | 63.10 | 41.33 | 42.35 |
| "No" responses | 46.43 | 36.90 | 58.67 | 57.65 |

The results indicate that the frequency of "yes" responses of the treatment group exceeded that of the comparison group by 12.24% at the start of the experiment, but this figure went up to 20.75% at the end of the treatment group's intervention period. The treatment group's high-level responses increased by 9.53% (from 53.57% to 63.10%), while the comparison group's increased by 1.02% (from 41.33% to 42.35%).

The majority of students in both groups were categorised as having moderate-level autonomy in pre- and post- results. The number of treatment group students categorised as having high-level autonomy increased by 27.77% (from 16.67% to 4.44%),while low-level autonomy decreased from 5.56% to 0.00% and the moderate category decreased also from 77.78% to 55.56%. The number of comparison group students categorised as having low-level autonomy increased (from 14.29% to 21.43%), while the moderate category decreased (from 71.43% to 62.29%). There was no change in the comparison group's high-level motivation (14.29%) at the end of the treatment group's intervention period.

The comparison group showed a higher "yes" response frequency (85.71% ) to item 2 (use of a dictionary when doing homework), in both pre- and post- results, than the treatment group (72.22%).  The comparison group showed a higher percentage (57.14%) of "yes" responses for item 6 (listening to Spanish songs) also, again both pre- and post-, than the treatment group (55.56%). There was a decrease between pre- and post- in both groups regarding item 11 ("note-taking"), with the comparison group's result decreasing from 83.33% to 77.78% and the treatment group's decreasing from 78.57% to 57.14%.

For item 13 (taking opportunities to speak Spanish), the score of the comparison group went up by 7.11% (from 21.43% to 28.54%) while that of the treatment group increased by more than 22% from 44.44% to 66.67%. The score for the comparison group remained unchanged at 14.29% for item 14 (discussing learning problems with classmate), while that of the treatment group again increased by more than 22% from 72.22% to 94.44%.

Paired t-tests were conducted to assess whether the difference between pre- and post-means for autonomy levels was statistically significant. The treatment group's t-tests indicate that the post- mean (Mu =8.83, SD =1.89) was significantly greater than the pre-mean (Mu =7.50, SD =2.01), t(17) =-5.22, p =0.00.  The comparison group's t-tests indicate that the post- mean (Mu =5.93, SD 2.34) was not significantly higher than the pre-mean (Mu =5.79, SD =2.12) for motivational levels, t(13) =-0.81, p =0.43. These results indicate a significant increase in the treatment group's autonomy levels following the use of

the ISs, while no significant change in the autonomy levels of the comparison group during the same period of time.

An independent t-test (p<0.05) was conducted to compare the two groups' autonomy levels (Table 4.27), in order to determine if there was a significant difference between their mean difference scores ($\mu d$). The mean difference scores were calculated by subtracting the pre- means from the post- means for each group.

**Table 4.27** Intergroup comparisons of means for autonomy levels (n=32)

| | Treatment group (n=18) | Comparison group (n=14) |
|---|---|---|
| Mean difference ($\mu_d)$ | 1.33 | 0.14 |
| SD | 1.08 | 0.66 |
| | **Independent t-tests** | |
| t calculated | 3.83 | |
| t critical | 2.05 | |
| p value | 0.00 | |

Independent t-tests: $df$ =29, $\alpha$ = 0.05, H$_o$: $\mu_1 = \mu_2$

The independent t-test indicates that there was a significant difference between the treatment group's (Mu =1.33, SD =1.08) and the comparison group's (Mu =0.14, SD =0.66) levels of autonomy, t (29) = 3.83, p= 0.00, indicating that the treatment group's autonomy levels increased significantly subsequent to the use of the ISs.

## 4.3 Follow-up Survey

As stated in the introduction to this results chapter, the experiment ended in the last week of the academic year and was followed by a three-month summer break. Two of the questionnaires (Learner Motivation and Learner Autonomy questionnaires) were later re-administered to the treatment group in a follow-up survey, in order to assess whether any gains observed following the treatment in levels of autonomy or motivation were maintained. The follow-up survey took place seven months after the experiment concluded, when the students were four months into the next academic year (fifth year), at which time they had a different teacher and no longer engaged with the ISs.

### 4.3.1 Motivation

The follow-up results regarding the treatment group's motivational levels are presented in table 4.28.

**Table 4.28** Follow-up results for motivational levels (*n*=18)

| Item no. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|----------|--------|--------|--------|
| 9 | 50.00% | 50.00% | 0.00% |
| 10 | 55.56% | 38.89% | 5.56% |
| 11 | 5.56% | 16.67% | 77.78% |
| 12 | 22.22% | 50.00% | 27.78% |
| 13 | 16.67% | 38.89% | 44.44% |
| 14 | 16.67% | 50.00% | 33.33% |
| 15 | 16.67% | 50.00% | 33.33% |
| 16 | 22.22% | 55.56% | 22.22% |
| 17 | 44.44% | 44.44% | 11.11% |
| 18 | 22.22% | 50.00% | 27.78% |
| Totals | 27.22% | 44.44% | 28.33% |

1 = Low-level category; 2 = moderate-level category; 3 = high-level category

Responses frequencies pertaining to the low-level category ranged from 5.56% to 55.56%, frequencies in the moderate-level category ranged from 16.67% to 55.56%, and high-level response frequencies ranged from 0.00% to 77.78%.

The main finding is that there was very little change in motivational levels. The total percentage of high-level responses (28.33) decreased by 1.11%. The percentage of low-level responses (27.22%) increased by 1.11%, while, moderate-level responses (44.44%) remained unchanged. The moderate category continued to have the highest number of responses. In terms of categorising each individual student as having low-level, moderate-

level or high-level motivation, the treatment group's pre- and post- total scores are shown in table 4.29.

**Table 4.29** Follow-up scores for motivation (*n*=18)

|  | Total Score out of 30 | | | Category of Motivation | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
|  | Pre- | Post- | Follow-up | Pre- | Post- | Follow-up |
| Ana | 16 | 17 | 16 | Low | Moderate | **Low** |
| Bibiana | 21 | 22 | 22 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| Cristina | 24 | 24 | 24 | High | High | High |
| Elena | 19 | 20 | 20 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| Esperanza | 21 | 21 | 21 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| Isabel | 16 | 18 | 19 | Low | Moderate | Moderate |
| Juana | 12 | 16 | 16 | Low | Low | Low |
| Leticia | 24 | 27 | 27 | High | High | High |
| Magda | 14 | 16 | 14 | Low | Low | Low |
| María | 24 | 24 | 24 | High | High | High |
| Pabla | 18 | 18 | 18 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| Paula | 20 | 20 | 20 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| Pilar | 21 | 24 | 23 | Moderate | High | **Moderate** |
| Ramona | 16 | 17 | 16 | Low | Moderate | **Low** |
| Salma | 17 | 17 | 17 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| Silvia | 20 | 24 | 24 | Moderate | High | High |
| Sofía | 21 | 21 | 21 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| Yolanda | 20 | 20 | 20 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |

Low-level: 10-16, moderate-level: 17-23; high-level: 24-30

The vast majority of students scored exactly the same number of points as in the post-test. In the case of the five students where changes took place (Ana, Isabel, Magda, Pilar and Ramona), they were very small with a maximum decrease of two points. Three of the five students (Ana, Pilar and Ramona) moved down a category in their motivation as a result of these changes.

The results indicated that the number of students in the low-level category of motivation increased from two to four students. The two students who moved into the low-level category (Ana and Ramona) had also been in this category in the pre- results. Isabel, who had moved from the low- to moderate-level category, maintained her gain in motivation. Pilar, who had moved out of the moderate- into the high-level category, returned to the moderate-level category, decreasing the number of students in the high-level category from five to four. Silvia, who had also moved from the moderate- to the high-level category, maintained her gain. The number of students in the high-level category (four) equalled those in the low category. Previously, the number of students with high levels of motivation had outnumbered those with low levels (by five to two). While the five of the students' overall scores changed in the follow-up results (Ana, Isabel, Magda, Pilar and

Ramona), only three of those students (Ana, Pilar and Ramona) moved into a different category of motivation.

A paired t-test (p<0.05) was conducted to determine if the treatment group's motivational levels were significantly higher or lower seven months after the period of time in which the ISs were introduced to the treatment group (Table 4.30).

**Table 4.30** Comparison of means for post- and follow-up motivational levels (*n*=18)

| | Post- average score out of 30 | Follow-up average score out of 30 |
|---|---|---|
| Mean (Mu; $\mu$) | 20.33 | 20.11 |
| SD | 3.29 | 3.51 |
| | Paired t-tests | |
| t calculated value | -1.46 | |
| t critical value | 2.11 | |
| p value | 0.16 | |

df = 17; α = 0.05; H$_o$: $\mu_d$ = 0.00

The t-test indicated that the post- mean (Mu =20.33, SD 3.29) was not significantly higher than the follow-up mean (Mu =20.11, SD =3.51) for motivational levels, t(17) =-1.46, p =0.16, indicating that there was not a statistically significant difference between the follow-up and post- means. These results indicated that, overall, the gains in the treatment group's motivation were maintained seven months after the experiment was completed.

### 4.3.2 Autonomy

The follow-up results regarding the treatment group's autonomy levels are presented in table 4.31.

**Table 4.31** Follow-up results for autonomy levels (*n*=18)

| Item no. | Yes | No |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 50.00% | 50.00% |
| 2 | 72.22% | 27.78% |
| 3 | 22.22% | 77.78% |
| 4 | 16.67% | 83.33% |
| 5 | 22.22% | 77.78% |
| 6 | 50.00% | 50.00% |
| 7 | 55.56% | 44.44% |
| 8 | 100.00% | 0.00% |
| 9 | 94.44% | 5.56% |
| 10 | 94.44% | 5.56% |
| 11 | 77.78% | 22.22% |
| 12 | 55.56% | 44.44% |
| 13 | 61.11% | 38.89% |
| 14 | 94.44% | 5.56% |
| **Totals** | **61.90%** | **38.10%** |

Yes = some/a degree of autonomy; No = no degree of autonomy

The "yes" responses frequencies ranged from 16.67% to 100%, and the "no" frequencies ranged from 0.00% to 83.33%.

The main finding is that there was very little change in autonomy levels. The total of "yes" responses decreased from 63.10% to 61.90% and the "no" responses increased from 36.90% to 38.10%. In terms of categorising each individual student as having low-level, moderate-level or high-level autonomy, the treatment group's follow-up total scores are shown in table 4.32.

**Table 4.32** Follow-up scores for autonomy (*n*=18)

| | Total score out of 14 | | | Category of Autonomy | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Pre- | Post- | Follow-up | Pre- | Post- | Follow-up |
| Ana | 8 | 10 | 10 | Moderate | High | High |
| Bibiana | 7 | 10 | 9 | Moderate | High | Moderate |
| Cristina | 7 | 7 | 7 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| Elena | 9 | 10 | 10 | Moderate | High | High |
| Esperanza | 5 | 5 | 5 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| Isabel | 7 | 8 | 8 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| Juana | 5 | 7 | 7 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| Leticia | 10 | 10 | 10 | High | High | high |
| Magda | 6 | 6 | 6 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| María | 8 | 11 | 9 | Moderate | High | Moderate |
| Pabla | 7 | 9 | 9 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| Paula | 7 | 9 | 9 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| Pilar | 9 | 10 | 10 | Moderate | High | High |
| Ramona | 12 | 12 | 12 | High | High | High |
| Salma | 4 | 7 | 7 | Low | Moderate | Moderate |
| Silvia | 8 | 9 | 9 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |
| Sofía | 10 | 11 | 11 | High | High | High |
| Yolanda | 6 | 8 | 8 | Moderate | Moderate | Moderate |

Low-level = 0-4; moderate-level = 5-9; high-level = 10-14

Sixteen out of the eighteen students scored exactly the same number of points as in the post-test. One student's score dropped by one point (Bibiana) and another student's by two (María), resulting in a change in category in each case. The results indicated that the number of students in the high-level category decreased, while the numbers in the moderate-level category increased. Bibiana and María, who had moved into the high-level category in the post- results, returned to the moderate-level category. The moderate-level category continued to have the highest number of students with an increase from ten to twelve.

A paired t-test (p<0.05) was conducted to determine if the treatment group's autonomy levels were significantly higher or lower seven months after the period of time in which the ISs were introduced to the treatment group (Table 4.33).

**Table 4.33** Comparison of means for post- and follow-up autonomy levels (n=18)

|  | Post- average score out of 14 | Follow-up average score out of 14 |
|---|---|---|
| Mean (Mu; $\mu$) | 8.83 | 8.67 |
| SD (S) | 1.89 | 1.78 |
| **Paired t-tests** | | |
| t calculated value | -1.37 | |
| t critical value | 2.11 | |
| p value | 0.19 | |

df = 17; α = 0.05; H$_0$: $\mu_d$ = 0.00

The t-test indicated that the post- mean (Mu =8.83, SD 1.89) was not significantly greater than the follow-up mean (Mu =8.67, SD =1.78) for autonomy levels, t(17)= -1.37, p =0.19, indicating that there was not a statistically significant difference between the follow-up and post- means. These results indicated that, overall, the treatment group's gains in levels of autonomy were maintained seven months after the experiment was completed.

## 4.4 Goal-Setting and Evaluations

The data presented in this section was obtained using the Goal-Setting and Evaluation record (Appendix E), which is based on a goal-setting record that was developed by Iowa State University. Only the treatment group completed this record, which was used to support the implementation of the second IS (*promotion of self-evaluation).* Table 4.34 lists the items contained in the Goal-Setting and Evaluation record.

**Table 4.34** Items of the Goal-Setting and Evaluation Record

| Item no. | Page 1: Goal-Setting |
|---|---|
| 1 | List three realistic goals that you want to achieve in __ weeks' time |
| 2 | Describe how you will achieve each of these goals |
| | **Page 2: Assessment of Goals** |
| 3 | Review your personal goals. For each goal, indicate if you are meeting it |
| 4 | If you are meeting that goal, describe ways in which you will continue to do so. If you are not meeting that goal, indicate what you will change to make sure that goal is met |
| 5 | Please make any changes to your goals or adjust them if necessary. Please write your redefined goals |
| | **Page 3: Final Session** |
| 6 | Were the goals met? |
| 7 | Why or why not? |
| 8 | What can you do differently in future and what will stay the same for you? |
| 9 | Teacher feedback |

The record consists of three pages or sections. The first page invites students to state three personal learning goals and to formulate plans to achieve those goals. The second page asks learners to review their progress, adjust their goals (if necessary) and reflect on what they will continue doing or what they will do differently with the aim of achieving their goals. The third page allows respondents to reflect on why they are, or are not, achieving their goals and what, if anything, they will do differently in future; this page also features a progress feedback section for the teacher to complete in order to provide learners with feedback.

The comparison group covered learning content from chapters one and three of their textbook[7]. The treatment group was asked to cover the same learning content as the comparison group in order to control dependent variables as much as possible. However, the treatment group had the option to cover the content using materials that they sourced themselves, either to supplement the textbook or to use instead of it. The treatment group used the learning objectives listed in their textbook as a guide for setting personal learning goals (Table 4.35).

**Table 4.35** Learning objectives as specified in the textbook

| Learning Aims (Weeks 1-7) | Learning Aims (Weeks 8-16) | |
|---|---|---|
| • Talk about yourself | • Talk about school subjects and timetables | • Describe your town/village |
| • Talk about your last holidays and your plans for the New Year | • Talk about your school, classroom and uniform | • Discuss positive/negative aspects of living in a town or village |
| • Give and ask for personal information | • Talk about what you do every day and at the weekend | • Talk about your house/flat and area where you live |
| • Introduce people | • Talk about what you are doing at the moment | • Talk about your house and your room |
| • Use "usted" (formal you) | • Talk about what you did yesterday and during the weekend | • Describe places in the past |
| • Talk about your family | | |
| • Describe people and animals | | |
| • Talk about nationalities | | |

Since the learning aims for weeks one to seven were different to those for weeks eight to sixteen, students completed the Goal-Setting and Evaluation record in two sessions during class time.

As regards the first session, students were given the first set of learning aims (for weeks one to seven) to assist them in setting their personal learning goals. They completed the first page of the record in week one of the experiment, filled out the second page in week four and the third page in week seven.

As regards the second goal-setting session, the treatment group was given the second set of learning aims (for weeks eight to sixteen) in order to set new learning goals. Students filled out the first page of the record in week eight, page two in week twelve and page three in the final week of the experiment (week sixteen).

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[7] The comparison group used a Leaving Certificate textbook during class (Aventura Nueva 3, by Martín and Ellis).

Results of the Goal-Setting and Evaluation record are presented in two sections: 1) results of the first goal-setting session; and 2) results of the second goal-setting session. Firstly, however, the different forms the goal-setting process appeared to take are represented graphically using a diagram which was designed by the researcher (Figure 4.1); thus the diagram shows the goal-setting and evaluation process.

**Figure 4.1** Goal-setting and Evaluation Process
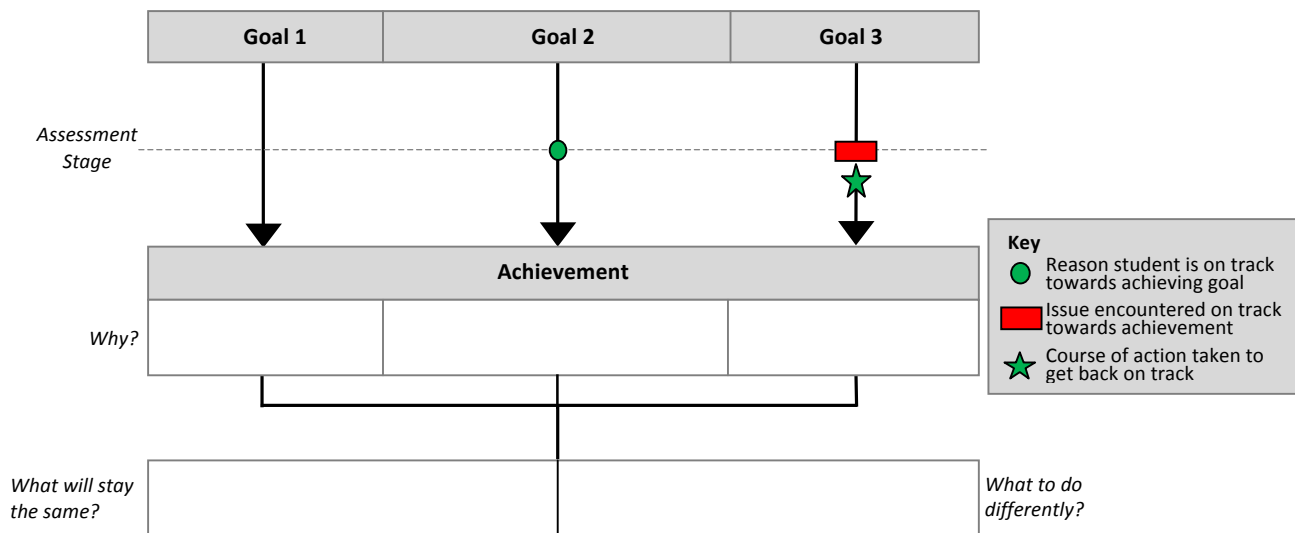


The first section of the diagram concerns the "journey" that a student takes towards achieving learning goals; this journey is represented by an arrow/line. Along the journey, there is an assessment stage where students review their progress towards achieving their goals. Where a student fails to provide feedback at this stage, but goes on to achieve her goal, her journey is represented by a continuous arrow/line only (Figure 4.1: Goal 1). Where a student successfully provides feedback regarding why she is on course to achieve her goal, this is signified by a green dot (Goal 2) accompanied by the student's reflection in text. Where a student is not on track towards achieving her goal by the assessment stage, this is signified by a red rectangular symbol (along with the student's reflection) and a break in the line (or journey) towards achievement (Goal 3). The course of action which that student then takes to get back on track is signified by a green star (and detailed in text) and the arrow/line then continues towards achievement.

The next section of the diagram is the achievement stage, which includes students' reflections on why they successfully achieved (or not) their learning goals. The final section of the diagram concerns students' reflections on future learning, with regard to what they will continue doing and what they will do differently.

### 4.4.1 Results of the First Goal-Setting Session

Results of the first goal-setting session (Appendix F) indicate that all eighteen members of the treatment group achieved their personal learning goals. This section presents the results in three parts: 1) students' reflections on their progress towards achieving their goals at the assessment stage in week four; 2) students' reflections on goal attainment in week seven; and 3) students' reflections on future learning in week seven, as regards what to continue doing and what to do differently.

#### 4.4.1.1 Assessment of Progress towards Achieving Goals

Students assessed their progress towards attaining learning goals in week four of the experiment. Thirteen out of eighteen students indicated that they were on track to achieving their learning goals. Out of the remaining five students, four (Bibiana, Elena, Esperanza and Juana) indicated that they were not progressing towards achieving one of their goals by the assessment stage, and one student (Ana) indicated that she was not on course to achieve two goals by that stage. As regards students who were on course to achieve their goals at the assessment stage, their reasons are summarised in Table 4.36.

**Table 4.36** Session 1: Learner reasons for progressing towards goal achievement

| Learner reasons | No. of Students |
|---|---|
| Working in groups, participating in group activities | 8 |
| Memorising/studying content (e.g. grammar, vocabulary) | 5 |
| Enjoying learning activities | 4 |
| Practising speaking Spanish | 4 |
| Receiving help/guidance from teacher | 2 |
| Selecting good quality materials, using materials well | 2 |
| Putting in a lot of effort, persevering | 2 |
| Following planned tasks | 2 |
| Paying attention to goals | 1 |
| Practising writing Spanish | 1 |
| Finding content easy | 1 |

Eight out of eighteen students (Cristina, Esperanza, Pabla, Paula, Pilar, Ramona, Sofía and Yolanda) indicated that were on course to achieve one or more goals by the assessment stage due to participating in group activities. Pilar and Paula suggested that they would continue working on a group project in order to stay on course to achieve their goals. Cristina and Sofía indicated that working in groups was useful for generating and sharing ideas. According to Yolanda, her group supported each other by peer correcting, while Esperanza felt that her group worked well together by engaging in learning games. Describing how she would continue towards achieving her goal, Ramona said "I will keep working with my group". Pabla suggested that her group would continue "helping each other" in order to progress towards achieving their goals.

Four students (Bibiana, Cristina, Isabel and Pilar) indicated that they were on target to meet their learning goals because they enjoyed the learning activities that they took part in. Bibiana indicated that she enjoyed participating in learning games, describing them as "fun"; however she did not describe these activities. Pilar suggested that she enjoyed participating in role-plays and quizzes, and Cristina expressed a fondness for language quizzes also. Isabel indicated that she enjoyed taking part in her group's tasks, describing them as "fun ways to learn", but like Bibiana, did not detail the activities.

Two students (Leticia and Sofía) suggested that the teacher kept them on the path to achievement. Leticia indicated the teacher explained grammar structures to her, while Sofía stated that the teacher corrected her written work.

Two students (Leticia and Paula) suggested that making good use of learning materials led them towards goal achievement. Leticia indicated that she made good use of online resources, while Paula claimed that she selected learning materials which were good quality.

Other reasons attributed to being on target by the assessment stage include: practising speaking Spanish (Cristina, María, Sofía and Yolanda); putting in a lot of effort and persevering (Juana and Leticia); memorising/studying grammar and vocabulary (Ana, Bibiana, María, Paula and Pilar); following planned tasks (Magda and Silvia); paying attention to learning goals (Salma); practising writing Spanish (Yolanda); and finding the learning content easy (Elena).

As previously stated, five students (Ana, Bibiana, Elena, Esperanza and Juana) indicated that they were not on course to achieve their learning goals at the assessment

stage. Four out of the five students (Bibiana, Elena, Esperanza and Juana) indicated that they were not progressing towards achieving one of their goals and one student (Ana) indicated that she was not on course to achieve two goals. Table 4.37 summarises issues that students felt prevented them from being on target and the courses of action taken to get back on track.

**Table 4.37** Session 1: Issues encountered on track towards achievement and courses of action taken

| Issue | Course of action |
|---|---|
| Neglecting the relevant learning content | • Devote more time to learning the relevant content<br>• Make a start on learning the relevant content<br>• Adjust learning goal<br>• Ask for teacher's help |
| Experiencing difficulties in learning the content | • Ask for group's help<br>• Adjust learning goal |
| Not satisfied with level of progress | • Devote more time to learning the relevant content |

Four students (Ana, Bibiana, Elena and Juana) felt that they were not on course to achieve their learning goals because they neglected the relevant learning content. Ana and Bibiana indicated that they did not study enough vocabulary, while Elena and Juana said they did not study the verb tenses necessary for progressing towards achievement. One student (Ana) expressed difficulty with grammar as a reason for not meeting a learning goal. Ana indicated that she was having difficulty grasping a verb form. One student (Esperanza) indicated that she was not satisfied with her progress towards achievement at the assessment stage. Esperanza stated that she was unhappy with her progress despite "working hard" to achieve her goal.

Each of these five students decided to take courses of action to get back on track towards realising their goals. Two students (Ana and Esperanza) decided to devote more time to learning relevant content and two students (Ana and Juana) decided to ask for help from others (Ana decided to ask for her group's help, while Juana decided to ask the teacher to help her). Two students (Ana and Bibiana) decided to adjust their learning goals and one student (Elena) decided to make a start on learning the relevant content.

**4.4.1.2 Reflections on Goal Attainment**

As previously stated, all eighteen members of the treatment group stated that they had achieved their goals by week seven. Students were asked to reflect on why they were successful; their reasons are summarised in Table 4.38.

**Table 4.38** Session 1: Learner reflections on goal achievement

| Learner Reasons for Success | No. of Students |
|---|---|
| Put in a lot of effort, persevered | 7 |
| Received help from group, worked well as a group | 6 |
| Enjoyed learning tasks | 5 |
| Received help/guidance from teacher | 4 |
| Found content easy, already familiar with content | 3 |
| Practised speaking Spanish | 3 |
| Memorised/studied content (e.g. grammar, vocabulary) | 3 |
| Followed planned tasks | 3 |
| Used materials well | 2 |
| Paid attention to goals | 1 |
| Adjusted plans | 1 |
| Managed time well | 1 |
| Translated texts from L1 to L2 | 1 |

Seven students (Ana, Isabel, Juana, Magda, Pabla, Ramona and Yolanda) indicated that putting in a lot of effort and/or perseverance helped them to attain their personal goals. Juana stated "[I] did not stop until I was happy that I understood it", indicating that she persisted until she learned the content. Reflecting on why she achieved her goal, Yolanda responded "plenty of practice and commitment". Ana, Isabel, Magda, Pabla and Ramona indicated that they were successful because they put a lot of effort into achieving learning goals, but did not provide further details.

Six students (Ana, Bibiana, Esperanza, Paula, Ramona and Silvia) indicated that other members of their group supported them in achieving their goals. Paula stated that her group "helped each other to stay motivated". Silvia indicated that her group supported her by correcting her work. Ana, Bibiana, Esperanza and Ramona did not provide details regarding how their groups helped them to achieve their goals.

Five out of the eighteen (Esperanza, Isabel, Leticia, María and Paula) students indicated that they achieved their learning goals because they enjoyed the learning activities that they took part in. Esperanza and Leticia indicated that they enjoyed learning games. The other three students (Isabel, María and Paula) did not go into detail regarding which learning activities they considered enjoyable.

Four students (Esperanza, Isabel, Paula and Ramona) indicated that input from the teacher was important in their goal attainment. Paula's comment ("the teacher was very helpful and kept us right") suggested that the teacher offered guidance to students. Ramona's comment ("the teacher encouraged us") suggested that the teacher motivated students to achieve their goals. Esperanza and Isabel felt that their teacher assisted them in achieving their goals, but did not elaborate on their reasons.

Three students (Bibiana, Cristina and Elena) indicated that they attained their goals because they found the learning content easy and/or remembered a lot of the content from previous academic years. Bibiana's comment ("I found this easy enough") indicated that she did not have difficulties in learning the content, while Cristina's comment ("it came back to me") and Elena's comment ("this was mostly revision") indicated that they achieved their goals because they had previously covered a great deal of the learning content.

Other reasons that students attributed their goal achievement to include the following: practising speaking Spanish (Cristina, Leticia and Silvia); memorising verb tenses and vocabulary (Cristina, Elena and María); following planned learning tasks (Juana, Pilar and Sofía); making efficient use of learning resources (Juana and Leticia); paying attention to learning goals (Salma); adjusting plans to achieve goals (Bibiana); managing time well by allocating sufficient time to learning tasks (Pilar); and translating texts from L1 to L2 (Elena).

### 4.4.1.3 Future Learning

After students had reflected on their goal achievement, they were asked to contemplate their future learning as regards what they would continue doing and what they would do differently. Their suggestions are summarised in Table 4.39.

**Table 4.39** Session 1: Learner reflections on future learning

| What to continue doing | No. of Students | What to do differently | No. of Students |
|---|---|---|---|
| Working in groups | 9 | Ask for teacher's help more often | 4 |
| Practising speaking Spanish | 2 | Manage time better | 2 |
| Setting learning goals | 2 | Plan more speaking activities | 2 |
| Maintaining a good work ethic | 1 | Plan more listening activities, develop listening skills | 1 |
| Using a variety of learning resources | 1 | Plan more reading activities | 1 |
| Implementing all aspects of new learning approach | 1 | Plan more writing activities | 1 |
| Planning learning tasks | 1 | Incorporate more individual work | 1 |
| | | Pay more attention to learning goals | 1 |
| | | Put more effort into planning learning tasks | 1 |
| | | Source larger quantity of learning materials | 1 |
| | | Incorporate new learning content more often (rather than previously learned content) | 1 |

**What to continue doing:**

Nine out of the eighteen students' (Ana, Elena, Isabel, Juana, Magda, María, Pabla, Silvia and Sofía) suggested that they would continue working in groups in future. Elena, Juana and Magda stated that they would continue planning learning tasks in groups. Isabel, Juana and Sofía indicated that they would continue generating and sharing ideas with their group members. María and Pabla suggested that they would continue doing group projects. Ana indicated that she would continue to ask for support from her group members. Isabel said that her group would continue to "trust each other". Silvia did not go into detail regarding how her group would continue working together.

One student (Bibiana) indicated that she would continue putting in a lot of effort and maintain a good work ethic, stating "[I'll] continue to do my best". One student (Pilar) suggested that she would continue using a variety of learning resources ("e.g. book, internet, CDs, magazines"). Paula indicated that she would continue to implement all aspects of the new learning approach, stating "we'll continue as we are because it's working well, [I would] change nothing" and "I like doing things this new way. It's better".

Students also indicated that they would continue planning their learning tasks (Leticia), practising speaking Spanish (Esperanza and Cristina) and setting learning goals (Salma and Yolanda). One student (Ramona) did not suggest anything that she would continue doing.

**What to do differently:**

Four students (Isabel, Juana, Sofia and Yolanda) indicated that they would ask for the teacher's help more often in future. Isabel indicated that she would ask the teacher to

correct her work and Juana said that she would seek the teacher's help. Sofía and Yolanda indicated that they would ask the teacher for more feedback and advice, Sofía stating "I think it'll help us so much".

Two students (Pilar and Ramona) suggested that they would manage their time better. Pilar indicated that she would allot a specific amount of time to each activity, while Ramona suggested giving all topics the same amount of time and attention.

Two students (María and Pabla) suggested that it would be important to participate in more speaking activities, while one student (Magda) expressed a desire to plan more listening activities, asserting that her group needed to improve their listening comprehension. Similarly, students indicated that they would plan more reading (Juana) and writing activities (Esperanza).

One student (Silvia) suggested that she would incorporate more individual work into her lessons. While this student also suggested continuing with group activities in future, she felt that it would be beneficial to work independently as well.

Students also indicated that they would pay more attention to learning goals (Ana) and put more effort into planning learning tasks (Bibiana). One student (Cristina) suggested that she would source a larger quantity of materials in future and another student (Elena) indicated that she would spend more time studying new vocabulary, rather than previously learned content. Two students (Leticia and Paula) did not suggest anything that they would do differently.


**4.4.2 Results of the Second Goal-Setting Session**

Results of the second goal-setting session (Appendix G) indicate that all eighteen students achieved their personal learning goals for a second time. Again, the following sections examine: 1) students' progress towards achieving their goals by the assessment stage in week twelve; 2) students' reflections on achieving their goals in week sixteen; and finally, 3) their suggestions regarding what they would continue doing and what they would do differently in future in week sixteen.

## 4.4.2.1 Assessment of Progress towards Achieving Goals

During week twelve, students assessed their progress towards attaining their goals. Seventeen out of eighteen members of the treatment group indicated that they were on course to achieve their learning goals, indicating that the number of students on course by the assessment stage increased by four (from thirteen to seventeen students). Students' reasons for being on target to attain their goals are summarised in Table 4.40.

**Table 4.40** Session 2: Learner reasons for progressing towards goal achievement

| Learner Reasons | No. of Students | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| | $1^{st}$ session | $2^{nd}$ session |
| Working in groups, participating in group activities | 8 | 8 |
| Memorising/studying content (e.g. grammar, vocabulary) | 5 | 5 |
| Putting in a lot of effort, persevering | 2 | 5 |
| Selecting good quality learning materials, using materials well | 2 | 3 |
| Following planned tasks | 2 | 3 |
| Practising speaking Spanish | 4 | 2 |
| Practising writing Spanish | 1 | 2 |
| Finding content easy, already familiar with content | 1 | 1 |
| Receiving help/guidance from teacher | 2 | 1 |
| Paying attention to goals | 1 | 1 |
| Enjoying learning activities | 4 | 1 |
| Managing time well | 0 | 1 |

All of the categories (or reasons) for being on course to achieve goals were the same as those identified in the first-goal setting session; an additional category (managing time well) was also identified. There were no changes in the numbers of students indicating that they were on target to achieve their goals for the following reasons: working in groups (eight students), memorising/studying grammar and vocabulary (five students), paying attention to goals (one student) and finding the content easy to learn (one student). There were increases in the numbers of students giving the following reasons: putting in a lot of effort and persevering (from two to five students), following planned tasks (from two to three students), using materials well (from two to three students) and practising writing Spanish (from one to two students). Finally, there were decreases in the numbers of students giving the following reasons: practising speaking Spanish (from four to two students), receiving help from the teacher (from two to one student) and enjoying learning activities (from four to one student).

Eight out of eighteen students (Ana, Bibiana, Esperanza, María, Pabla, Paula, Ramona and Sofía) indicated that participating in group activities kept them on target to reach their goals. There was no change in this number (eight students) since the first goal-setting session, thus indicating that working in groups remained the most popular reason for progressing towards achievement. Ana, Bibiana, María and Paula suggested that it was useful to work on group projects, while Sofía stated that "listening to others' ideas" was helpful. Ramona suggested that her group worked well together and Esperanza and Pabla indicated that group members helped each other.

Three students (Esperanza, Paula and Pilar) indicated that making good use of learning materials put them on course to achieve their personal goals, claiming that they made good use of "visual aids" (Esperanza), online resources (Paula) and textbooks (Pilar).

One student (Bibiana) indicated that she was on target to achieve her learning goals because she was already familiar with most of the learning content, stating "this has been mostly revision with some new words, so it's easy".

One student (Ana) suggested that the teacher helped her to progress towards achievement, indicating that the teacher corrected and proofread written pieces which she created for a group project.

Students also indicated that studying/memorising grammar and vocabulary (Ana, Cristina, María, Paula and Pilar), putting in a lot of effort and perseverance (Elena, Esperanza, Isabel, Leticia and María), following planned tasks (Magda, Silvia and Yolanda), practising speaking Spanish (Cristina and María), practising writing Spanish (Juana and María), paying attention to learning goals (Salma), managing time well (Bibiana) and participating in enjoyable activities (Ana) helped them to move towards achieving their goals.

One student (Magda) suggested that she was not progressing towards goal achievement at the assessment stage, indicating a decrease (from five to one student) in the number of learners who felt that they were not on track to achieve their goals at this stage. Magda felt that she attained her goal prematurely because she did not set herself a sufficiently challenging goal. This student decided to adjust her learning goal, describing it as "too easy", and then set about achieving her redefined learning goal.

**4.4.2.2 Reflections on Goal Attainment**

As previously stated, all eighteen members of the treatment group stated that they had achieved their goals by week sixteen, thus indicating no change in this result since the first goal-setting session in week seven. After students achieved their goals, they again reflected on why they were successful. Their reasons are summarised in Table 4.41.

**Table 4.41** Session 2: Learner reflections on goal achievement

| Learner Reasons for Success | No. of Students | |
|---|---|---|
| | 1st session | 2nd session |
| Put in a lot of effort, persevered | 7 | 6 |
| Found content easy, already familiar with content | 3 | 6 |
| Received help from group, worked well as a group | 6 | 4 |
| Received help/guidance from teacher | 4 | 3 |
| Practised speaking Spanish | 3 | 3 |
| Memorised/studied content (e.g. grammar, vocabulary) | 3 | 3 |
| Selected good quality materials, used materials well | 2 | 3 |
| Enjoyed learning activities | 5 | 2 |
| Determination/desire to improve language level and/or achieve goals | 0 | 2 |
| Followed planned tasks | 3 | 2 |
| Paid attention to goals | 1 | 2 |
| Adjusted plans | 1 | 0 |
| Managed time well | 1 | 0 |
| Translated texts from L1 to L2 | 1 | 0 |

The number of categories/reasons that were identified decreased (from thirteen to eleven) since the first goal-setting session. Three categories that were included in the first goal-setting session (adjusted plans; managed time well; and translated what to say from L1 to L2) were not identified in the second session, while a new category was detected (determination/desire to improve language level and/or achieve goals). Compared to the first goal-setting session, there were no changes in the numbers of students who indicated that they practised speaking Spanish (three students) and memorised/studied content (three students) in order to achieve their goals. There were increases in the numbers of students who indicated that they used their materials well (from two to three students) and paid attention to goals (from one to two students). Finally, there were decreases in the numbers of students who suggested that they achieved their goals for the following reasons: put in a lot of effort and/or persevered (from seven to six students); received help from group and/or worked well as a group (from six to four students); received help from the teacher (from

four to three students); followed planned tasks (from three to two students); and enjoyed learning activities (from five to two students).

Six students (Bibiana, Isabel, Juana, Magda, Pabla and Yolanda) indicated that putting in a lot of effort and/or perseverance helped them to attain personal goals. This result indicates that putting in a lot of effort and/or perseverance continued to be the most popular reason for attaining their learning goals, however the number of students decreased by one (from seven to six students). Bibiana stated "I had to really work hard at this, but I did it", indicating that she put a lot of effort into attaining her goal. Isabel's comment ("I worked really, really hard") indicated that she also achieved her learning goal by putting in a lot of effort. Juana wrote "I just did it, put in the work, no excuses", indicating that she put in effort to achieve her goals because she felt that she was responsible for her own learning. Magda, Pabla and Yolanda did not go into detail regarding how putting in a lot of effort helped them to achieve their goals.

Six students (Elena, Esperanza, Isabel, Leticia, Pilar and Ramona) suggested that they attained their goals because they remembered a lot of the content from previous academic years and/or found the content easy to learn. Covering the learning content and/or finding the content easy to learn was the joint most popular reason (along with put in a lot of effort/persevered) for achieving goals, with the number of students increasing by three (from three to six students) since the first goal-setting session. Esperanza's comment ("I found this task easy") and Ramona's comment ("it was easier than other topics") indicated that they did not have difficulties in learning the content. Elena's response ("I remembered a lot of it from second year"), Isabel's response ("We did a lot of it before") and Leticia's comment ("I built on the stuff I already knew") indicated that they achieved their goals because they had previously covered a great deal of the learning content. Pilar's comments ("we covered some of it before"; "it was so easy to remember") indicated that she achieved her learning goals through a combination of finding the learning content easy and recalling portions of it from previous academic years.

Four students (Bibiana, Paula, Ramona and Silvia) indicated that other members of their group supported them in achieving their goals. Reflecting on why they achieved their goals, Paula stated "my group motivated me" and Bibiana claimed "It was group effort". Ramona and Silvia indicated that their groups supported them by correcting their work and explaining their errors.

Three students (Elena, Isabel and Paula) indicated that input from the teacher was important in their goal attainment. Isabel wrote "the teacher helped us so much", indicating that the teacher played a significant role in her goal attainment. Elena's comment ("we got the teacher to keep us right") and Paula's comment ("[the] teacher corrected our stuff") suggested that the teacher offered students guidance and support.

Two students (Elena and Paula) indicated that they achieved their goals because they enjoyed the activities in which they partook. Elena indicated that she enjoyed participating in art activities, describing them as "fun". Paula did not go into detail regarding specific activities that she enjoyed, however her response ("we enjoyed doing it") indicates that she achieved her goals because she enjoyed the learning activities/tasks.

Two students (Ana and Sofía) indicated that their determination/desire to succeed led to their goal achievement. Ana said "I was determined to do it" and Sofia said "I met the goal because I wanted to".

Other explanations that students attributed their goal achievement to include the following: practising speaking Spanish (Esperanza, Leticia and Silvia); memorising verb tenses and vocabulary (Juana, María and Pilar); using learning resources efficiently (Esperanza, Leticia and Pilar); sticking to planned tasks (Cristina and Juana); and paying attention to learning goals (Salma and Sofía).

### 4.4.2.3 Future Learning

After students reflected on why they had achieved their goals, they were again asked to contemplate what they would continue doing in future and what they would do differently. Their responses are summarised in Table 4.42.

**Table 4.42** Session 2: Learner reflections on future learning

| What to continue doing: | No. of Students | | What to do differently: | No. of Students | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Session 1 | Session 2 | | Session 1 | Session 2 |
| Working in groups | 9 | 6 | Incorporate more individual work | 1 | 2 |
| Practising speaking Spanish | 2 | 2 | Plan less reading activities | 0 | 1 |
| Setting learning goals | 2 | 2 | Plan less writing activities | 0 | 1 |
| Self-directed learning, taking responsibility for learning | 0 | 2 | Plan more speaking activities | 2 | 1 |
| Implementing all aspects of new learning approach | 1 | 1 | Plan more listening activities | 1 | 1 |
| Setting challenging tasks | 0 | 1 | Put more effort into sourcing good quality materials | 0 | 1 |
| Having a say in learning materials | 0 | 1 | Incorporate more creative tasks | 0 | 1 |
| Work ethic | 1 | 1 | Be more assertive during group tasks | 0 | 1 |
| Using a variety of learning | 1 | 0 | Ask for teachers help more often | 4 | 0 |

| resources | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Planning learning tasks | 1 | 0 | Manage time better | 2 | 0 |
| | | | Plan more writing activities | 1 | 0 |
| | | | Plan more reading activities | 1 | 0 |
| | | | Put more effort into planning tasks | 1 | 0 |
| | | | Pay more attention to learning goals | 1 | 0 |
| | | | Source larger quantity of learning materials | 1 | 0 |
| | | | Incorporate new learning content more often (rather than previously learned content) | 1 | 0 |

**What to continue doing:**

The number of categories identified increased by one (from seven to eight categories). Two categories that were included in the results of the first goal-setting session (using a variety of learning resources; and planning learning tasks) were not identified in data from the second session. Three new categories were identified (self-directed learning; setting challenging tasks; and having a say in learning materials).

Six students (Ana, Isabel, Juana, María, Pabla and Silvia) indicated that they would continue working in groups in future. While this continued to be the most popular suggestion for future learning, the number of students proposing to continue with group work decreased by three (from nine to six students). Isabel, Juana and Silvia stated that they would continue working in groups and Ana, María and Pabla suggested that they would continue doing group projects. Three students (Elena, Magda and Sofia) who indicated during the first session that they would continue working in groups did not make this suggestion for a second time.

Two students (Cristina and María) suggested that they would continue to plan Spanish speaking activities, indicating no change in the number of students (two) who made this suggestion for future learning. One student (Esperanza) who proposed continuing with speaking activities during the first session did not make this suggestion for a second time.

Two out of the eighteen treatment group participants (Salma and Yolanda) suggested that they would continue setting learning goals; these two students made the same suggestion during the first goal-setting session.

Two students (Esperanza and Ramona) indicated that they would continue with self-directed learning. Ramona indicated that she enjoyed this responsibility, stating "I like having more freedom in how we learn, more responsibility and independent [*sic*]". Esperanza's comment ("In future I will play a part in managing my learning. It'll be up to

me") suggested that she also wished to take greater responsibility for her own learning by engaging in self-directed learning.

One student (Paula) indicated that she would continue with all aspects of the learning approach, commenting "we'll continue doing everything as we are". Paula also suggested that she would continue with the learning approach in the first goal-setting session.

Students also indicated that they would continue setting challenging tasks for themselves (Leticia), having a say in learning materials (Pilar) and putting in a lot of effort (Sofía). Three students (Bibiana, Elena and Magda) did not make suggestions as regards what to continue doing, thus indicating an increase (from one to three students) in the number of students who did not comment on what to continue doing in future. Although Ramona did not contribute a response during the first goal-setting session, she suggested what she would continue doing during the second session.

**What to do differently:**

The number of categories that were identified decreased (from eleven to eight) compared to the first goal-setting session. Eight categories that were included in the first session were not identified in the second session, including: ask for the teacher's help; manage time better; plan more writing activities; plan more reading activities; put more effort into planning tasks; pay more attention to learning goals; source a larger quantity of learning materials and incorporate new learning content. Five new categories were identified in the second session: plan less writing activities; plan less reading activities; put more effort into sourcing good quality materials; incorporate more creative tasks; and be more assertive during group tasks.

Two students (Ana and Silvia) indicated that they would work independently of their groups more often by planning individual tasks. This number increased by one (from one to two students) since the first goal-setting session and was the most popular suggestion. Ana stated "I won't work as a group for everything" and Silvia responded "I'd like to do more silent study on my own". While Ana and Silvia suggested that they would continue participating in group projects, these comments indicate that they also wanted to do more individual activities in future. Silvia proposed incorporating more individual tasks during the first session also.

While students suggested that they would plan more reading and writing activities in the first goal-setting session, this time one student (María) indicated that she would do less of both activities. One student (Pabla) suggested that she would plan more speaking tasks, this number decreased by one (from two students to one student) since the first goal-setting session, when two other students (Cristina and Esperanza) suggested planning more Spanish speaking tasks. Magda continued to express a desire to plan more listening tasks, thus indicating no increase in the number of students (one) making this suggestion.

Students also indicated that they would endeavour to source good quality materials (Yolanda), plan more creative exercises/tasks (Elena) and be more assertive in group situations by encouraging others to take their ideas on board (Bibiana). The number of students who did not suggest anything that they would do differently increased from two to nine students (Cristina, Esperanza, Juana, Leticia, Paula, Pilar, Ramona, Salma and Sofía), with Leticia and Paula not making any suggestions for a second time.

## 4.5 Student Reflections

The data presented in this section was obtained using the Student Reflection Record (Appendix H), which is based on a reflection record that was developed by the University of Hong Kong (Benson 2001, p.158). The record was used to support the implementation of the second IS (*promotion of self-evaluation).* According to Benson (2001) the reflection record is used to support learners in differentiating between what they have done and what they have learned in an activity and to explain the significance of the activity in planning further work. The treatment group completed the record on four occasions (weeks four, eight, twelve and sixteen) over the sixteen-week duration of the experiment. Table 4.43 lists the items of the Reflection Record.

**Table 4.43** Items of the Reflection Record

| Item no. | What I have done |
|---|---|
| 1 | Describe activities you have taken part in |
|  | **What I have learned** |
| 2 | Summarise what you think you have learned in a few words |
|  | **Reflections** |
| 3 | Comment on how useful and enjoyable the activities were. (Any problems?) |

Data obtained via the first two items was descriptive rather than reflective in nature and, thus, is not presented in this chapter. Some example responses to item 1 included the following: "describing people, writing letters, role playing", "studied notes on tenses, wrote about my town and house", "wrote letters, I described people", and the following are example responses to item 2: "present continuous tense", "I learned how to use the past and future", "I learned to give descriptions of people and talk about sports". Data contained in item 3 of the reflection records was examined and divided into issues/topics which students discussed when reflecting on their learning; emerging themes were then identified. The data indicates that students discussed four main issues/topics during their reflection sessions: 1) taking responsibility for learning; 2) changes in the teacher's role; 3) working in groups; and 4) future learning. The results are presented in four sections, each concerning one of the topics.

### 4.5.1 Taking Responsibility for Learning

*Taking responsibility for learning* relates to a willingness or enthusiasm to engage in self-directed learning, put effort into learning tasks and take on challenges. Figure 4.2

shows the themes which were identified regarding the issue of *taking responsibility for learning*.

**Figure 4.2** Themes identified regarding "taking responsibility for learning"

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┌─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│          Taking Responsibility for Learning          │
└─────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
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Positive attitudes towards taking responsibility

- Enjoys having a say in choice of learning materials (6 students)
- Personalises lessons (6)
- Enjoys planning learning tasks (3)
- Takes on challenges (2)
- Enjoys setting learning goals (1)
- Puts in effort (to learn content and/or achieve goals) (1)
- Engages in self-directed learning at home (1)

Negative attitudes towards taking responsibility

- Challenging to make lessons enjoyable/ interesting (2)
- Not sure if covering enough content (2)
- Goal-setting should not be students' responsibility (1)
- Initially enjoyed responsibility, but no longer interested (1)
- Dislikes the writing involved (filling out records etc.) (1)

It is possible to group the majority of comments under this topic, as sixteen students (Ana, Bibiana, Cristina, Elena, Esperanza, Isabel, Juana, Leticia, Magda, Paula, Pilar, Ramona Salma, Silvia, Sofía and Yolanda) discussed taking responsibility for their own learning. All except one of these students (Cristina) provided comments indicating that they were positive toward the responsibility. Six out of the sixteen students (Cristina, Esperanza, Isabel, Ramona, Salma and Sofía) expressed concerns about taking on the responsibility. Data relating to *taking responsibility for learning* is presented in two sections: 1) positive

toward taking responsibility for learning; and 2) concerns regarding taking responsibility for learning.

**4.5.1.1 Positive toward Taking Responsibility for Learning**

Seven themes emerging from reflection data were considered positive with regard to students taking responsibility for their own learning: "enjoys having a say in learning materials"; "personalises lessons"; "enjoys planning learning tasks"; "takes on challenges"; "enjoys setting learning goals"; "puts in effort (to learn content and/or achieve goals)"; and "engages in self-directed learning at home".

As regards the first theme, *enjoys having a say in learning materials*, six students (Juana, Leticia, Magda, Pilar, Sofía and Yolanda) provided comments suggesting they were positive toward selecting their own learning resources. Three out of the six students (Juana, Leticia and Yolanda) indicated that having a say in selecting/choice of learning materials allows students to access useful online resources. Juana described using the internet to find learning materials as "the most useful activity", explaining that students can find a range of online exercises which language teachers have recommended. Leticia discussed her fondness for online quizzes/tests which offer users a percentage score and explain why answers are correct or incorrect. She described these tests as "great". Yolanda indicated that she also enjoyed online quizzes, but did not provide details regarding the reasons she found them enjoyable. Three students (Juana, Magda and Pilar) expressed enthusiasm about not being restricted to their textbook. Juana suggested that the textbook contains content that students are not likely to use in real life situations, stating "it was good using more than just the book to learn because sometimes the book has stuff you'll never use". Reflecting on selecting her own learning resources, Pilar stated "[it is] better than the boring book, yawn!", indicating that she felt that selecting her own materials was an attractive alternative to using the textbook. Magda also expressed enthusiasm about the freedom to use materials other than the textbook. Sofía indicated that she enjoyed having a say in learning materials, but did not elaborate.

As regards the second theme, *personalises lessons*, six students (Ana, Bibiana, Elena, Pilar, Ramona and Yolanda) indicated that they were enthusiastic about taking responsibility for their learning because it allowed them to personalise their lessons. Two students (Ana and Yolanda) indicated that they enjoyed incorporating activities into the

classroom that they would not ordinarily have the opportunity to do within a traditional classroom context. In reference to role-plays, Ana wrote "they're a lot of fun and we don't usually get to do them". Yolanda indicated that students enjoyed incorporating unconventional activities into lessons, stating "we started to branch out and tried different things...and it was a nice change". She also indicated that experimenting with unusual learning activities presented learners with a chance to express their individuality and learn about each other. One student (Pilar) suggested that personalising lessons allows learners to allocate more time to learning content that is difficult to grasp and/or pay more attention to language skills that need improvement. Pilar also indicated that personalising lessons allows students to spend less time working on areas/skills that are more advanced and pay less attention to content that they find easy to comprehend. Pilar stated "When we're in control we spend longer focusing on things we need help with and spend less time on things that are easy to us. This is positive". Providing an example from a personal experience in which she was unable to control the amount of time allocated to learning content, Pilar stated "I have been in classes before and didn't get[8] something, but the teacher moved on because most of the other girls did". Two students (Bibiana and Elena) suggested that they incorporated content relating to their personal interests. Bibiana expressed enthusiasm about discussing her interests in Spanish during oral activities, stating "I liked talking about my interests and learning the things the way I want to". Elena indicated that she enjoyed both art and Spanish and expressed enthusiasm about combining the two, stating "I really enjoyed the use of art in learning. Spanish is already one of my favourite subjects so it's nice to do it with something else that I enjoy – drawing!". One student (Ramona) suggested that taking responsibility for their own learning allows students to do more of the activities they enjoy and focus less on those they do not enjoy; Ramona wrote "The activities were enjoyable because if we didn't like something we didn't do it".

The next theme, *enjoys planning learning tasks*, emerged from data provided by three students (Esperanza, Magda and Pilar). Magda and Pilar suggested that planning learning tasks allows students to come up with exciting learning activities. Pilar stated "we came up with good activities and things to do" and Magda wrote "planning lessons as a group is exciting because you can come up with cool ideas". Esperanza did not provide details

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[8] In this context "get" means understand.

regarding reasons she found planning learning tasks enjoyable, simply stating "I enjoyed planning what to do".

With regard to the next theme, *takes on challenges*, two students (Silvia and Yolanda) indicated that they enjoyed the opportunity to push themselves and attempt more difficult tasks. Silvia stated "I'd prefer to try something harder next time", indicating that she wished to take on more challenging content. Yolanda stated "I like being able to push myself" indicating that she also enjoyed the challenge of difficult content.

With regard to *enjoys setting goals*, one student (Salma) expressed enjoyment about formulating her own learning targets, describing the goal-setting process as "interesting in itself". Salma also suggested setting personal goals offers students direction in their learning, stating "it keeps you directed in what you're doing".

As regards *puts in effort (to learn content and/or achieve goals)*, one student (Isabel) indicated that she made an effort to attain her learning goals and was pleased with her progress, stating "I'm making an effort to reach the goals and I'm happy with how it's going". This student also expressed a desire to successfully learn relevant content, stating "I want to learn what we have to and make sure it sticks".

As regards the next theme, *engages in self-directed learning at home*, one student (Paula) indicated that she continued learning Spanish at home of her own accord by going online to do Spanish language tests both after school and during the weekends. Paula stated "I even went online at home to do some quizzes and I even did it at the weekend".

### 4.5.1.2 Concerns Regarding taking Responsibility for Learning

Five themes emerging from reflection data indicated that students had concerns about taking responsibility for their own learning: "challenging to make lessons enjoyable/interesting"; "unsure if covering enough content"; "goal-setting should not be students' responsibility"; "initially enjoyed responsibility, but no longer interested"; and "dislikes the writing involved".

With regard to the first theme, *challenging to make lessons enjoyable/interesting*, two students (Cristina and Esperanza) indicated that they found it difficult to keep lessons interesting. Cristina felt that her group spent too long on certain activities and found it challenging to generate ideas. She stated "I liked the acting, but sometimes it went on too

long. We really need to come up with more ideas because we did the same thing everyday". Esperanza found it difficult to make lessons engaging because students had to study topics that they have no interest in, she stated "I didn't enjoy the activities about sports because I don't care about sports". She also indicated that it was difficult to make learning grammar enjoyable, stating "I thought learning off the tenses was boring. I wish there was an easier way but for me I need to study the endings over and over".

As regards the next theme, *not sure if covering enough content*, two students (Isabel and Ramona) indicated that taking charge of their own learning left them uncertain if they had covered sufficient content during class. Isabel stated "I'm not sure if we're doing enough" and Ramona wrote "A problem was maybe that we didn't do enough".

As regards *goal-setting should not be students' responsibility*, one student (Sofía) described the goal-setting process as "strange" and indicated that she prefers the teacher to take on this responsibility instead of students.

The next theme that was identified is *initially enjoyed responsibility, but no longer interested*. One student (Sofía) indicated that she did not enjoy taking responsibility for her own learning over a prolonged period of time, stating "I've been so lazy with the activities. The novelty has worn off".

As regards *dislikes the writing involved*, one student (Salma) wrote "I don't like filling out all these stupid forms. Time would be better spent doing a bit of work", indicating that she disliked filling out reflection records and goal-setting records.

### 4.5.2 Changes in the Teacher's Role

In order to facilitate the transition from a teacher-centred to a learner-centred approach, the teacher had to depart from her traditional responsibilities. Her new role, in a classroom where learners took responsibility for their own learning, involved supporting and facilitating students in processes, such as planning learning tasks and selecting learning materials, and making her knowledge available to them. Figure 4.3 shows the themes which were identified regarding the issue of *changes in the teacher's role*.

**Figure 4.3** Themes identified regarding "changes in the teacher's role"
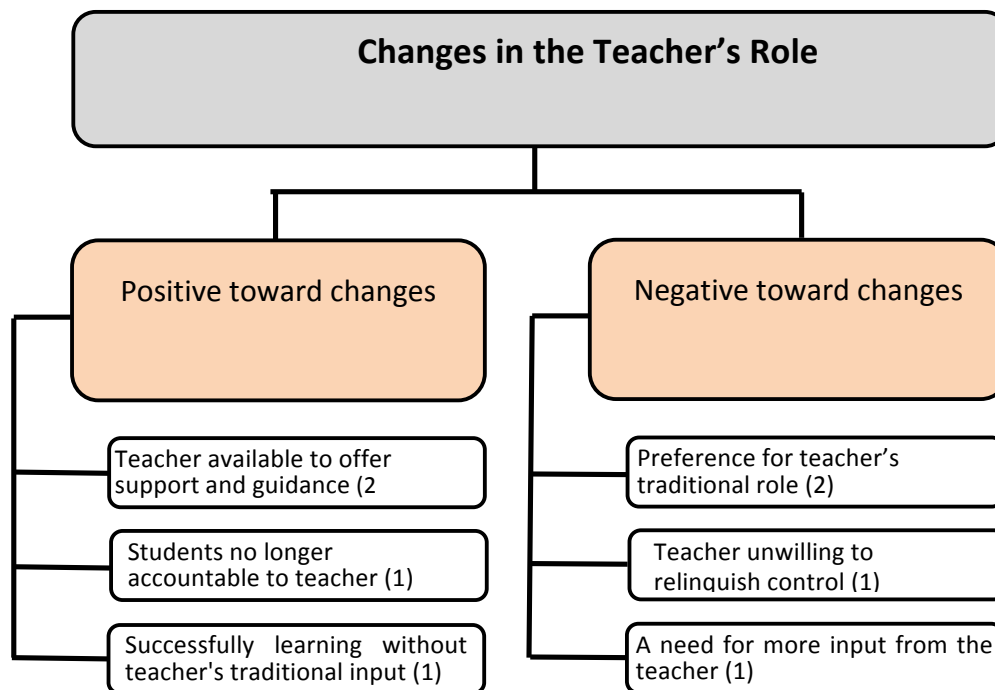


Seven students commented on their teacher's role (Isabel, Pabla, Ramona Salma, Silvia, Sofia and Yolanda). Four of these students (|Isabel, Pabla, Ramona and Yolanda) provided comments that were considered positive toward the changing role of their teacher. Four out of the seven students (Isabel, Salma, Silvia and Sofía) expressed concerns regarding the changes. Data relating to this topic is presented in two sections: 1) positive toward changes in the teacher's role; and 2) concerns regarding changes in the teacher's role.

#### 4.5.2.1 Positive toward Changes in the Teacher's Role

Three themes emerging from reflection data were considered positive with regard to changes in the teacher's role: "teacher available to offer support and guidance"; "students no longer accountable to the teacher"; and "successfully learning without the teacher's traditional input".

With regard to the first theme, *teacher available to offer support and guidance*, two learners (Isabel and Paula) indicated that their teacher helped students and offered them guidance in their learning. Isabel suggested that the teacher's advice kept her on track towards achieving her learning targets, stating "The teacher's advice and help was so

important because then you know you're keeping right". Pabla stated "it was good to have the teacher explain what the things meant", indicating that it was beneficial having the teacher on hand to explain words/grammar.

As regards the next theme, *students no longer accountable to the teacher*, one student (Ramona) indicated that the teacher no longer hurried processes along in order to continue with what she perceived to be important. Ramona felt that this allowed students to work at their own pace without interjections from the teacher. Expressing enthusiasm about the teacher's new backseat role, Ramona stated "you don't have someone judging you or hurrying you or looking over your shoulder".

The next theme that emerged is *successfully learning without the teacher's traditional input*. One student (Yolanda) indicated that she was not comfortable with the changes in the teacher's role at first, as she worried about her ability to organise lessons resembling the teacher's efforts. However, as the experiment progressed, she realised that she was successfully learning without the teacher's traditional input, stating "I started discovering that I was still learning".

### 4.5.2.2 Concerns Regarding Changes in the Teacher's Role

Three themes emerging from reflection data indicated that students had concerns about the changing role of their teacher: "preference for teacher's traditional role"; "a need for more input from the teacher"; and "teacher unwilling to relinquish control".

The first theme that emerged is *preference for teacher's traditional role*. Two students (Silvia and Sofía) indicated that they wanted the teacher to resume her central role within the classroom. Silvia stated "I usually do really well with the way we usually do class with the teacher", indicating that she worked well in the traditional classroom with the teacher in charge. Sofía indicated that she wanted to the teacher to take charge again, stating "I'd like to go back to normal classes, with the teacher talking to everyone as a group".

As regards the second theme, *teacher unwilling to relinquish control*, one student (Salma) stated "I don't like when the teacher watches us so much. She expects us to work at a fast pace", indicating that the teacher overly monitored students and attempted to control the pace at which students worked.

With regard to the next theme, *a need for more input from the teacher*, one student (Isabel) felt that the teacher had conceded too much control, stating "We maybe need more of the teacher's help".

### 4.5.3 Group Work

Students were asked to work in groups of three for the duration of the experiment, planning their learning tasks and executing learning tasks as a threesome. Figure 4.4 shows the themes which were identified regarding the issue of *working in groups*.

**Figure 4.4** Themes identified regarding "working in groups"
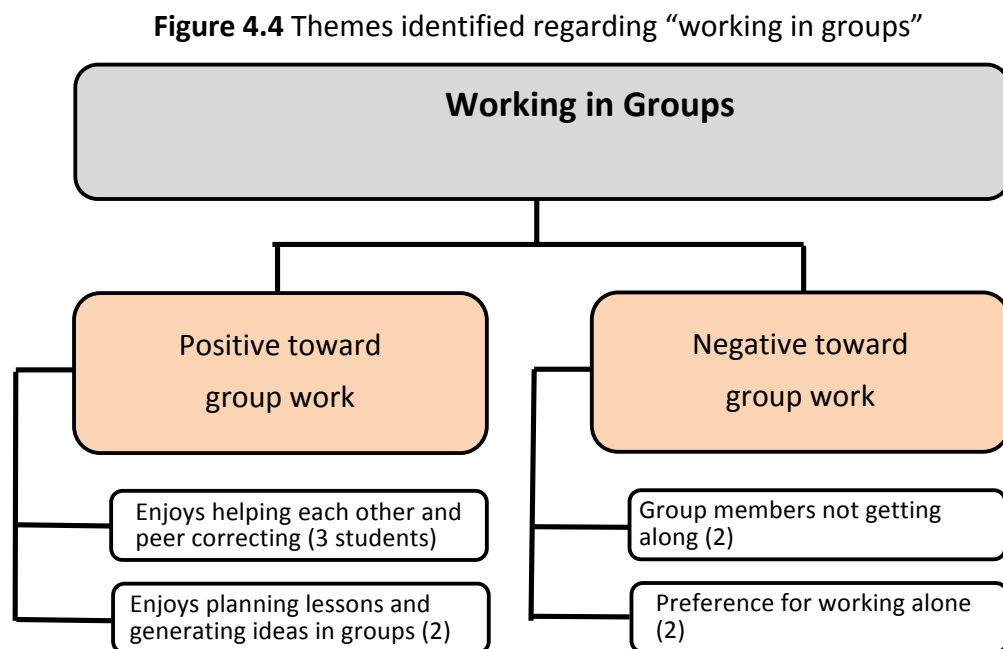


Seven students made comments regarding working in groups (Ana, Bibiana, Cristina, Isabel, Magda, Ramona and Silvia). Five of these students (Ana, Cristina, Isabel, Magda and Ramona) indicated that they enjoyed working in groups, while three out of the seven students (Ana, Bibiana and Silvia) expressed concerns about working in groups.

### 4.5.3.1 Positive toward Group Work

Two themes emerging from reflection data were considered positive with regard to working in groups: "enjoys helping each other and peer correcting"; and "enjoys planning learning tasks and generating ideas in groups".

As regards the first theme, *enjoys helping each other and peer correcting*, three students (Ana, Cristina and Ramona) indicated that they enjoyed helping each other in groups. Cristina stated "I liked correcting the others work in my group", indicating that she enjoyed correcting her group members' efforts. Ramona suggested that her group enjoyed peer correcting and did not find the task intimidating or embarrassing, she stated "We made the activities fun by helping each other and correcting each other and not being embarrassed or getting annoyed about our mistakes". Ana indicated that she also liked correcting her group's mistakes, stating "I liked showing them how to do some things if they got it wrong".

With regard to the second theme, *enjoys planning learning tasks and generating ideas in groups*, two learners (Isabel and Magda) indicated that they enjoyed planning learning tasks with their group members. Magda indicated that she found the process "exciting", stating "planning lessons as a group is exciting because you can come up with cool ideas".

### 4.5.3.2 Concerns Regarding Group Work

Two themes emerged which indicated that students had concerns about working in groups: "group members not getting along"; and "preference for working alone".

With regard to the first theme, *group members not getting along*, two students (Bibiana and Silvia) indicated that their group members were not working well together. Bibiana suggested that group members did not always take her ideas on board, stating "The problem is that sometimes they didn't listen to my ideas". Silvia indicated that there were tensions within her group, describing the atmosphere as "really horrible" and referring to a sense of "unfriendliness".

As regards the next theme, *preference for working alone*, two students (Ana and Silvia) indicated that they work best alone. Ana stated "I don't like doing everything as a group though because I learn best on my own", suggesting that she was not entirely averse to group work, but preferred to work alone. Similarly, Silvia's statement ("I don't like working with others all the time") indicated that she was not against working in groups, but preferred to do it less often. Silvia, like Ana, claimed to "work better alone" and suggested that fewer group activities would be desirable, stating "we did too many "group activities"". Silvia stated "we should get to know the topics as far as we can ourselves and

then do a few things as a group", suggesting that she preferred to do as much individual work as possible.

### 4.5.4 Future Learning

A number of students made comments regarding continuing with the learning approach in future and/or used the approach with future state exams in mind. Figure 4.5 shows the themes which were identified regarding the issue of *future learning*.

**Figure 4.5** Themes identified regarding "future learning"
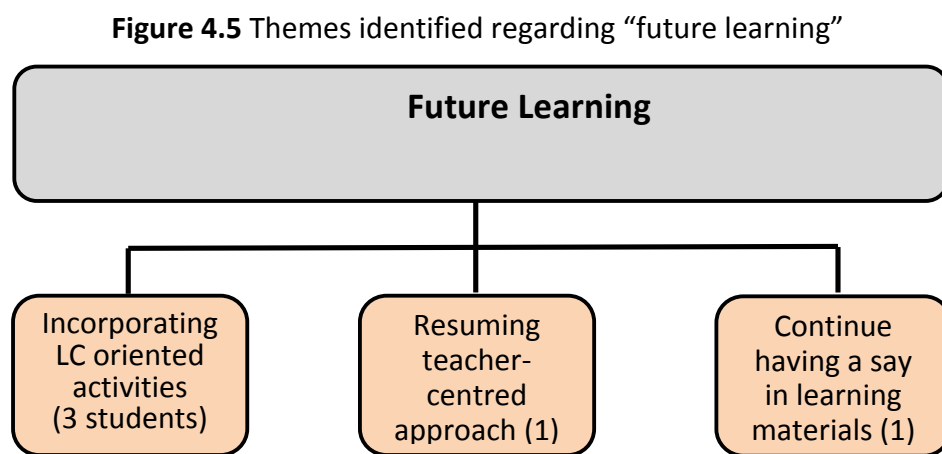


Four students made comments regarding future learning (Elena, Magda, María and Sofía). Three themes were identified: 1) incorporating Leaving Certificate[9] oriented activities; 2) resuming teacher-centred approach; and 3) continue having a say in learning materials.

With regard to the first theme, *incorporating Leaving Certificate oriented activities,* three learners (Elena, Magda and María) indicated that they consciously planned learning tasks which were geared towards preparing for the Leaving Certificate Spanish examination. Elena stated "The activities we did were useful because we were covering stuff that will be on the Leaving Cert orals", indicating that she used the process of planning learning tasks to practise oral activities that are of Leaving Cert standard. Magda expressed concern about the amount of time allocated to higher level[10] aural activities, stating "We didn't do enough listening activities, I'd like to do some honours Leaving Cert

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[9] The Leaving Certificate is the final examination in the Irish secondary school system.
[10] Leaving Certificate Spanish is offered at two difficulty levels: ordinary/lower level and honours/higher level.

standard aural work". María expressed enthusiasm about planning activities related to the Leaving Certificate, stating "we did loads of speaking ...with the orals in two years you have to get a lot of it in".

With regard to *resuming a teacher-centred approach*, one student (Sofía) stated "I'd like to go back to normal classes, with the teacher talking to everyone as a group", indicating that she preferred to return to the traditional classroom approach.

Finally, regarding the next theme, *continuing to have a say in learning materials*, one student (Sofía) indicated that, she preferred the traditional teacher-centred approach to learning, but would like to continue having a say in learning materials. She stated "I'd like to go back to normal classes...but I like having a say in learning materials".

## 4.6 Interviews

The interviews were carried out over the final three weeks of the experiment (weeks fourteen, fifteen and sixteen). They were open-ended and guided by the interview forms (appendices I and J). The teacher and the entire student sample (n=32) participated in the interviews; each participant was interviewed on a one-to-one basis for approximately five minutes. The resulting interview data was transcribed from digital audio recordings and analysed in terms of research questions 1 and 2 (Chapter One).

### 4.6.1 Student Interviews

All members of both the treatment group (n=18) and the comparison group (n=14) participated in the student interviews. The questions that the students were asked were designed to elicit their opinions on a number of topics relating directly to ISs (Table 4.44).

**Table 4.44** Student interview questions

| Question no. | Treatment Group's Questions | Question no. | Comparison Group's Questions |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | How do you feel about selecting learning materials? | 1 | How would you feel about selecting learning materials? |
| 2 | How do you feel about planning learning tasks? | 2 | How would you feel about planning learning tasks? |
| 3 | How do you feel about setting learning goals? | 3 | How would you feel about setting learning goals? |
| 4 | How do you feel about self-evaluating? | 4 | How would you feel about self-evaluating? |
| 5 | You've done something different in your Spanish lessons over the past four months. What do you think your teacher's role has been? | 5 | Let's say you were to use this learning approach. What do you think your teacher's role would be? |
| 6 | How would you feel about continuing with this learning approach next year? | 6 | How would you feel about using this learning approach next year? |
| 7 | Would you change anything about the approach? | 7 | How do you think it would go if it were introduced next year? |

Data was transcribed according to the topics that students were asked to discuss; recurring themes were then identified. Each member of the treatment group (n=18) was asked to reflect and share her thoughts having experienced the ISs firsthand, while each member of the comparison group (n=14) was asked to offer her opinions and thoughts on the prospect of introducing the ISs in a hypothetical sense. Each group's data was analysed separately.

**4.6.1.1 Treatment Group Results**

During the student interviews, the researcher asked seven questions to each of the eighteen participants. These questions are listed in the previous section (Table 4.44). As previously stated, the questions were designed to elicit the students' opinions on a number of topics relating directly to the ISs. The data indicates that students discussed six main issues/topics during the interview sessions: 1) selecting learning materials; 2) planning learning tasks; 3) setting learning goals; 4) self-evaluating; 5) the teacher's role; and 6) continuing with the approach in future.

4.6.1.1.1 Selecting learning materials

The treatment group was free to choose their own learning resources, in order to help them to develop greater ownership of the learning process. Students were made aware that their selected materials should relate to predetermined learning aims, as specified in their textbook; they had the option to use existing materials (textbook, workbook etc.), search for resources online and/or use materials provided by the teacher. The teacher was available to facilitate and advise students during this selection process. Figure 4.6 shows themes which were identified regarding the issue of *selecting learning materials*.

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
                    │      Selecting learning Materials     │
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                                     │
              ┌──────────────────────┴──────────────────────┐
    ┌─────────────────────────┐              ┌─────────────────────────┐
    │  Positive attitudes     │              │  Negative attitudes     │
    │  towards                │              │  towards                │
    │  selecting materials    │              │  selecting materials    │
    └─────────────────────────┘              └─────────────────────────┘
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Positive attitudes towards selecting materials:

- Personalises lessons (4 students)
- Attractive alternative to using textbook (3)
- Students should be responsible for selecting learning materials (3)
- Learning more effectively (1)
- Good quality materials facilitate lessons planning (1)
- Uses online resources outside of school hours (1)
- Most enjoyable aspect of new learning approach (1)

Negative attitudes towards selecting materials:

- Preference for using textbook
- Dislikes sourcing materials (1)
- Too much selection to choose from (1)
- Becoming disinterested (1)
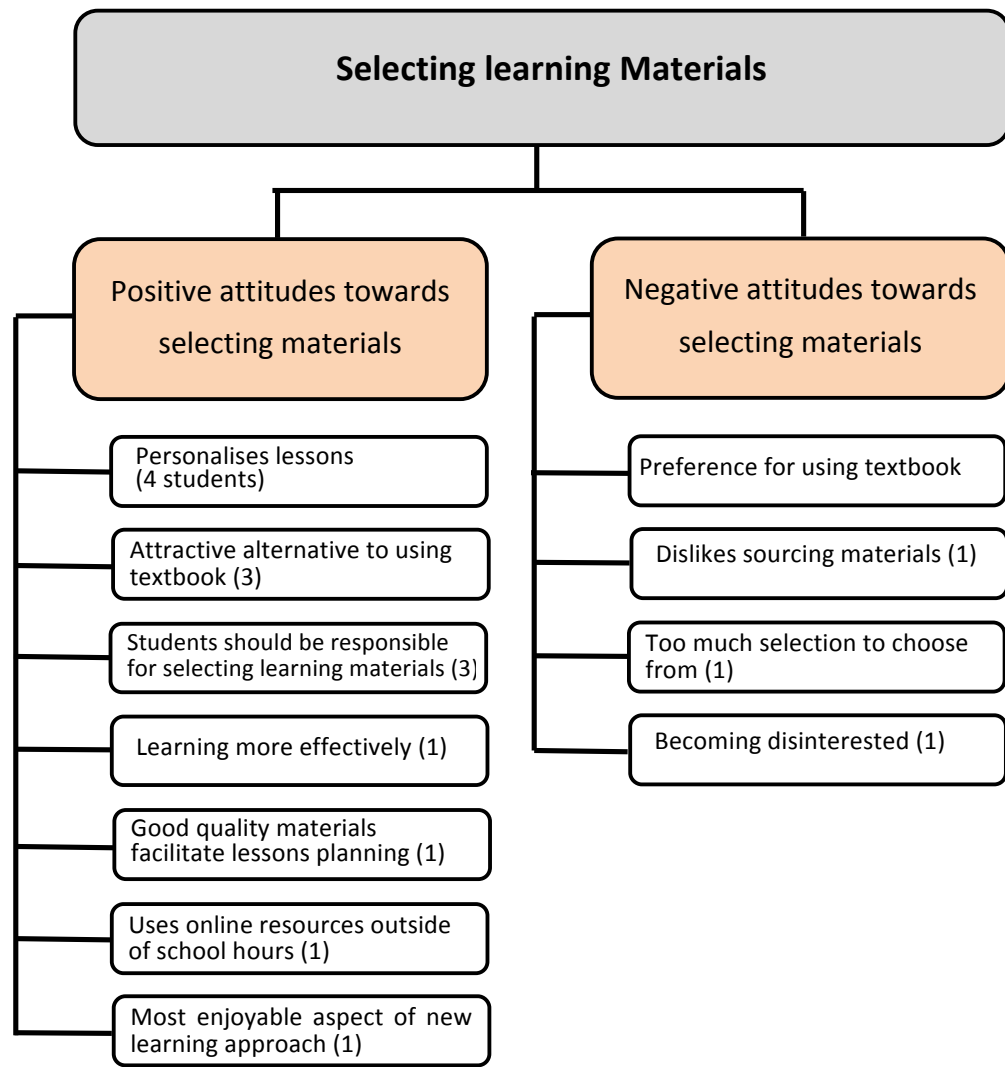
All eighteen students made comments regarding selecting their own learning materials. Fifteen of these students (Ana, Bibiana, Elena, Esperanza, Juana, Leticia, Magda, María, Pabla, Paula, Pilar, Ramona, Salma, Sofía and Yolanda) indicated that they were positive about selecting resources, while three out of the eighteen students (Cristina, Isabel, and Silvia) expressed concerns about engaging in this process. Themes are listed in descending order by frequency of occurrence (Figure 4. 6). Data relating to this topic is presented in two sections: 1) positive attitudes toward selecting materials; and 2) negative attitudes toward selecting materials.

<u>Positive attitudes toward selecting materials:</u>

Seven themes emerging from interview data were considered positive with regard to selecting learning materials: "personalises lessons"; "attractive alternative to using the textbook"; "students should be responsible for selecting learning materials"; "learning more effectively"; "good quality materials facilitate tasks planning"; "uses online resources outside of school hours"; and "most enjoyable aspect of new learning approach".

With regard to the first theme, *personalises lessons*, four students (Juana, Isabel, Ramona and Yolanda) suggested that they used the selection process as an opportunity to include material relating to their own interests and tastes. Juana said, "I was able to find stuff that suited me and stuff I cared about" and Yolanda stated "you can pick good stuff, like, pick stuff you like", expressing a sense of opportunity to personalise lessons and incorporate personal interests. Ramona indicated that she also felt the process allowed learners to individualise their lessons, stating "[we choose] stuff that we find interesting or enjoyable". Isabel's comment ("we were choosing what suits us") indicated that she selected materials that suited her preferences.

As regards the next theme, *attractive alternative to using the textbook*, three learners (Ana, Esperanza and María) indicated that they enjoyed the freedom to use materials other than the textbook. Comments from Ana ("It's far better than using the book") and María ("I liked choosing my own things... because I don't like the book") indicated that they preferred searching for materials to having to use the book. Like María, Esperanza indicated that she enjoyed sourcing her own materials because she disliked using the books, particularly the workbook. She explained "it's always full of pure annoying questions to do that you learn nothing from and there's never even any space to write the answers".

The next theme, *students should be responsible for selecting learning materials*, emerged from interview data from three students (Ramona, Salma and Sofía). Ramona said "it makes sense that if it's us who have to do the learning then we should be able to choose things that we want to do", indicating that she believed that learners should be allowed to select relevant learning resources. Salma's comment ("it's good to choose for yourself…rather than have it chosen for you. It's only right") and Sofia's comment ("it's very important that we have a say in learning materials") suggested that they also felt that it was important for students to select their own learning materials.

The next theme that emerged is *learning more effectively*. One student (Ana) indicated that students were learning more successfully in class as a result of having a say in the choice of materials. She stated "a lot of us are learning more and are more positive because we can choose".

As regards the next theme that emerged, *good quality materials facilitate task planning*, one student (Isabel) said, "If you get good materials you don't spend as much time trying to figure out what you're doing with your groupies because it's straight forward". Her statement indicates that selecting appropriate materials allowed students to plan learning tasks without difficulty.

As regards *uses online resources outside of school hours*, one student (Leticia) stated "I have done a lot of work on the Internet and I've even done some at home too because I've gotten to know some good websites", indicating that she decided to use useful online resources at home that she had become familiar with through selecting her own learning materials. These comments indicate that Leticia continued with self-directed learning in her free time.

The next theme, *most enjoyable aspect of new learning approach*, emerged from interview data provided by one student (Sofía). When asked how she felt about selecting her own materials Sofía stated "I thought it was the best part of everything", indicating that it was the process in which she most enjoyed engaging.

Six students (Bibiana, Elena, Magda, Pabla, Paula and Pilar) indicated that they found selecting learning materials enjoyable, but did not elaborate.

<u>Negative attitudes toward selecting materials:</u>

Four themes emerging from interview data were considered negative with regard to selecting learning materials: "preference for using textbook"; "dislikes sourcing materials"; "too much selection to choose from"; and "becoming disinterested".

As regards the first theme, *preference for using textbook*, one student (Christina) expressed a preference for existing materials. Cristina said "I far rather just having my book

in front of me and knowing what I'm doing each day... it's handier if the book's in your bag", indicating that she preferred using the materials selected by the school.

With regard to the next theme, *dislikes sourcing materials*, one learner (Cristina) indicated that she disliked having to search for materials, stating "It can be a bit of a pain, I'm a bit lazy... I hated looking for stuff. I couldn't get interested in it". Cristina also said "if the other girls chose good materials then I'd happily use them and forget the book", suggesting that she was not entirely averse to using materials other than the textbook as long as she was not responsible for selecting them herself.

The next theme, *too much selection to choose from*, emerged from interview data provided by one student (Isabel). In response to the question of how she felt about selecting her own learning resources, Isabel said "It'd be far better if, like, there was one website to cover everything" and "they had loads of different kinds of stuff, too much", indicating that she would prefer having a limited selection to choose from. She continued "I just didn't find websites that I like yet. I never really stuck to one website. I didn't know how or where to begin", suggesting that she found it difficult to decide where to begin searching for materials.

*Becoming disinterested* was the next theme emerging from interview data of one student (Silvia). Silvia stated "In the beginning it was more of a novelty…it's something I liked in the beginning, but I'm more used to it now… it's not exciting like it was at the start". Her comments suggested that she was initially interested in selecting materials, but grew bored of the task, indicating that her apathy resulted from decreased interest in the selection process.

4.6.1.1.2 Planning learning tasks

When individual students had selected materials, they pooled them together in groups of three. These groups were responsible for planning how and when to use their selected materials. The teacher offered support and facilitated students in this process. Figure 4.7 shows themes which were identified regarding the issue of *planning learning tasks*.

**Figure 4.7** Treatment group: themes identified regarding "planning learning tasks"
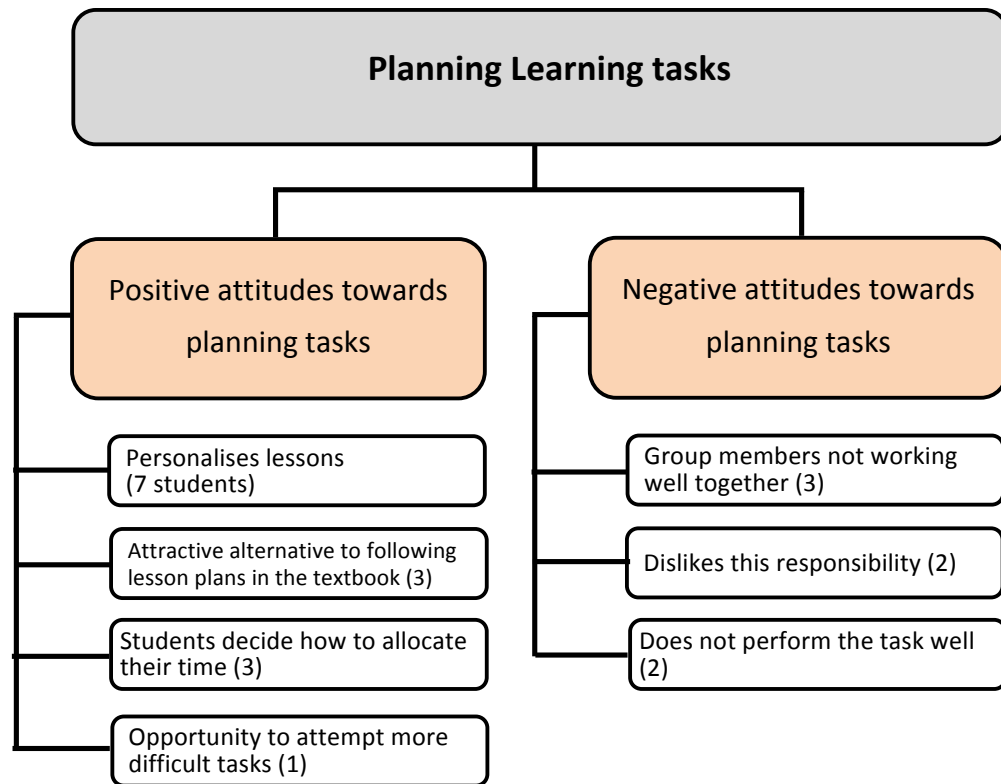


All eighteen students made comments regarding planning their learning tasks. Sixteen of these students (Ana, Bibiana, Cristina, Elena, Esperanza, Juana, Leticia, Magda, María, Pabla, Paula, Pilar, Ramona, Salma, Sofía and Yolanda) indicated that they were positive about planning learning tasks. Five out of the eighteen students (Ana, Cristina, Isabel, Silvia and Sofía) expressed concerns about engaging in this process. Themes are listed in descending order by frequency of occurrence (Figure 4.7). Data relating to this topic is presented in two sections: 1) positive attitudes toward planning learning tasks; and 2) negative attitudes toward planning learning tasks.

<u>Positive attitudes toward planning learning tasks:</u>

Four themes emerging from interview data were considered positive with regard to selecting learning materials: "personalises lessons"; "attractive alternative to following lesson plans in the textbook"; "students decide how to allocate their time"; and "opportunity to attempt more difficult tasks".

With regard to the first theme, *personalises lessons*, seven students (Elena, Esperanza, Magda, Pabla, Pilar, Ramona and Yolanda) suggested that they used the process of planning learning tasks as an opportunity to include activities relating to their interests. Esperanza and Pilar indicated that they planned learning tasks that suited their learning preferences. Pilar also felt that planning learning tasks allowed students to take learning preferences into consideration when selecting learning activities, stating "you get to do stuff that really suits how you learn". Ramona's comment ("we kept doing loads of fun things like loads of art and project work and speaking") and Elena's comment ("we put in loads of fun things to do like even drawing and making things and games") suggested that they planned tasks that they were interested in and that they found enjoyable. Pabla stated "we did things that relate to what we're into", indicating that students included activities/content that matched their personal interests. Magda's comment ("We tried to get in stuff that we liked doing") also indicated that students planned tasks that they found enjoyable. Yolanda said "It was class...to do things that you want to", but did not elaborate on which activities she was referring to.

The next theme that emerged regarding planning learning tasks is *attractive alternative to following lessons plans in the textbook*; comments made by three students (María, Pilar and Salma) were taken as an indication of this. When asked how they felt about planning their learning tasks, María said "I liked it because I don't like the way they do it in the book" and Pilar said "far better than going by the book". Salma indicated that she enjoyed planning learning tasks, she stated "it means we don't have to use the workbook", indicating that she disliked the workbook selected by the school.

As regards the next theme, *students decide how to allocate their time*, three learners' (Bibiana, Juana and Leticia) comments were taken as an indication of this. Juana suggested that planning learning tasks allowed students to spend as much time as they desired on activities/topics, stating "it was good to plan [be]cause then you could spend as long as you

wanted on something because you were following your own plan". Juana's statement suggested that she enjoyed having the freedom to allocate as much time as she wished to learning tasks. Leticia suggested that she enjoyed being able to choose when to carry out learning activities, stating "it's good to get the opportunity...to say I'm not going to do, say reading, on, say Thursday". Bibiana's comments indicated that students enjoyed being in control of scheduling when to do activities/content that they did not find appealing, she stated "if there's something you don't like...it's not being sprung on you, you can say we'll do the things we don't like and then we'll follow it up with a wee[11] game or a bit of oral stuff or something".

The next theme, *opportunity to attempt more difficult tasks*, emerged from interview data from one student (Ramona). When asked how she felt about planning learning tasks, Ramona stated "We had so much fun. We really worked hard on the planning to make sure we were learning enough and, like our teacher says, challenging ourselves", indicating that students enjoyed the opportunity to push themselves and attempt more difficult tasks.

Four students (Ana, Cristina, Paula and Sofía) indicated that they enjoyed planning their learning tasks, but did not provide reasons.

Negative attitudes toward planning learning tasks:

Three themes emerging from interview data were considered negative with regard to planning learning tasks: "group members not working well together"; "dislikes this responsibility", "does not perform the task well".

As regards the first theme, *group members not working well together*, three students (Ana, Silvia and Sofía) expressed concern about planning tasks in groups. In response to the question of how she felt about planning learning tasks, Ana said "there are times when you'd rather do it on your own....I don't like having to do it with other students", suggesting that she experienced difficulty in planning tasks as a group. Elaborating on her response, Ana continued "some of them are very pushy and won't meet you halfway...some people just want it all their way", indicating that she disliked doing this activity with her group members because they did not take her ideas on board. While Ana's comments were

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[11] "Wee" is an informal word used in the north of Ireland which means "small" in size/extent.

negative regarding planning tasks in groups, she was positive toward students being responsible for planning their learning tasks. Sofía stated "I didn't like doing it with other people, that's my only complaint…because I didn't like who was in my group". Her statement indicated that she was not against the process of planning tasks per se, but did not enjoy doing it with the particular students in her group. Her comment does not suggest that she was entirely averse to planning tasks in groups either, but perhaps averse to performing this task with certain individuals with whom she did not get along. Silvia indicated that she preferred to plan tasks alone, stating "I prefer doing it on my own", but she did not elaborate.

With regard to the next theme, *dislikes this responsibility*, two learners (Isabel and Silvia) indicated that they did not wish to plan their own learning tasks. Silvia stated "I don't like students planning, it's not right" indicating that she felt that students should not be responsible for planning learning tasks. Isabel indicated that she did not enjoy planning learning tasks; she said "It was a bit time wasting some days and boring too", indicating that she did not enjoy or value this task.

*Does not perform the task well* was the next theme to emerge from interview data of two students (Cristina and Silvia). When Cristina was asked how she felt about planning learning tasks she said "I'm so bad at that... [I] didn't like saying what we would have to do... I have absolutely no imagination". These comments indicated that she did not perform well at this task because she had difficulty generating ideas. In response to how she felt about planning learning tasks Silvia said "it doesn't come easy. I didn't think most of the stuff was… good". Her comments suggested that she had difficulty getting the hang of this activity and felt that she performed poorly.

### 4.6.1.1.3 Setting learning goals

The treatment group set personal learning goals on two occasions (weeks one and eight). They completed this task individually rather than in groups. Figure 4.8 shows themes which were identified regarding the issue of *setting learning goals*.

**Figure 4.8** Treatment group: themes identified regarding "setting learning goals"

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                    ┌─────────────────────────────────┐
                    │      Setting Learning Goals      │
                    └─────────────────────────────────┘
                              │
              ┌───────────────┴───────────────┐
   ┌────────────────────────┐      ┌────────────────────────┐
   │  Positive attitudes     │      │  Negative attitudes     │
   │  towards setting goals   │      │  towards setting goals   │
   └────────────────────────┘      └────────────────────────┘
```

| Positive attitudes towards setting goals | Negative attitudes towards setting goals |
|---|---|
| Focuses on individual learning (9 students) | Dislikes this responsibility (3) |
| Gives students clear targets to aim for (4) | Restricted by the syllabus (2) |
| Teacher supports learners in this process (1) | |
| Opportunity to push themselves (1) | |
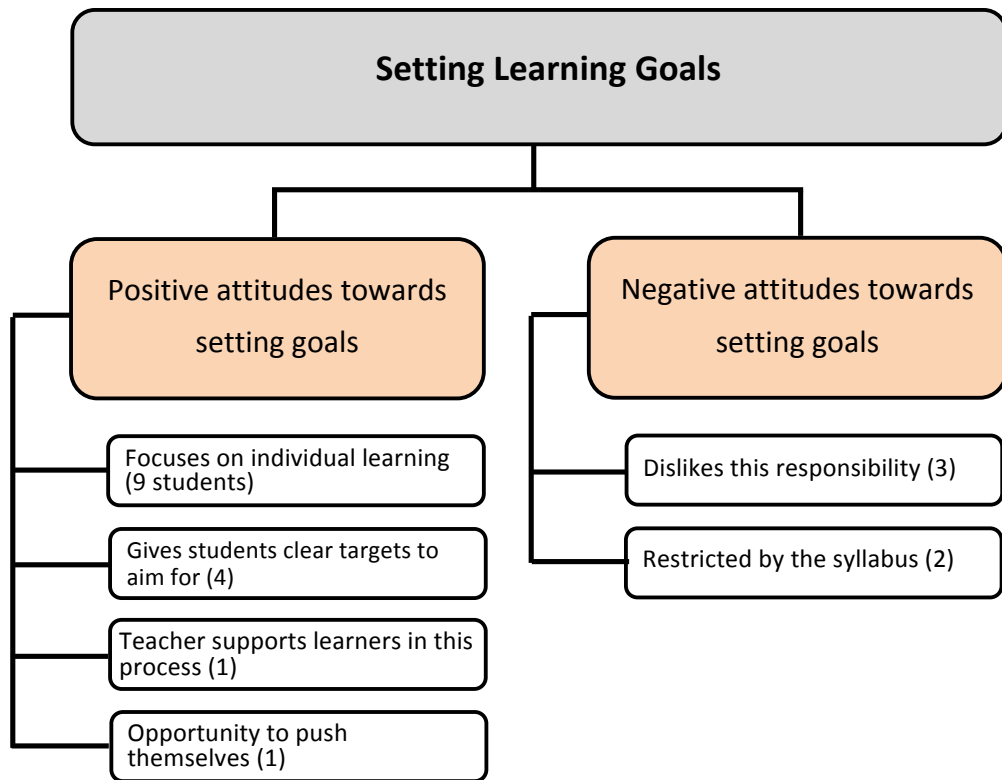
All eighteen students made comments regarding setting their personal learning goals. Sixteen of these students (Ana, Bibiana, Cristina, Elena, Esperanza, Isabel, Juana, Leticia, María, Pabla, Paula, Pilar, Ramona, Salma, Silvia, and Yolanda) indicated that they were positive toward goal-setting. Four students (Isabel, Magda, Salma and Sofía) expressed concerns about engaging in this task. Themes are listed in descending order by frequency of occurrence (Figure 4.8). Data relating to this topic is presented in two sections: 1) positive attitudes toward setting learning goals; and 2) negative attitudes toward setting learning goals.

Positive attitudes toward setting learning goals:

Four themes emerging from interview data were considered positive with regard to setting learning goals: "focuses on individual learning"; "gives students clear targets to aim for"; "teacher supports learners in this process"; and "opportunity to push themselves".

The first theme is *focuses on individual learning*; comments by nine students (Ana, Bibiana, Cristina, Elena, Esperanza, Juana, Pilar, Silvia and Yolanda) were taken as an

indication of this. When asked how she felt about setting learning goals, Ana stated "it's something that you do yourself and if somebody else isn't meeting their goals then it's not your problem so you're just thinking about your own". Ana's comments indicate that setting goals allowed learners to focus on fulfilling personal targets, rather than group targets. Comments made by Cristina ("you can only do it on your own... You just think about what *you* want to achieve") and Bibiana ("You do it for you and it doesn't matter what someone else thinks") also suggest that it was not important to have cooperation with group members when setting goals. Silvia indicated that having personal targets allowed each student to have a degree of influence when it came to planning learning tasks in groups, stating "I could use them [*goals*] for planning and say to my group that we had to do something…because it was the only way I could get my goal". Juana indicated that she used her personal goals to influence tasks planning, stating "I could tell the girls that I planned to know this or whatever and they would schedule in more activities on it or more time on it". Statements from Yolanda ("It was a way to express your own needs"), Elena ("[it] was good for each individual"), Esperanza ("It's supposed to be your own business") and Pilar ("It was good for *me*") indicate that setting goals is a personal process that allowed students to focus on individual learning and work towards their own objectives.

The next theme that was identified regarding setting goals is *gives students clear targets to aim for*; comments made by four students (Leticia, María, Paula and Ramona) were taken as an indication of this. When asked how she felt about setting learning goals, Leticia said "It makes you think more about what you're actually doing and gives you something to aim for", indicating that having personal targets gave her something to aim for in her learning. María felt that the process of setting goals helped learners to focus on learning activities/content that would help them to achieve their targets. She stated "it helps [*students*] to study the right things and move on from things that don't fit into your goal". Paula's comments indicated that her goals encouraged her to learn and gave her clear aims to achieve, she stated "I would have my goals there and I'd be saying right I need to succeed and make this goal a reality. It motivates you". When asked about her experience of the goal-setting process, Ramona said "it sort of forces you to say "OK let's get serious" and, you know, think about what you're actually aiming to learn", indicating that setting goals encouraged her to learn in order to achieve what she had explicitly set out to.

As regards the next theme, *teacher supports students in this process*, one learner (Esperanza) stated "the teacher said you should, like, let her know if you're happy and she said for us to be honest. I think that's the right thing because if the teacher knows you're really trying but you can't learn it then she can help you" indicating that the teacher guided learners in setting goals and offered help and advice to students who had difficulty achieving their goals.

The next theme, *opportunity to push themselves*, emerged from interview data from one student (Esperanza). Discussing the goal-setting process, Esperanza said "as long as you didn't make them [*the goals*] too simple, so it meant you were *trying* to meet them and not just picking something pure handy for the sake of it and then saying "Oh look, I'm meeting all the things I said I would"". Her comments indicate students took advantage of the opportunity to push themselves.

Two students (Isabel and Pabla) indicated that they enjoyed setting goals, but did not elaborate.

Negative attitudes toward setting learning goals:

Two themes emerging from interview data were considered negative with regard to setting learning goals: "dislikes this responsibility"; and "restricted by the syllabus".

With regard to the first theme, *dislikes this responsibility*, three learners (Magda, Salma and Sofía) made comments suggesting that they did not enjoy setting goals. Giving her opinion on setting goals, Magda stated "I didn't get it. It was boring", indicating that she did not see any value in setting learning goals and found the process uninteresting. Salma described the task of setting goals as "unnecessary paperwork" and indicated that she did not enjoy or see any merit in setting goals, stating, "I didn't get anything from filling out all of the forms". Sofía simply said "I didn't like setting learning goals.", but did not elaborate.

As regards the next theme, *restricted by the syllabus*, two students (Isabel and Sofía) expressed concern regarding the limited freedom they experienced when setting goals. Isabel felt that students did not have complete freedom in setting goals because they are not involved in the syllabus creation process. In response to how she felt about the goal-setting process, Isabel said "really the book still decides...well the Department of Education does. They say that we need to cover these things, so then our goals have to be about them".

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Sofía shared Isabel's concerns, stating "I thought we couldn't really set goals that we wanted to because it all had to meet what the teacher said we had to do". Sofía was referring to the teacher's instruction to use learning aims listed in the textbook as a guide for setting personal learning goals.

4.6.1.1.4 Self-evaluating

The treatment group evaluated their learning by assessing their progress towards attaining their learning goals and also by completing reflection records. Figure 4.9 shows themes which were identified regarding the issue of *self-evaluating*.

**Figure 4.9** Treatment group: themes identified regarding "self-evaluating"
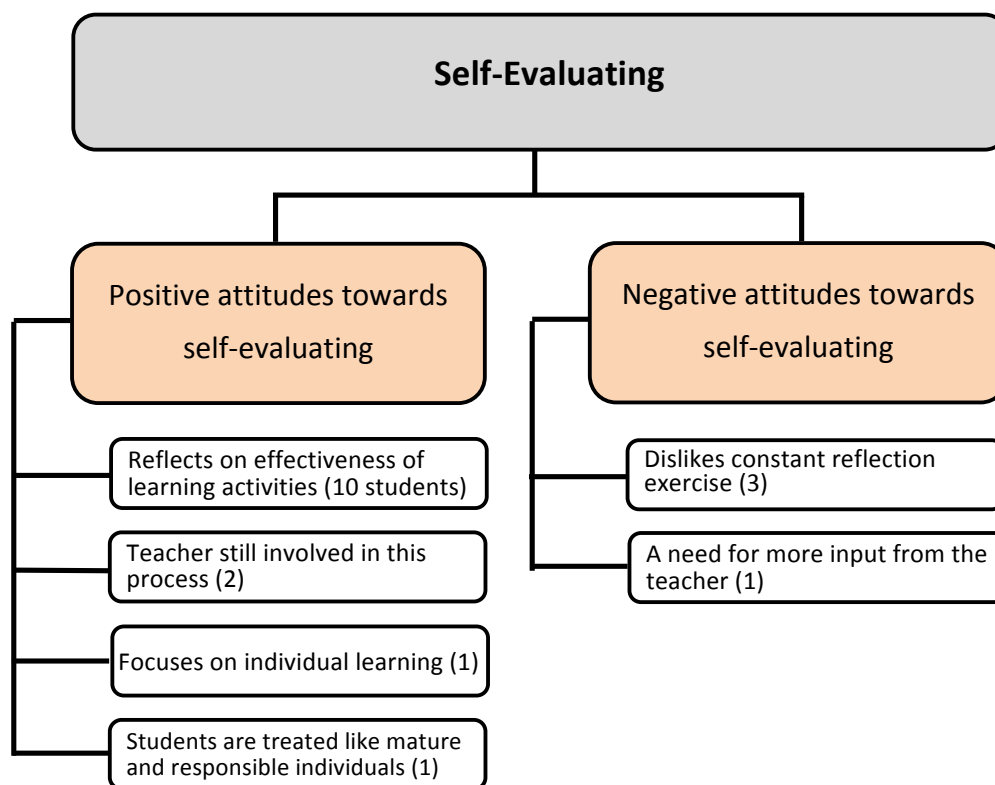


All eighteen students made comments on the subject of self-evaluating. Fifteen of these students (Ana, Bibiana, Cristina, Elena, Esperanza, Isabel, Juana, Leticia, María, Pabla, Paula, Pilar, Ramona, Sofía and Yolanda) indicated that they were positive about self-

evaluating, while four out of the eighteen students (Ana, Magda, Salma and Silvia) expressed concerns about engaging in this process. Themes are listed in descending order by frequency of occurrence (Figure 4.9). Data relating to this topic is presented in two sections: 1) positive attitudes toward self-evaluating; and 2) negative attitudes toward self-evaluating.

Positive attitudes toward self-evaluating:

Four themes emerging from interview data were considered positive with regard to learners evaluating their learning: "reflects on effectiveness of learning activities"; "teacher still involved in this process"; "focuses on individual learning" and "students are treated like mature and responsible individuals".

Ten students (Ana, Bibiana, Cristina, Elena, Juana, Pabla, Pilar, Ramona Sofía and Yolanda) made comments that were taken as an indication of the first theme, *reflects on effectiveness of learning activities*. These students' statements indicated that reflecting on their learning allowed them to consider the value of activities that they had participated in and think about how to improve their learning (if necessary). A selection of such comments includes the following: "you can see if you're improving or if you need to improve" (Bibiana); "If the thing you're doing means you're not learning or…you didn't achieve your goals…You know it's time to get down to business and start learning" (Ramona); "it helped me to plan what to do like because you get to know what worked and what you shouldn't be doing" (Sofía). These statements indicate that learners evaluated the usefulness of their learning activities and reflected on why activities were (or were not) effective.

As regards the next theme, *teacher still involved in this process*, two learners (Esperanza and Paula) indicated that the teacher remained involved in evaluating students' learning. Esperanza said "the teacher's still always be there too to correct us and stuff like that" and Paula stated "I liked showing the teacher that I was really trying", indicating that the teacher was involved in evaluating leaning and students sought her approval regarding their own assessments.

The next theme that emerged is *focuses on individual learning*. One student (Isabel) suggested that students enjoyed evaluating their learning because their performances were not judged against others' performances/standards. When asked how she felt about

evaluating her own learning, Isabel said "[it is] better than feeling you're being compared to everyone. I don't mind because I normally do well, but some of my friends get embarrassed by everyone knowing they're not able to do as well as they are". Her comments suggest that learners sometimes feel anxious or stressed when they perform poorly compared to other learners.

The next theme, *students are treated like mature and responsible individuals*, emerged from interview data from one student (Bibiana). Bibiana suggested that self-evaluating encouraged learners to become more independent, as their teacher did not direct them in this process. She stated "the teacher isn't saying you better learn something and do well or she'll send a letter home... you're trusted to just do it yourself". She also indicated that the atmosphere in the classroom was calmer as students had a more "mature" role, stating "It's more relaxed because you have to be more mature".

Two students (Leticia and María) indicated that they found self-evaluating enjoyable, but did not elaborate.

Negative attitudes toward self-evaluating:

Two themes emerging from interview data were considered negative with regard to evaluating learning: "dislikes constant reflection exercise" and "a need for more input from the teacher".

As regards the first theme, *dislikes constant reflection exercise*, comments from three learners (Ana, Magda and Salma) indicated that they had concerns about being responsible for evaluating their learning. Using the same word she had previously used to describe the goal-setting process, Salma claimed that the self-evaluating process was "paperwork". She expressed apathy towards completing the goal-setting records and reflection records and an extreme dislike of reflecting on her learning, she stated "I hated having to actually think about what I was writing in those, it was so exhausting that I just started writing anything to hurry it up". Ana's comment ("at times we had too much writing") indicated that she also had concerns about the amount of writing involved in filling out evaluation records. Magda expressed disinterest in reflecting on her learning, simply stating "boring" when asked how she felt about the process.

The second theme, *a need for more input from the teacher*, emerged from interview data provided by one student (Silvia). Silvia expressed concern regarding the level of input from the teacher during the learning evaluation process, stating "I would've liked more…correcting and tests from the teacher. I wanted her to test me by asking me stuff, quizzing me on the things we were doing". Silvia's comments indicate that she wanted the teacher to be involved in assessing her learning.

4.6.1.1.5 The teacher's role

The teacher's role changed significantly following the implementation of the ISs when she had to depart from her traditional role in order to create a more learner-centred approach. Her new role involved supporting and facilitating students in planning learning tasks and selecting learning materials, and making her knowledge available to them. Figure 4.10 shows themes which were identified regarding the issue of *the teacher's role*.

**Figure 4.10** Treatment group: themes identified regarding "the teacher's role"
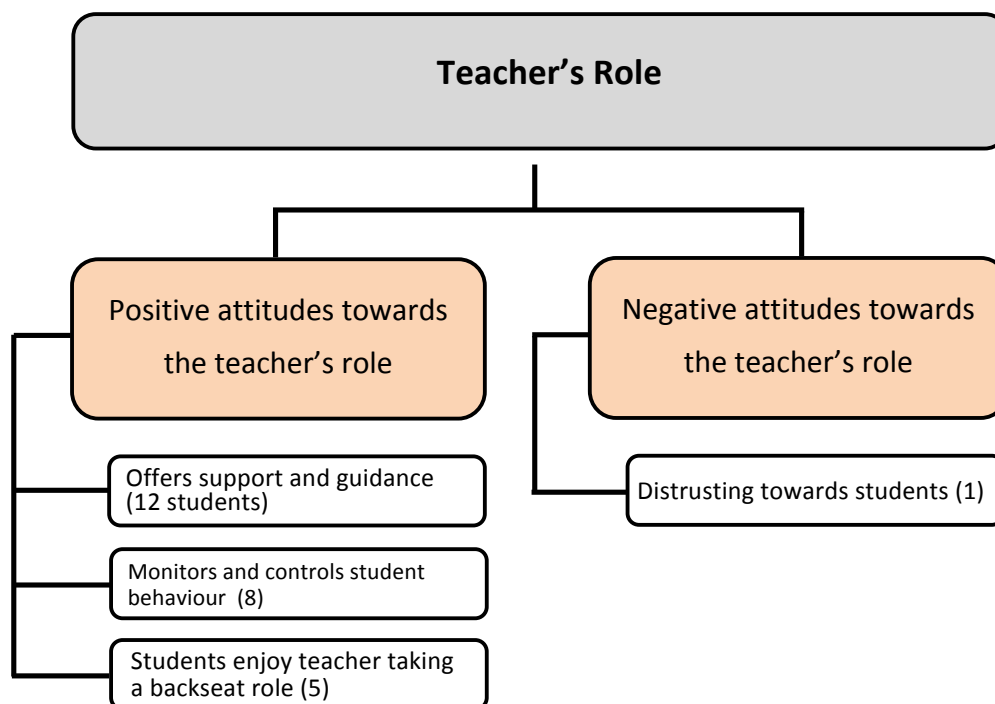
All eighteen students made comments regarding changes in the teacher's role. Seventeen of these students (Ana, Bibiana, Cristina, Elena, Esperanza, Isabel, Juana, Leticia, Magda, María, Pabla, Paula, Pilar, Ramona, Silvia, Sofía and Yolanda) indicated that they were positive about the teacher's new role, while one out of the eighteen students (Salma) expressed concerns regarding changes in her role. Themes are listed in descending order by frequency of occurrence (Figure 4.10). Data relating to this topic is presented in two sections: 1) positive attitudes toward the teacher's role; and 2) negative attitudes toward the teacher's role.

<u>Positive attitudes toward the teacher's role:</u>

Three themes emerging from interview data were considered positive with regard to selecting learning materials: "offers support and guidance"; "monitors and controls student behaviour"; and "students enjoy teacher taking a backseat role".

With regard to the first theme, *offers support and guidance*, comments by twelve students (Ana, Cristina, Elena, Isabel, Juana, Leticia, Magda, Pabla, Paula, Pilar, Ramona and Silvia) were taken as an indication of this. Seven learners (Cristina, Elena, Juana, Leticia, Magda, Paula and Ramona) indicated that their teacher monitored their work and asked if they needed help in order to identify and help individuals/groups who were having difficulty. Comments taken as an indication of this include the following: "[her role was] to guide us... make sure we weren't confused and that we were doing the right things... not making away at mistakes" (Magda); "when we put up our hands she was there like a shot to help. We couldn't have done it without her" (Elena); "She supported us whenever we needed her. I called her over all the time to get advice and she always asked how we were getting on" (Juana), "[her role was] to check that we...weren't having any difficulties" (Leticia); "she would teach you if you asked for her help. She had a big role really" (Paula). Four students (Elena, Isabel, Juana and Silvia) indicated that the teacher supported them in the materials selection process. Comments taken as an indication of this include the following: "She was giving us hints about what kinds of materials we would need" (Elena); "[her role was] to make sure we have good materials. She always had stuff there that we could borrow" (Isabel); "She gave us some good materials to use and she gave us ideas too"

(Juana); and "she helped us when we were picking our materials… let us know we were looking at something that she thought we should pick" (Silvia). Two students (Paula and Ramona) felt that the teacher guided them by offering advice written feedback during class. Two students (Pabla and Pilar) indicated that the teacher explained the meaning of phrases/words. Pilar stated "She explained what everything meant" and Pabla said "She was explaining… we really needed her even though we had more independence". Ana indicated that the teacher supported students in their learning, but did not provide details.

The next theme that emerged regarding the role of the teacher is *monitors and controls student behaviour*; comments made by eight students (Bibiana, Cristina, Esperanza, Leticia, María, Ramona, Sofía and Yolanda) were taken as an indication of this. When asked about the teacher's role, these eight students indicated that she made sure that learners were pulling their weight and working during class. A selection of comments taken as an indication of this includes the following: "if someone isn't pulling their weight she makes it clear that she sees them" Esperanza; "[her role] was to make sure we were working" (Leticia); "she'd be over every two minutes, standing behind you, so you just got on with it… if she wasn't there you would've slacked off… it's good to know that you are, like, accountable to someone" (Ramona); "she was clapping her hands and going "right girls" you know what you're doing, so do it" (Yolanda). Three students (Bibiana, Sofía and Yolanda) suggested that the teacher controlled the level of classroom noise. Bibiana stated "[if] you're getting a wee bit noisy, she says just keep it down", Sofía said "She was controlling the noise" and Yolanda stated "she was going about here and there shushing people".

As regards the next theme, *students enjoy teacher taking a backseat role*, five learners' (Ana, Bibiana, Cristina, Ramona and Sofía) comments were taken as an indication of this. The word "different" was used by three students (Ana, Bibiana and Cristina) to describe their teacher's role following the introduction of the ISs. Ana, Cristina and Ramona indicated that the teacher was no longer teaching or instructing students. Ana stated "we're not, like, being taught by her anymore", Cristina said "she is not really, well, directly teaching", and Ramona stated "she wasn't dictating the whole class". Two students (Ana and Bibiana) felt that the teacher became noticeably kinder in her behaviour towards

students. Ana said "She's been really different... She's been really nice" and Bibiana stated "she just acts so nice and she doesn't shout... [or] give out[12] ... She doesn't go mad".

Data resulting from one student's (Salma) interviews did not indicate a positive attitude toward the role of the teacher.

Negative attitudes toward the teacher's role:

One theme which emerged from interview data was considered negative with regard to the teacher's role in the classroom: *distrusting towards students*. One student (Salma) expressed concern regarding the relationship between her group and the teacher. Salma said "She was constantly, like, looking at us, like staring at our group. I just wished she would go to someone else". These comments indicate that Salma felt that the teacher monitored her group excessively and disproportionately compared to other groups. Salma continued "I could swear it was really me she was watching and not the other girls because I sometimes, like, chat a bit in class and she knows what I'm like, always laughing and all". These statements indicate that there was a possibility that the teacher paid more attention to Salma because she had a reputation of misbehaving during class. Salma continued "I wasn't even doing that [*chatting and laughing*]", suggesting that she felt that the attention she received was unjustified. Salma's comments indicate concern regarding her teacher's distrust and suspicion toward her because of past behaviour.

4.6.1.1.6 Continuing with the approach in future

Students were asked about their feelings regarding continuing with the approach during the next academic year when they would begin the Leaving Certificate programme. They were asked how they would feel about continuing with the ISs and if there was anything that they would change about the learning approach. Figure 4.11 shows themes which were identified regarding the issue of *setting learning goals*.

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[12] "Giving out" is Irish slang for "telling off" or "scolding".

**Figure 4.11** Treatment group: themes identified regarding "continuing with the approach in future"

| Continuing with the Approach in Future | |
|---|---|
| **Wants to continue with the ISs** | **Wants to resume traditional approach** |
| Students enjoy having more control over their learning (5 students) | Prefers traditional approach (3) |
| ISs are effective (4) | Success of ISs depends on others (students/teacher) (3) |
| ISs are flexible (can adapt to student/teacher needs) (2) | Continuity concerns (1) |
| Teacher plays important role (1) | Teacher should be responsible for evaluating learning (1) |
| | Unnecessary to use materials other than textbook (1) |
| | Dislikes working in groups (1) |
| | Concerns regarding LC (1) |

All eighteen students made comments regarding continuing with the learning approach in future. Twelve of these students (Bibiana, Esperanza, Isabel, Juana, Leticia, Magda, María, Pabla, Paula, Pilar, Salma and Yolanda) expressed a desire to continue with the ISs in the next academic year. Six students (Ana, Cristina, Elena, Ramona, Silvia and Sofía) indicated that they wanted to resume the teacher-centred approach. Themes are listed in descending order by frequency of occurrence (Figure 4.11). Data relating to this topic is presented in two sections: 1) desire to continue with the approach; 2) and 3) wants to resume traditional approach.

<u>Desire to continue with the approach:</u>

Four themes emerged from interview data regarding desire to continue with the ISs: "students enjoy having more control over their learning"; "ISs are effective"; "ISs are flexible"; and "the teacher plays an important role".

The first theme that was identified regarding continuing with the approach is *students enjoy having more control of their learning*; comments made by five students (Leticia, Magda, Paula, Salma and Yolanda) were taken as an indication of this. Salma indicated that she wanted to continue with the approach because she enjoyed having more control over her learning; she stated "I do like having more power over what we do". Leticia, Magda and Yolanda also indicated that learners enjoyed having more control over their learning, suggesting a number of initiatives that could be introduced. Leticia indicated that she would like to see an online element introduced, suggesting that each group could display their work in an online portfolio and that groups could view and comment on each other's work. Magda suggested that learners should take responsibility for their own learning by challenging themselves, stating "[students should] always look to improve and be better than we are, even if you're already good". Yolanda stated "when we're going over exam papers and stuff, I think this way will be better because we can decide how much we need to do", indicating that the ISs allowed students to take ownership of their own learning by giving them freedom to implement initiatives. Paula indicated that learners took control of their own learning by engaging in unprompted, self-directed learning outside of school hours. She indicated that she had become familiar with online resources due to the materials selection process. She said "When I go home I try to do as much listening as I can online with the TV stations. The teacher gave us loads of the stations".

As regards the next theme, *ISs are effective*, four learners (Bibiana, Esperanza, Juana and Paula) indicated that the ISs improved learners' behaviour, increased their motivation towards learning Spanish and produced more effective learning. Bibiana indicated that she was more motivated about studying Spanish, stating "I'm even far more interested in Spanish than I used to be... I like going to class more now". Paula also suggested that she had become more motivated towards learning Spanish; she said "it [*the learning approach*] has made me care more about the language... I'm feeling very motivated now when I'm learning Spanish". Esperanza indicated that she felt that the students' behaviour improved due to the ISs. Juana indicated that the ISs were effective as her learning improved.

The next theme is *ISs are flexible*; comments by two students (Bibiana and Yolanda) were taken as an indication of this. Bibiana indicated that she believed that the ISs could be adapted to meet learner/teacher needs, she stated "if something wasn't working or if we had more ideas on how to learn better, then we would adjust it maybe... but, like, only if we weren't happy with something or someone had a good idea of how we could improve". Yolanda suggested that usage of the approach could be scaled back, stating "I would cut it down to two lessons a week with the teacher doing the other three or four the old fashioned way".

The next theme, *the teacher plays an important role*, emerged from interview data of one student (Isabel). Discussing her reasons regarding her desire to continue with the ISs, Isabel indicated that the security of knowing that the teacher would always be on hand to help or facilitate students was important to her.

Three students (María, Pabla and Pilar) expressed a desire to continue using the ISs during the next academic year, but did not elaborate.

Wants to resume traditional approach:

Six (Ana, Cristina, Elena, Ramona, Silvia and Sofía) indicated that they did not wish to continue with the ISs. Seven themes emerged from interview data regarding learners' desire to resume the traditional teacher-centred approach: "prefers traditional approach"; "success of ISs depends on others"; "continuity concerns". "teacher should be responsible for evaluating learning"; "unnecessary to use materials other than the textbook"; "dislikes working in groups" and "concerns regarding the Leaving Certificate".

With regard to the first theme, *prefers traditional approach*, three learners (Ana, Cristina and Ramona) made comments suggesting that they were not sure about continuing with the ISs because they preferred the traditional teacher-centred approach. Ana indicated that she was concerned about using the ISs when preparing for Leaving Certificate examinations. Cristina stated "it's OK this year, but I'm not sure about doing it when I'm not in TY really" indicating that she felt that the felt the traditional approach would be more appropriate for the Leaving Certificate. Ramona indicated that she preferred the teacher-centred approach stating "I would have the teacher doing more, like maybe she could record herself teaching the topic and if we wanted we could watch or listen to it over and

over". Ramona's comments indicated that she preferred the teacher to be at the heart of learning.

The next theme, *success of ISs depends on others*, emerged from interview data collected from three students (Ana, Elena and Ramona). Ramona suggested that working in groups was problematic because group members did not get along. She suggested that the effectiveness of the ISs depended on relationships between group members, stating "this approach all depends on who's actually in your group… I was lucky with the girls I got, but I don't think some of the girls in other groups were thrilled". Ana indicated that she would prefer to limit the amount of time spent working in groups, stating "if we had less group time and more time to work on our own. I work better on my own anyway". Her comments also suggest that working in groups was an issue. Elena felt that student and teacher attitudes would be important should they continue with the ISs the following year; she stated "you would have to see what teacher you have and what kind of people are in your class". She suggested that students could use ISs as an excuse to do very little work, stating "some people would just take the mick[13] if they thought they could. They would be pure dossing about[14], doing nothing". Explaining why the teacher's attitude would be important, she said "if we got one of the other teachers they mightn't like us having any power or control". This statement indicates that she thought that issues could arise concerning a teacher's willingness to relinquish control in the classroom.

As regards the next theme, *continuity concerns*, one student (Cristina) expressed concern regarding the ISs being limited to one subject and concerns about it being brought in so late into her secondary education. Cristina stated "I don't like change... if we always did it from day one, like in first year, then I'd be grand because then it wouldn't be change... It takes getting used to". These comments indicate that Cristina was not averse to the ISs, but rather the timing of their introduction. Giving further reasons for her uncertainty regarding whether she wanted to continue with the ISs, she said "if we didn't do those things in our other subjects I'd be annoyed at having to do them in Spanish, even though I know it is a better way to learn". These comments indicate that Cristina was concerned that her Spanish learning approach would be inconsistent with her overall learning at the school.

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[13] "Taking the mick/mickey" is slang for behaving in a frivolous manner.
[14] "Dossing about" is slang for spending one's time doing very little.

With regard to the next theme, *teacher should be responsible for evaluating learning*, one learner's (Silvia) comment was taken as an indication of this. Silvia stated "I like just getting tests and marks and the teacher quizzing us", suggesting that she preferred the teacher to assess students' learning.

As regards the next theme, *unnecessary to use materials other than the textbook*, one student (Silvia) indicated that she wanted to resume the teacher-centred approach to learning because she did not value students having a say in choice of learning materials. Silvia stated "I want things to go back to normal… I can just do what's in the book then", indicating that she felt the traditional approach worked well and that it was not necessary to change it.

The next theme, *dislikes working in groups*, emerged from comments made by one student (Silvia). Silvia stated "I wouldn't want to be in a group all of the time because it's too hard to agree and I always give in to keep the peace", indicating that there were tensions within her group. She continued "no one likes my ideas and they don't listen to me because I'm not popular enough or cool enough for them I suppose or something stupid like that", suggesting that members of her group were not willing to take her ideas on board, possibly because of her social status within the group.

As regards the next theme, *concerns regarding the Leaving Certificate*, one student (Sofía) indicated that she wanted to go back to a teacher-centred approach because she was concerned about preparing for Leaving Certificate examinations. Sofia stated "when I'm doing my Leaving Cert' I'd like to do things the right way, like with the teacher in charge", indicating that she believed that it was appropriate for the teacher to be at the centre of learning. Elaborating on why she felt that the teacher should resume her traditional role, she continued "she knows, like, how to prepare, just because she's been doing it for years and I wouldn't want to be in the guinea pig class for the Leaving Cert'". These comments indicate that Sofía wished to resume the traditional approach to learning for the Leaving Certificate programme because she perceived the ISs as experimental and untested.

### 4.6.1.2 Comparison Group Results

During the student interviews, the researcher asked seven questions to each of the fourteen participants of the comparison group. These questions were previously listed in Section 4.6.1 (Table 4.44). As previously stated, the questions were designed to elicit their

opinions and thoughts on the prospect of introducing the ISs in a hypothetical sense. The data indicates that students discussed six main issues/topics during the interview sessions: 1) selecting learning materials; 2) planning learning tasks; 3) setting learning goals; 4) self-evaluating; 5) the teacher's role; and 6) introducing the approach in future. The results are presented in six sections, each concerning one of the topics.

4.6.1.2.1 Selecting learning materials

The comparison group were asked about their feelings regarding selecting their own learning resources. Students were made aware that they would have the option to use existing materials (textbook, workbook etc.), search for resources online and/or use materials provided by the teacher. They were informed that the teacher would be available to facilitate and advise students during this selection process. Figure 4.12 shows themes which were identified regarding the issue of *selecting learning materials*.

**Figure 4.12** Comparison group: Themes identified regarding "selecting learning materials"
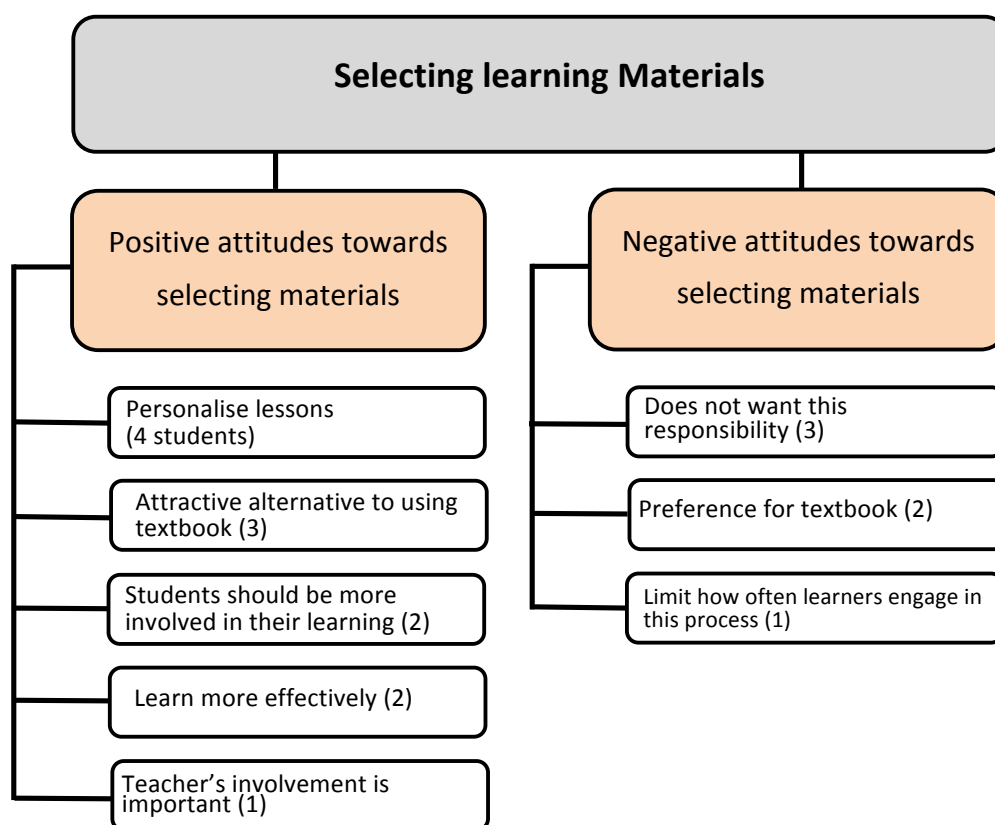
All fourteen students made comments regarding selecting their own learning materials. Eleven of these students (Adriana, Alba, Antonia, Blanca, Camila, Carla, Gabriela, Imelda, Paca, Pepa and Tatiana) indicated that they were positive about the prospect of selecting resources. Five out of the fourteen students (Alicia, Blanca, Imelda, Olivia and Roberta) expressed concerns about the notion of engaging in this process. Themes are listed in descending order by frequency of occurrence (Figure 4.12). Data relating to this topic is presented in two sections: 1) positive attitudes toward selecting materials; and 2) negative attitudes toward selecting materials.

Positive attitudes toward selecting materials:

Five themes emerging from interview data were considered positive with regard to selecting learning materials: "personalise lessons"; "attractive alternative to using the textbook"; "students should be more involved in their learning"; "learn more effectively"; and "the teacher's involvement is important".

With regard to the first theme, *personalise lessons*, four students (Adriana, Carla, Gabriela, and Tatiana) suggested that they would use the selection process as an opportunity to include material relating to personal interests and tastes. Adriana stated "I could find materials or things that, like, interest me... I'm a teenager, so I'd probably find things more for my age", indicating that she viewed selecting resources as an opportunity to incorporate material better suited to her age and interests. Comments from Carla ("you could get stuff that is, like, fun, like games), Gabriela ("you'd get to do much more fun things and you could enjoy it") and Tatiana ("I'd choose lots of games and songs and really fun things") indicate that they would select materials that they considered to be enjoyable.

As regards the next theme, *attractive alternative to using the textbook*, three learners (Adriana, Alba and Blanca) indicated that they would enjoy the freedom to use materials other than the textbook. Blanca said "it'd be good if you saw some other stuff because then you might think "you know what? That's actually much clearer"", indicating that she felt that students could find materials that were superior to the textbook. Comments from Adriana ("the stuff in the book is, like, boring and probably written by teachers") and Alba

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("you get really bored of just sitting reading a book") suggested that they would prefer searching for materials to having to use the book.

The next theme, *students should be involved in their own learning*, emerged from interview data from two students (Antonia and Paca). Antonia said "I'd like to have some more control... I'd rather if I could choose materials for myself and try to learn it", indicating that she would like learners to be allowed to select learning resources. Paca's comment ("it'd be good because you would be more involved in your learning, like, so you would be more hands-on") suggested that she also felt that it was important for students to select their own learning materials.

The next theme that emerged is *learn more effectively*. Two students (Alba and Camila) felt that students would learn more successfully in class if they had a say in the choice of materials. Alba stated "if you were looking for it yourself, you'd probably remember it more. If you were looking through books yourself and trying to figure it out" and Camila said "if you've gone to all the effort of finding the materials, then I think you'd be more likely to actually use them".

As regards the next theme that emerged, *the teacher's involvement is important*, one student (Antonia) said "if the teacher made sure you were doing it and made sure she checked it... that it's not too easy for you... as long as she was giving us advice". Her statements indicate that she felt that the teacher should monitor students, offer advice on selecting materials and approve those selected by students.

Two students (Imelda and Pepa) indicated that they thought it would be a good idea for learners to choose their own learning materials, but did not elaborate.


Negative attitudes toward selecting materials:

Three themes emerging from interview data were considered negative with regard to selecting learning materials: "does not want this responsibility"; "preference for using the textbook"; and "would limit how often learners engage in this process".

With regard to the first theme, *does not want this responsibility*, three learners (Alicia, Olivia and Roberta) indicated that they disliked the idea of having to search for materials. Roberta said "there's no way I'd want to do it.... I wouldn't want all that stuff to do",

indicating that she did not wish to take on this responsibility. Alicia stated "I don't think I'd like being left to do it by myself. I'd rather get help to do it instead of me having to take the responsibility. I wouldn't like much responsibility really. I'd rather have the help of a teacher telling me what to do", suggesting that she was not entirely averse to selecting her own materials as long as she was not solely responsible for selecting them. When asked about her feelings regarding the prospect of students selecting learning materials, Olivia simply stated "I'd hate it", but did not give further details.

As regards the next theme, *preference for using the textbook*, two students (Alicia and Blanca) indicated that they would prefer to use existing materials. In response to how she would feel about having the option to choose her own materials, Alicia said "I'd use what's in the book", indicating that she would rather use materials that the school chooses. Blanca felt that there was no need for students to select materials for themselves because their textbooks are geared towards specific examination programmes. She stated "I'd say I'm happy enough with all the books. I've never really had a problem with using them... The stuff in the book is good... it's for the Junior Cert' or the Leaving".

The next theme, *would limit how often learners engage in this process*, emerged from interview data provided by one student (Imelda). In response to the question of how she would feel about selecting her own learning resources, Imelda said "it'd be good to do, but just as a once in a while thing... it'd be really chaotic if we were using class time to look for materials", indicating that she felt that the amount of time spent on this activity would have to be limited. She suggested that it would be appropriate to engage in this process "once a week".

4.6.1.2.2 Planning learning tasks

The comparison group was asked about their feelings regarding planning learning tasks in groups of three. Figure 4.13 shows themes which were identified regarding the issue of *planning learning tasks*.

**Figure 4.13** Comparison group: Themes identified regarding "planning learning tasks"

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┌──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┐
│                  Planning Learning Tasks                      │
└──────────────────────────────────────────────────────────────┘
        ┌──────────────────────────┬──────────────────────────┐

┌─────────────────────────┐         ┌─────────────────────────┐
│ Positive attitudes      │         │ Negative attitudes      │
│ towards planning tasks  │         │ towards planning tasks  │
└─────────────────────────┘         └─────────────────────────┘

  ┌─────────────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────────────┐
  │ Generate more ideas in      │     │ Does not want to take on    │
  │ groups (3 students)         │     │ this responsibility (3)     │
  └─────────────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────────────┘

  ┌─────────────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────────────┐
  │ Personalise lessons (2)     │     │ Problems working in         │
  │                             │     │ groups (2)                  │
  └─────────────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────────────┘

  ┌─────────────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────────────┐
  │ Necessary if selecting      │     │ Learners become             │
  │ materials (2)               │     │ inefficient/lazy (2)        │
  └─────────────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────────────┘

  ┌─────────────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────────────┐
  │ Learn more effectively (1)  │     │ Concerns regarding ability  │
  │                             │     │ to perform this task (1)    │
  └─────────────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────────────┘

  ┌─────────────────────────────┐     ┌─────────────────────────────┐
  │ Attractive alternative to   │     │ Limit how often learners    │
  │ following the teacher's     │     │ engage in this process (1)  │
  │ lesson plans (1)            │     │                             │
  └─────────────────────────────┘     └─────────────────────────────┘
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All fourteen students made comments regarding the prospect of planning their learning tasks. Eight of these students (Adriana, Alba, Blanca, Gabriela, Imelda, Paca, Pepa and Tatiana) indicated that they were positive about planning learning tasks and eight students (Alba, Alicia, Antonia, Camila, Carla, Imelda, Olivia and Roberta) expressed concerns about engaging in this process. Themes are listed in descending order by frequency of occurrence (Figure 4.13). Data relating to this topic is presented in two sections: 1) positive attitudes toward planning learning tasks; and 2) negative attitudes toward planning learning tasks.

Positive attitudes toward planning learning tasks:

Five themes emerging from interview data were considered positive with regard to tasks planning: "generate more ideas in groups"; "personalises lessons"; "necessary to plan

learning tasks if selecting materials"; "learn more effectively"; and "attractive alternative to following the teacher's lesson plans".

The first theme, *generate more ideas in groups*, emerged from interview data from three students (Adriana, Gabriela and Paca). Adriana stated "You could, like, learn from other people", indicating that she felt that students could benefit from planning tasks in groups. Gabriela said "if you're doing it as a group it'd be good because you'd be using some materials that you didn't find. Like maybe someone else has something that you didn't find, but that's good", indicating that she thought planning learning tasks in groups would allow learners to pool their resources together and benefit from each other. Paca felt that group planning would allow learners to generate more ideas, stating "it'd be good too doing it in groups because it means we'd have a lot more ideas".

With regard to the next theme, *personalises lessons*, comments from two students (Blanca and Tatiana) were taken as an indication of this. Blanca stated "you'd be able to skim over the stuff you find easy and focus more on what you need to... you could focus on your weak areas", indicating that she felt that the planning learning tasks could present learners with an opportunity to strengthen areas of weakness. Tatiana suggested that planning learning tasks would allow learners to plan activities that they found enjoyable, stating "We'd make it fun... it'd be exciting... [we could] plan fun things". She did not elaborate on which activities she was referring to.

The next theme that emerged regarding planning learning tasks is *necessary to plan learning tasks if selecting materials*; comments made by two students (Gabriela and Paca) were taken as an indication of this. When asked how they would feel about planning their learning tasks, Gabriela said "it seems like the next logical step... if everyone has chosen their own materials the teacher can't just do the same thing with everyone" and Paca stated "I suppose it's the next thing to do. If we're all choosing away at our own materials then one person, I mean the teacher, can't plan one lesson for everyone", indicating that they felt that groups would have to plan their own learning tasks if they were using different materials to other groups.

As regards the next theme, *learn more effectively*, one learner's (Adriana) comment was taken as an indication of this. Adriana stated "you could learn a wee bit more. It would stick better", suggesting that she felt that planning learning tasks would improve students' learning.

With regard to the next theme, *attractive alternative to following the teacher's lesson plans*, one student (Imelda) indicated that she would like to plan her own learning tasks because she did not always enjoy her teacher's efforts. She said "I don't always like what the teacher has planned for us".

Two students (Alba and Pepa) indicated that they would like students to plan their learning tasks, but did not provide reasons.

<u>Negative attitudes toward planning learning tasks:</u>

Five themes emerging from interview data were considered negative with regard to planning learning tasks: "does not want to take on this responsibility"; "problems working in groups"; "concerns regarding ability to perform this task"; "learners become inefficient/lazy"; and "would limit how often learners engage in this process".

With regard to the first theme, *would not like to take on this responsibility*, three learners (Carla, Olivia and Roberta) indicated that they did not wish to plan their own learning tasks. Carla said "seems like a lot of work... it'd take ages... It'd suck the fun out of it because it'd be fun if, like, you were picking your own materials", indicating that she thought that having to plan tasks was unnecessary and would take the enjoyment out of selecting materials. Olivia also indicated that she was not interested in taking on this responsibility, stating "I'm not interested... it's bad enough being in any class without getting all involved in giving yourself work... I no more want to plan lessons than write out stupid Spanish sentences". When asked how she would feel about students planning learning tasks, Roberta said "I wouldn't want to do that.... I don't want to sit there planning a Spanish lesson", suggesting that she was not in favour of students taking responsibility for planning learning tasks.

As regards the next theme, *problems working in groups*, two students (Alba and Camila) expressed concern regarding planning tasks in groups. Alba said "some people might not bother doing that much if they were just in a group", indicating that she felt that working in groups might negatively influence student behaviour. Camila also indicated that she felt that problems could arise from planning tasks in groups, stating "there might be a lot of clashing and fighting for power... you know especially what girls are like, very strong minded and want their own way". Proposing how these problems might be addressed, she

continued "I think you would need a group leader... then you could have one girl with the final say... you'd need to rotate the leader or there'd be some serious falling out and arguing". These comments indicate that Camila felt that potential problems regarding group work could be resolved by designating a group leader and changing the leader often.

*Concerns regarding ability to perform this task* was the next theme, emerging from interview data of two students (Alicia and Carla). When asked how she would feel about students planning learning tasks, Alicia said "I don't think I'd do very well. I need the teacher", indicating that did not think that students would do a good job of planning learning tasks on their own. Carla felt that students would not know how to go about planning learning tasks, stating "[I'd] be sitting thinking "Ok now how do I manage all this?"".

As regards the next theme, *learners would become inefficient/lazy*, one student (Antonia) indicated that she felt that learners would use the process of planning learning tasks as an excuse to do very little work. Antonia felt that giving students this responsibility would not work; she explained "It's too tempting to do nothing... you always get problems with some students and we all would take it easy if we could and then we'd be complaining we're not doing enough".

The next theme is *need to limit how often learners engage in this process*; one student's (Imelda) comment was taken as an indication of this. Imelda stated "it wouldn't be good to do it every time. Maybe once a week or…once every two weeks", indicating that she would limit the amount of time that students spend planning learning tasks.

### 4.6.1.2.3 Setting learning goals

The comparison group was asked how they would feel about setting personal learning goals. They were informed that they would complete this task individually rather than in groups. Figure 4.14 shows themes which were identified regarding the issue of *setting learning goals*.

**Figure 4.14** Comparison group: Themes identified regarding "setting learning goals"
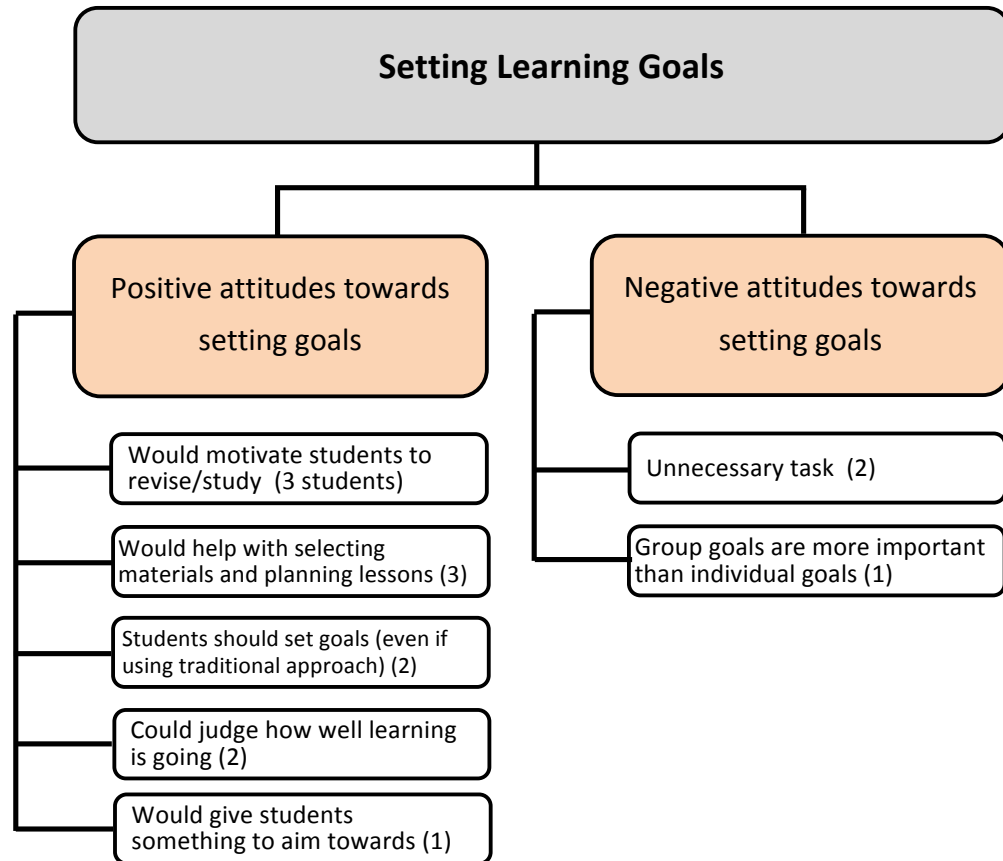


Thirteen out of fourteen students made comments regarding setting personal learning goals. One student (Alicia) did not comment on how she would feel about setting learning goals. Ten of the thirteen students who responded (Adriana, Alba, Antonia, Blanca, Camila, Carla, Gabriela, Imelda, Pepa and Tatiana) indicated that they were positive toward goal-setting, while three out of the thirteen students (Olivia, Paca and Roberta) expressed concerns about engaging in this task. Themes are listed in descending order by frequency of occurrence (Figure 4.14). Data relating to this topic is presented in two sections: 1) positive attitudes toward setting learning goals; and 2) negative attitudes toward setting learning goals.

Positive attitudes toward setting learning goals:

Five themes emerging from interview data were considered positive with regard to setting learning goals: "would motivate students to revise/study"; "would help with selecting learning materials and planning learning tasks"; "students should set learning

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goals (even if using traditional approach)"; "could judge how well learning is going"; and "would give students something to aim towards".

The first theme that was identified regarding setting goals is *would motivate students to revise/study*; comments made by three students (Adriana, Blanca and Gabriela) were taken as an indication of this. Adriana stated "We would need to make goals to revise more because we could just skip topics and then the next time we'd see it, it'd be in an exam", indicating that she felt that setting learning goals would deter learners from neglecting important content. Gabriela felt that learning goals would encourage students to focus on appropriate learning content, stating "it'd be important so that you don't lose sight [of the fact] that you're still actually supposed to be learning... a new tense or words". Asked how she would feel about setting goals Blanca said "you'd say "I better get this learned off" or "I'll need to know X, Y or Z"... you'd focus more on what to cover", indicating that she felt that learners would be encouraged to study relevant learning content in order to achieve their goals.

The next theme, *would help with selecting learning materials and planning learning tasks*, emerged from interview data from three students (Alba, Blanca and Camila). Alba felt that setting goals would help students when selecting their learning materials, stating "you would think "have we got what we need so that we, like, get our goals?"". Blanca stated "you'd focus more on what to cover rather than maybe spending too much time on the one thing", indicating that she believed that personal goals would help students to plan their learning tasks. Camila also felt that learning goals would help students to plan their learning tasks, stating "if the group is planning what to do they could make sure that they include stuff so that each person would be able to achieve their own goals"

The next theme is *students should set learning goals (even if using traditional approach)*, comments by two students (Antonia and Imelda) were taken as an indication of this. When asked how they would feel about setting learning goals, Antonia stated "I think it would be good to do that even in class as it normally is" and Imelda said "our Irish teacher always tells us that we should be doing that anyway. I think it's not just for languages though, you should do it in every subject". These comments indicate that these students felt that learners should set learning goals regardless of whether the approach is teacher-centred or learner-centred and regardless of the subject.

As regards the next theme, *could judge how well learning is going*, two learners (Carla and Tatiana) felt that learning goals would allow students to judge the effectiveness of learning activities. Carla said "you could say what you want to achieve... so you could... know if you're not doing so good" and Tatiana stated "It'd be good if you want to make sure you're doing well".

The next theme that was identified regarding setting goals is *would give students something to aim towards*; comments made by one student (Pepa) were taken as an indication of this. Pepa stated "It gives you something to aim towards so you know what direction to go in".

Negative attitudes toward setting learning goals:

Two themes emerging from interview data were considered negative with regard to setting learning goals: "unnecessary task"; and "group goals are more important than individual goals".

With regard to the first theme, *unnecessary task*, two learners (Olivia and Paca) made comments suggesting that they would not enjoy setting goals. Giving her opinion on setting goals, Olivia stated "I think it's pointless. If I want to do the work, I will". Paca said "you're obviously trying to learn what you're doing, that goes without saying so I don't see the point.... it's time wasting". These comments indicate that these students believed that learning goals would not add anything to their learning and that they could learn just as effectively without setting goals.

As regards the next theme, *group goals are more important than individual goals*, one student (Paca) expressed concern regarding setting personal goals. Paca said "we'd all have to agree on the goals... if we all are on the same page like in terms of where we expect to be", indicating that she believed that setting goals to achieve as a group was more important.

One student (Roberta) simply responded "no" when asked how she would feel about setting learning goals, but did not elaborate.

The comparison group was asked how they would feel about evaluating their learning. They were informed that they would complete this task individually rather than in groups. Figure 4.15 shows themes which were identified regarding the issue of *self-evaluating*.

**Figure 4.15** Comparison group: Themes identified regarding "self-evaluating"

```
                        Self-Evaluating

        Positive attitudes towards          Negative attitudes towards
            self-evaluating                      self-evaluating

    Teacher needs to be involved         Would not like to take on this
    (4 students)                         responsibility (1)

    Could reflect on effectiveness       Would prefer teacher to
    of learning activities (3)           evaluate learning (1)

    Students must be honest (3)

    Important if setting learning
    goals (2)

    Students should be responsible
    for evaluating their learning (2)

    Peer evaluating (1)
```

Thirteen out of the fourteen students made comments on the subject of self-evaluating. One student (Alicia) did not comment on how she would feel about setting learning goals. Ten of these students (Alba, Antonia, Blanca, Camila, Carla, Gabriela, Imelda, Paca, Pepa and Tatiana) indicated that they were positive about the idea of self-evaluating, while three out of the fourteen students (Adriana, Olivia and Roberta) expressed concerns about

engaging in this process. Themes are listed in descending order by frequency of occurrence (Figure 4.15). Data relating to this topic are presented in two sections: 1) positive attitudes toward self-evaluating; and 2) negative attitudes toward self-evaluating.

Positive attitudes toward self-evaluating:

Six themes emerging from interview data were considered positive with regard to learners evaluating their learning: "teacher needs to be involved in this process"; "could reflect on effectiveness of learning activities"; "students must be honest"; "important if setting learning goals"; "students should be responsible for evaluating their learning"; and "peer evaluating".

The first theme, *teacher needs to be involved in this process*, emerged from interview data from four students (Alba, Antonia, Gabriela and Tatiana). Alba suggested that self-evaluations could be supplemented with the teacher's opinion; she stated "you might think that you did really well. The teacher would be helpful if you were doing it yourself, like a second opinion". Antonia also indicated that the she felt that the teacher's opinion would be important, stating "you want your teacher's opinion. She'd know if you could improve something". Gabriela stated "I would like the teacher's help... to know that you're doing well... you might think you are but maybe you're not at all compared to her standards so you need to know you're doing well in her eyes as well as your own". These comments indicated that she felt that it would be important for the teacher to approve students' self-evaluations. Tatiana also felt that it would be important for the teacher to approve learners' assessments of their learning, stating "you need the teacher to back it up".

Three students (Gabriela, Imelda and Paca) made comments that were taken as an indication of the next theme, *could reflect on effectiveness of learning activities*. These students' statements indicated that they felt that reflecting on their learning would allow them to consider the value of learning activities that they participated in and think about how to improve their learning (if necessary). A selection of such comments includes the following: "it's important so you know that your learning is going good, that you're doing enough... you need to see if you're learning... you need to know that you're doing well" (Gabriela) "We should be checking ourselves and see how we're doing" (Imelda), and

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"You have to test yourself... and see if you can remember and... if you can you're doing good stuff" (Paca). These statements indicate that learners would evaluate the usefulness of learning activities and reflect on why activities were (or were not) effective.

As regards the next theme, *students must be honest*, three learners (Antonia, Blanca and Camila) felt that students would have to be truthful in their assessments regardless of their performance. When asked how she would feel about evaluating her own learning, Antonia stated "You would have to be really honest". Blanca felt that it would be important for students to think carefully about areas that could be improved rather than focus on praising what is going well. She said "I'd maybe just say "aye I'm doing well enough"... but you could push yourself. Like, don't be too praising of yourself and focus more on what you can do better with". Camila felt that it would be important for students to set goals that they could realistically achieve, stating "they should be realistic... You have to know your abilities... you have to say well "have I done it?" or "did I give myself a really hard goal for me?"".

As regards the next theme, *important if setting learning goals*, two learners (Camila and Pepa) felt that evaluating their learning would be important in order to assess progress made towards achieving personal goals. Camila said "you need to evaluate if you've actually learned what you said you were going to, otherwise what's the point of having the goals" and Pepa stated "you would do that if you set goals, or why did you set them in the first place? It's a good idea so if you need to pull your socks up[15] you can".

The next theme that emerged is *students should be responsible for evaluating their learning*, two students' (Carla and Imelda) comments indicated this. Carla said "Well you should be doing that anyway" and Imelda said "We should be checking ourselves... if we don't learn it the teacher doesn't care... you have to evaluate yourself and care about your own learning"

The next theme that emerged is *peer evaluating*. One student (Paca) suggested that students could evaluate each other's learning. Paca stated "you just need to have one of us to test the other two girls' understanding and see if they are learning their stuff".

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[15] "To pull one's socks up" means to make an effort to improve one's work.

<u>Negative attitudes toward self-evaluating:</u>

Two themes emerging from interview data were considered negative with regard to evaluating learning: "would not like to take on this responsibility" and "would prefer the teacher to evaluate learning".

As regards the first theme, *would not like to take on this responsibility*, comments from one learner (Olivia) indicated that she had concerns about being responsible for evaluating her learning. Olivia stated "I don't even like doing the stuff the teacher tells us to do so I hardly want to do more stuff... just not interested" indicating that she viewed taking on this responsibility as an unwelcome chore. She continued "we're always told to write out stuff and I hate it". Olivia's comments indicated that she had concerns about the amount of work involved in this process.

The second theme, *would prefer the teacher to evaluate learning*, emerged from interview data provided by one student (Adriana). Adriana stated "The teacher needs to correct over stuff... I'd rather someone else correct my work and tell me how I'm doing to make sure I was definitely doing well", indicating that she would prefer the teacher to assess students' learning.

One student (Roberta) indicated that she would not like to take responsibility for evaluating her learning, but did not provide details.

<u>4.6.1.2.5 The teacher's role</u>

The comparison group was asked what they felt their teacher's role would be in a classroom where students were selecting materials, planning learning tasks, setting personal learning goals and self-evaluating. Figure 4.16 shows themes which were identified regarding the issue of *the teacher's role*.

**Figure 4.16** Comparison group: Themes identified regarding "the teacher's role"
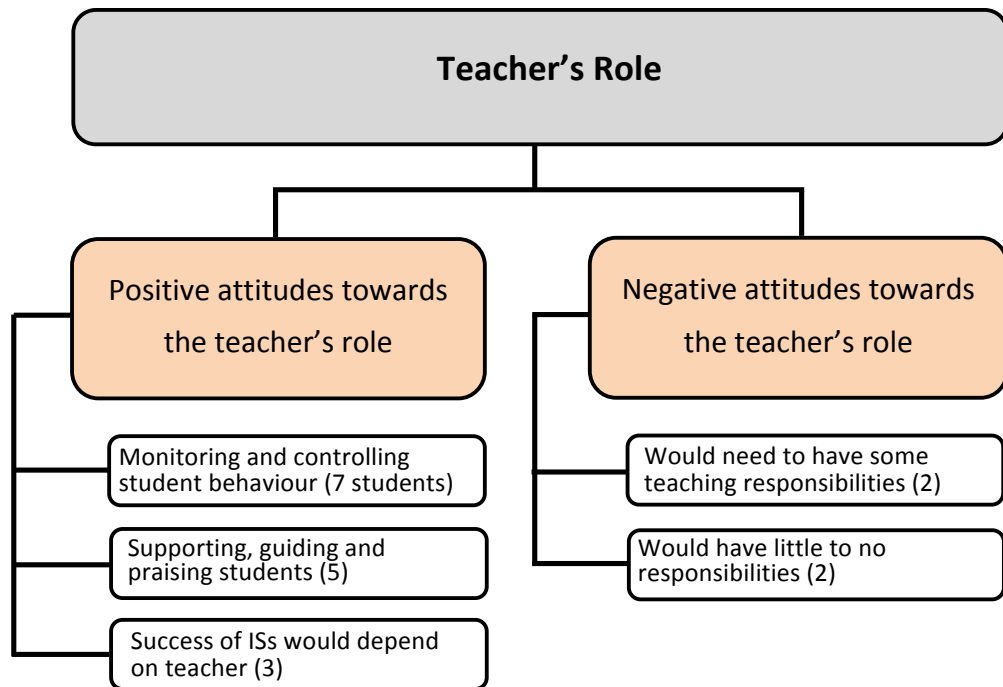


All fourteen students made comments regarding the teacher's role in this hypothetical classroom scenario. Eleven of these students (Adriana, Alba, Alicia, Antonia, Blanca, Camila, Carla, Gabriela, Paca, Pepa and Tatiana) indicated that they were positive about the role that they envisaged their teacher undertaking. Four students (Imelda, Olivia, Paca and Roberta) expressed concerns regarding her role. Themes are listed in descending order by frequency of occurrence (Figure 4.16). Data relating to this topic is presented in two sections: 1) positive attitudes toward the teacher's role; and 2) negative attitudes toward the teacher's role.

Positive attitudes toward the teacher's role:

Three themes emerging from interview data were considered positive with regard to selecting learning materials: "monitoring and controlling student behaviour"; "supporting, guiding and praising students"; and "success of ISs would depend on the teacher".

The first theme that emerged regarding the role of the teacher is *monitoring and controlling student behaviour*; comments made by seven students (Adriana, Alba, Antonia, Camila, Carla, Paca and Tatiana) were taken as an indication of this. When asked about the teacher's role, four students (Alba, Carla, Paca and Tatiana) indicated that they felt that the teacher should make sure that learners were pulling their weight and working during class. Comments taken as an indication of this include the following: "the teacher would have to check a lot that people were actually doing things... not sitting there discussing something else" (Alba); "She should see if you're working and not taking it too easy. You should be doing some work and she should make sure that you are" (Carla); "[it's only] because the teacher's there that a lot of those girls do something" (Paca); "She has to make sure that we are learning and that we're not distracted" (Tatiana). One student (Adriana) felt that the teacher's role would involve controlling the level of classroom noise, stating "If a group was really noisy you would kind of think it was the teacher's responsibility to keep them in check". Three students (Antonia, Camila and Paca) felt that the teacher's role would involve disciplining and punishing students who were not behaving appropriately. A selection of comments taken as an indication of this includes the following: "the teacher has to control the situation.... she'd need to be stern and stand no nonsense from dossers. Just say "Look do the work or you're going to get reported"" (Antonia); "She'd have to just make sure that you got in trouble the same way as you would have before for the same things" (Camila); and "she'd have to sort the troublemakers out and keep an eye on them" (Paca).

With regard to the next theme, *supporting, guiding and praising students*, five students (Adriana, Alba, Alicia, Blanca and Pepa) felt that their teacher's role would involve these responsibilities. Comments taken as an indication this included the following: "she should be saying you're doing well here, but you could do that better" (Adriana); "the teacher would need to be making sure that what you're doing is right, that you're not using wrong Spanish or vocabulary... help you if you had questions" (Alba); "She should ask how you're getting on. See if you're getting on okay" (Alicia); "[she'd be] checking that you know your stuff" (Blanca); "[she'd] tell you if you're doing well, tell you if you are making mistakes... correct your Spanish" (Pepa). These statements indicated that these learners felt that their teacher should identify and help students who are having difficulty, and help

those having difficulty, guide learners by offering advice and feedback and correcting students' work.

As regards the next theme, *success of ISs would depend on the teacher*, three learners' (Antonia, Camila and Gabriela) comments were taken as an indication of this. Speaking about the teacher's role in the hypothetical learner-centred approach, Antonia stated "the teacher has to control the situation". Camila said "if it doesn't work it's because she didn't make us do it or keep us under control. If it did work it'd be because she said that "this is it, this is how we do things now so do it"", indicating that she believed that success or failure of the ISs would come down to how well the teacher managed the classroom. Commenting on the role of her teacher in a learner-centred scenario, Gabriela stated "she's got to oversee it".

Negative attitudes toward the teacher's role:

Two themes which emerged from interview data were considered negative with regard to the teacher's role in the classroom: "would need to have some teaching responsibilities"; and "would have little to no responsibilities.

As regards the first theme, *would need to have some teaching responsibilities*, two students (Imelda and Roberta) expressed concern about their teacher departing from her teaching duties. Imelda said "she's the fluent Spanish speaker, not us, so she should be making sure that she is still teaching us". When asked what she thought her teacher's role would involve, Roberta replied "to teach".

The next theme is *would have little to no responsibilities*; two learners' (Olivia and Paca) comments were taken as an indication of this. When asked what her teacher's role would involve in a learner-centred approach, Olivia said "I've no idea. She'll probably just sit there picking her nails or flicking her hair for all she'd care." In response to the same question, Paca stated "I didn't even see her in my head once. I sort of assumed she would be replaced... like it'd just be us", indicating that she felt that her teacher would have no place in a learner centred classroom. However, reflecting on her response, Paca then changed her mind, stating "but I suppose that would never work... you'd end up doing nothing... she'd have to be there". Paca continued "one day... she was called to the office and she told us to look over the vocabulary... but they don't do it if she's not there... we'd

need her to just get them all working". Her comments indicated that Paca did not think that her teacher would have a part to play in a learner-centred classroom, but on reflection recanted her assertion and conceded that the teacher's presence would be necessary.

4.6.1.2.6 Using the approach in future

Students were asked about their feelings regarding introducing the learner-centred approach during the next academic year when they would begin the Leaving Certificate programme. They were asked how they thought it would be received if the approach were introduced. Figure 4.17 shows themes which were identified regarding the issue of *using the approach in future*.

**Figure 4.17** Comparison group: Themes identified regarding "using the approach in future"
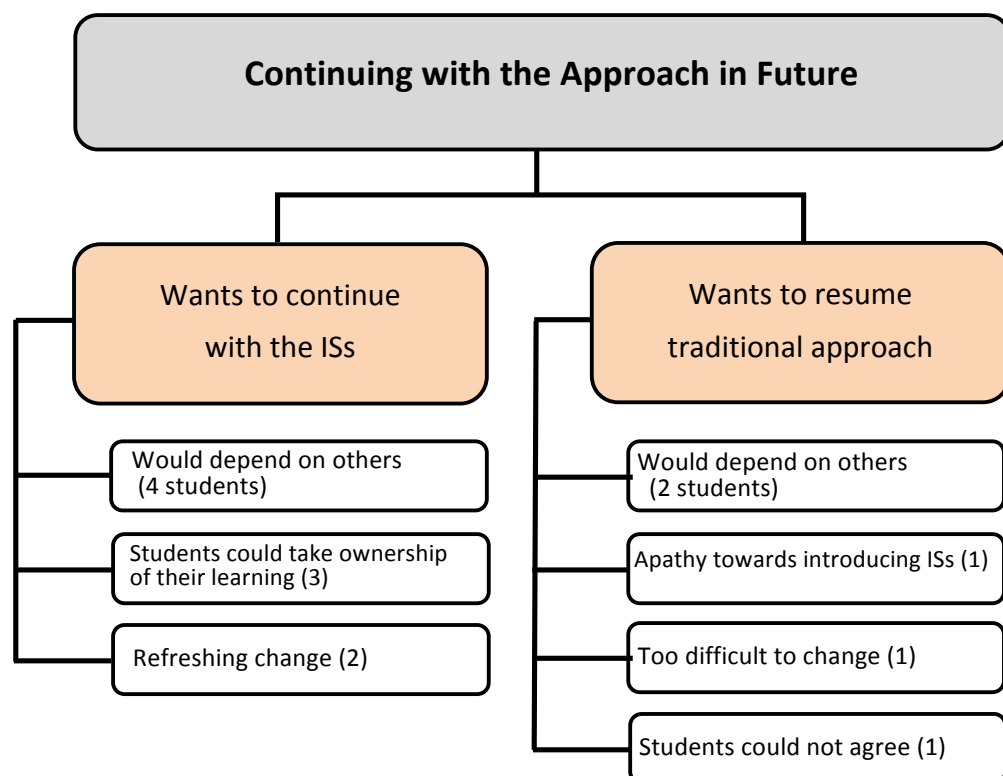
All fourteen students made comments regarding using the learning approach in future. Eight of these students (Adriana, Alba, Alicia, Antonia, Camila, Gabriela, Pepa and Tatiana) expressed a desire to introduce the ISs in the next academic year. Six students (Blanca, Carla, Imelda, Olivia, Paca and Roberta) indicated that they would prefer to stick with the teacher-centred approach. Themes are listed in descending order by frequency of occurrence (Figure 4.17). Data relating to this topic is presented in three sections: 1) desire to introduce the approach; 2) undecided whether to introduce the approach; and 3) preference for sticking with traditional approach.

Desire to introduce the approach:

Three themes emerged from interview data regarding desire to continue with the ISs: "would depend on others"; "students could take ownership of their learning"; and "refreshing change".

As regards the first theme, *would depend on others*, four learners (Adriana, Alba, Antonia and Camila) indicated that they believed that the ISs could only work if students and teachers wanted to do it. Adriana felt that some students would use a learner-centred approach as an excuse to misbehave, stating "People would be messing…chatting more to their friends rather than doing the work". Antonia also felt that some students would use the approach as an opportunity to do very little work, stating "you'd get your dossers just taking advantage". Alba stated "I'd definitely go with it if it worked for me, but you always get people who are never happy, so I don't know if we'd get everyone to agree to do it", indicating that she believed that the ISs would not work unless everyone was serious about it. Camila felt that it would be up to the teacher to make students get on board and make the ISs a success.

The next theme that was identified regarding continuing with the approach is *students could take ownership of their learning*; comments made by three students (Alicia, Antonia and Camila) were taken as an indication of this. These learners suggested a number of initiatives that could be introduced. Comments from Alicia ("It should be more fun. We could sing"), Antonia ("we could make Spanish class a wee bit more fun.... more games") and Camila ("we need to have more fun. If learning is fun you learn more") indicated that

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they would plan activities that they find enjoyable. Alicia and Antonia also suggested that they would introduce more listening activities, indicating that the ISs would allow students to have ownership of their own learning and freedom to take initiative.

The next theme is *refreshing change*; comments by two students (Gabriela and Tatiana) were taken as an indication of this. Tatiana said "students just want a change from the usual boring class... if we started doing this in every Spanish lesson I don't think it would get boring... all of our other subjects wouldn't change, so it'd be refreshing". These comments indicate that she believed that the ISs would make Spanish class more interesting compared to other subjects. Gabriela suggested that she felt it would be a welcome change from how they normally study Spanish; she said "I'd like to see it changed to this... it sounds like what I want. I'd prefer it to what we do every other year".

One student (Pepa) expressed a desire to introduce the ISs during the next academic year, but did not elaborate, simply stating "I want to....it'd be good".


Preference for sticking with traditional approach:

Six learners (Blanca, Carla, Imelda, Olivia, Paca and Roberta) indicated that they would not like to introduce the ISs. Four themes emerged from interview data regarding learners' preference for sticking with the traditional teacher-centred approach: "would depend on others"; "apathy towards introducing the ISs"; "too difficult to change" and "students could not agree".

With regard to the first theme, *would depend on others*, two learners (Blanca and Carla) made comments suggesting that introducing a learner-centred approach would depend on the teacher and students giving it their support. Blanca expressed concern about teachers' unwillingness to relinquish control, stating "the teachers in here love the power". She also felt that students would need to make sure that they were happy with it; she said "you'd need to make sure that everyone was learning as much as they need or wanted to". Carla stated "well you'd need to check with everyone... it only takes one or two not to like it and then everyone copies and follows the few", indicating that she believed it would be necessary to have all students on board with the idea. Her comments suggest that students are likely to follow suit even if only a small number of them are not happy about introducing the ISs.

As regards the next theme, *apathy towards introducing the ISs*, one student (Olivia) expressed indifference towards the ISs. Asked how she would feel about using the ISs, Olivia stated "I'd just think roll on lunchtime or home-time or whatever.... I wouldn't care less. Let them bang on with it". Her comments indicate that she was not averse to the ISs, but not interested in their introduction either.

With regard to the next theme, *too difficult to change*, Imelda stated "we couldn't just completely change overnight. When you're used with one way it's not easy to just stop it... You can't just say that we're doing it this way now and that's that", suggesting that she felt that it would be difficult for students to adapt to a learner-centred approach.

As regards the next theme, *students could not agree*, one student (Roberta) expressed a preference for sticking with the teacher-centred approach to learning because she did not believe that all students would be in favour of implementing the ISs. Roberta stated "Some people might love it, but it wouldn't work because not everyone would... Then one group would be complaining if another group was getting better marks".

Paca indicated that preferred to continue using the traditional approach, but did not provide further details.

### 4.6.2 Teacher Interview

The teacher was interviewed on a one-to-one basis during the final week of the experiment (week sixteen). She was asked to reflect and share her thoughts having experienced the effects of the treatment firsthand. The questions that she was asked during the interview session are listed in Table 4.45.

**Table 4.45** Teacher interview questions

| Question no. | Teacher's Questions |
|---|---|
| 1 | What has been your experience of this treatment? |
| 2 | Do you think the students' learning was influenced? |
| 3 | How do you think the students' learning was influenced? |
| 4 | Would you continue with this approach in future? |
| 5 | Would you change anything about the approach? |

The teacher was asked to give her opinion on the effectiveness of the approach and asked how she would feel about continuing with the approach in future. Figure 4.18 shows themes which were identified regarding the teachers' experience of using the ISs.

**Figure 4.18** Themes identified regarding the teacher's experience of using the approach
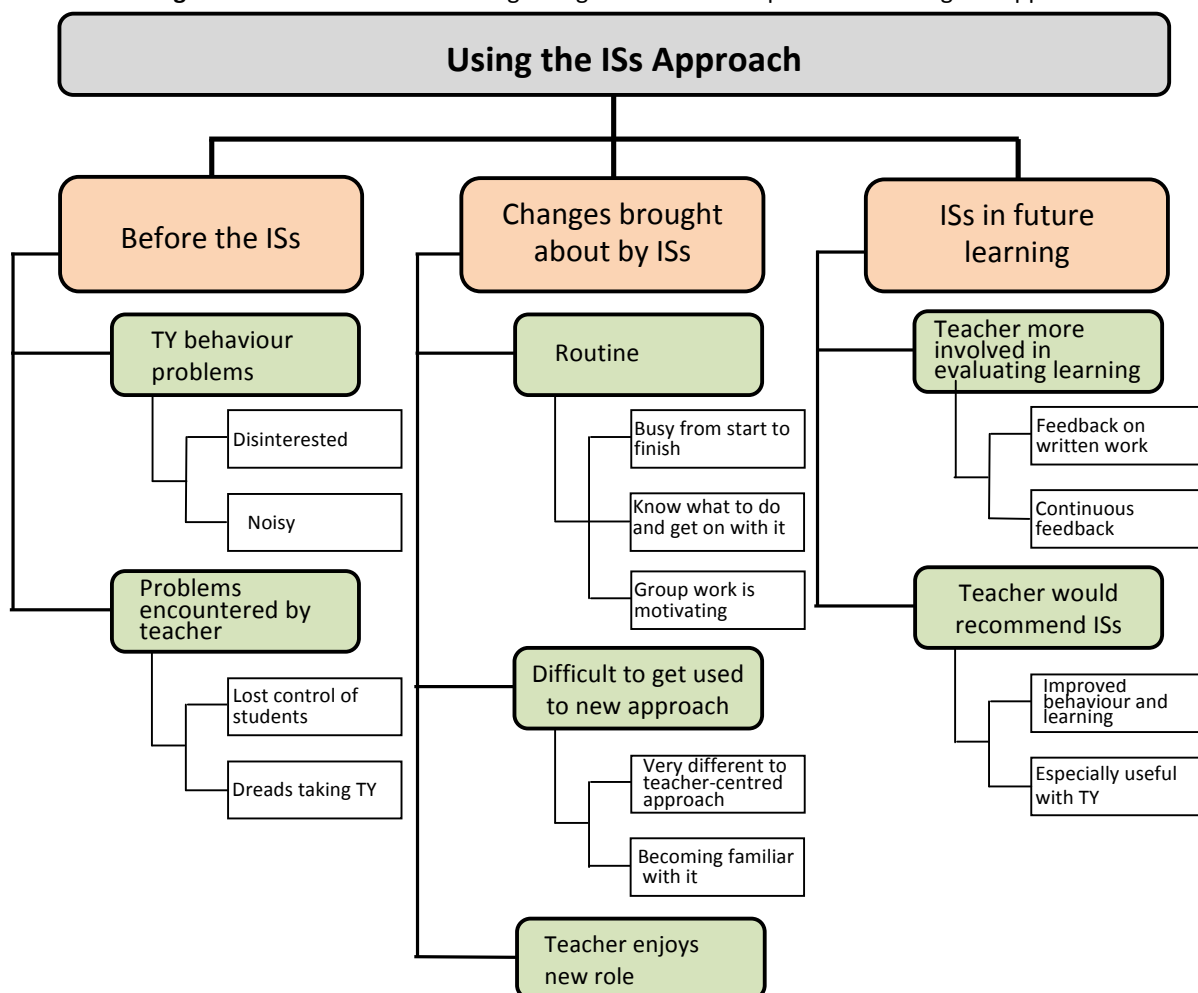


Data relating to the teacher's experience of the ISs is presented in three sections: 1) background information (regarding the classroom situation before introducing the ISs); 2) the influence of the ISs; and 3) Using the ISs in future learning.

### 4.6.2.1 Background Information: Prior to the Introduction of the ISs

The teacher provided background information regarding her experience of teaching TY students prior to the introduction of the ISs. She indicated that her students had not been behaving well during class. She suggested that students had been difficult to control, noisy

and generally disinterested in Spanish lessons. She explained that teaching TY students can be particularly challenging for teachers, stating "it can be extremely difficult to keep them interested... [they] think why should they be working hard when they're in TY... they think it's all fun". Indicating her students' apathy towards Spanish lessons, she mentioned how, in a bid to motivate them, she had asked students to decide on activities to participate in during class. According to her, the students had requested to read a Spanish novel, she stated "they wanted to do a novel, so we started the novel". She explained how, two weeks into reading it, the students informed her that they did not wish to continue with the novel, she said "half of them never gave me the money for the books and then they said they didn't want to do it, so then I was stuck with all these books". The explanation that she offered for their lack motivation and disinterest was the fact that they were in TY, she stated "when they get into TY a lot of them too think it's just a year for dossing and think they can do whatever they like".

The teacher indicated that TY students were generally above average in terms of academic achievement, she said "[the] groups that I have for the TY are really full of very bright, good, wee diligent girls... I had them before, they are good really, very intelligent. They were the pick of the groups when they were doing the Junior Cert". She felt that their behaviour problems appeared simply because these students were in TY; she said "when they get into TY they just run amok". The teacher suggested that behaviour problems which emerge in TY are usually resolved when the students move back into mainstream education, stating "when they get into fifth year, they normally go back to doing their work and they're top of the class again".

The teacher indicated that student behaviour problems negatively influenced her own motivation. She stated "they can be terrible... I would just nearly give up on them... I used to dread having them... I couldn't have stuck them all year".

## 4.6.2.2 Influence of the Intervention Strategies

The teacher indicated that she enjoyed using the ISs and felt that they positively influenced learner behaviour, stating "it can be extremely difficult to keep them interested, let me tell you, so from that point of view I thought it was fantastic and I was delighted with the whole thing". She suggested that the ISs helped her to introduce a routine into the classroom which helped to control the students' behaviour; she said "instead of me sitting

there trying to figure out what to do to keep them under control and get them to be quiet, because they can be terrible, we knew what we were doing every day". She continued "they used to just look at you when you said to them to take out their books. Now they are in the swing of things when they come in". She indicated that the students began engaging more in class and were more participative than usual in classroom activities, stating "they just got on with it, all their wee bits and pieces and activities. I really didn't expect that".

Commenting on how the ISs influenced student's learning, the teacher indicated that group work was helpful in generating motivation. She said "because they're in their wee groups, when one or two of them are getting on with it then it encourages the other members to get involved".

The teacher suggested that the approach was difficult to get used to because she had grown accustomed to the teacher-centred approach that she was familiar with. She said "it was a wee bit hard getting used to it... when you're used to doing things one way it can be hard to just start doing things another way". She suggested that she and her learners adapted to it well and that it improved her experience, stating "we got the hang of it... in the long run it made my life a lot easier".

The teacher indicated that she enjoyed taking a backseat and facilitative role, stating "It meant then that I wasn't standing there trying to get them to do the book, a book that they do not want to see when they're in TY... I could sit back a bit more and let them get on with it... I had no one to disappoint".

### 4.6.2.3 Using the Intervention Strategies in Future Learning

The teacher suggested that the ISs could be improved by requiring students to submit written work to her; she said "I would maybe like to have some compulsory requirements so that they had to hand up stuff to me to have a look at". She indicated that some of the students had been doing this during the ISs and that it helped her to indentify learners who were having difficulties with the content that they were covering; she stated "some of them gave me letters and things to correct... if they were making a pattern of getting something wrong... I could explain [it] to them". She indicated that she would like the students to submit a project to her at the end of each chapter/unit, so that she could evaluate their learning. She also suggested that it would be important to have smaller pieces of written work submitted regularly so that students could receive ongoing evaluation from the

teacher; she stated "it's better to have ongoing evaluation through mostly written things, you know". She indicated that teachers do not have enough opportunities to evaluate learning on an ongoing basis in a teacher-centred approach. She suggested that the traditional approach has its shortcomings in terms of student evaluation, stating "with the other years, when we finish a chapter and they don't know it, it's too bad because we haven't got all year to go over stuff for the ones who are falling behind, we have to reward the students who are keeping on top of things and working hard to do it too"

The teacher suggested that she would be recommending the ISs approach to other Spanish teachers within the school; she stated "I think it is a great idea and the proof is in the pudding and I've seen it for myself... this has been brilliant for me and for them [*the students*]". She hinted that she would be promoting its use for TY in particular, but indicated that she felt it would be an appropriate approach to use in second year too. She said "apart from TY, I think it would certainly have a place in maybe the other years too, especially a nice wee year like second year. They would get loads of revision done".

## 4.7 Researcher Observations

The researcher observed the treatment group's behaviour for the duration of the sixteen week experiment. These observations indicated that students became more efficient at sourcing and selecting materials over time, spending less time on this activity as they became familiar with online and physical resources. They began sourcing larger volumes of materials, which meant that they did not have to search for materials as often. Students' ability to plan learning tasks also seemed to improve over time, as they initially spent more time planning tasks than actually completing tasks, however, as the experiment progressed, improvement in their ability to plan tasks was observed, as students began spending more time completing learning tasks than planning which tasks to do. As the experiment progressed, students became more familiar with their responsibilities and appeared to get into a routine of carrying out these responsibilities without instruction.

Students occasionally produced noise levels above what the teacher considered acceptable, however, they reduced their volume when the teacher expressed concern. The researcher observed that students often discussed personal plans for the weekend and gossiped when speaking Spanish. The teacher did not appear bothered by this as long as students spoke Spanish. For example, she did not request that they stop nor did she attempt to direct the topic or content of the students' conversations back to the task at hand.

In the beginning, when a group was waiting for the teacher's assistance, they did not continue learning/working until their teacher arrived to provide support. However, as the experiment progressed, students continued working while awaiting the teacher's advice/help.

The students generally appeared content and enthusiastic about what they were doing during the experiment and they seemed to put effort into using the ISs approach. Learners continued to seek the teacher's approval regarding selecting materials, planning tasks and setting/evaluating learning goals, and they appeared to respond well to her comments.

## 4.8 Student Profiles

Individual profiles containing quantitative and qualitative information were created for the treatment group (Appendix K). As regards quantitative information, the profiles display levels of learner motivation and autonomy (pre-, post- and follow-up). The quantitative information was derived from data collected via the Motivation and Autonomy questionnaires.

With regard to qualitative information, the profiles display information relating to learner opinions on seven main issues/topics (selecting learning materials; planning learning tasks; setting learning goals; self-evaluating; the teacher's role; working in groups; and using the learning approach in future). The qualitative information is derived from data collected via goal-setting records, reflection records and interview sessions.

Student profiles are presented in tables. Quantitative information is represented using diagrams and text, and qualitative information is represented using text, symbols and colours (Figure 4.19).

**Figure 4.19** Student profile template
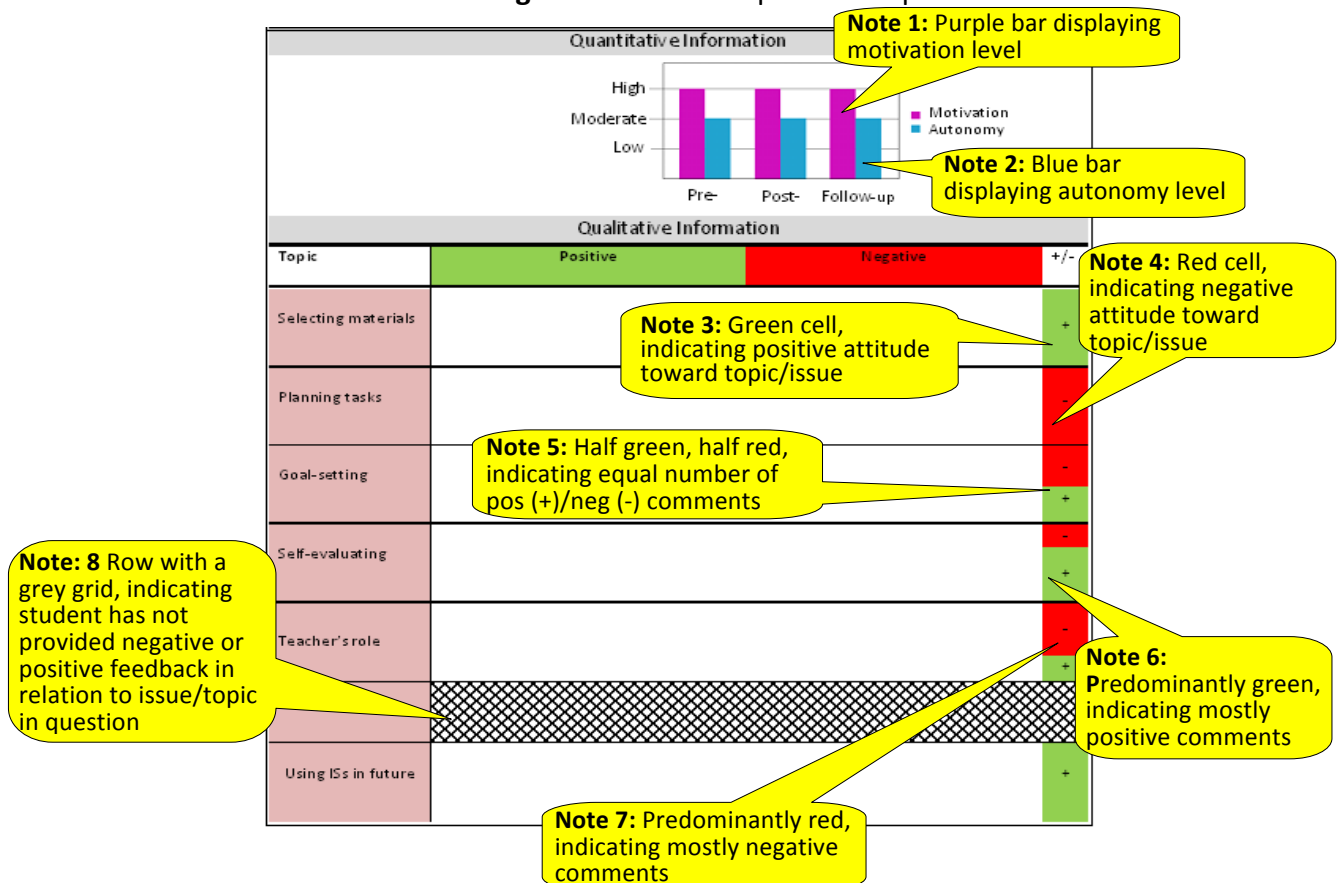
Figure 4.19 is a replica of the table used in subsequent sections to display student profiles. The first section of the table concerns a student's quantitative information as regards levels of motivation and autonomy. Levels of motivation and autonomy are represented by a bar chart. The bar chart contains pre-, post-, and follow-up results and indicates levels (low/moderate/high) of motivation and autonomy. Motivation is indicated by purple bars/columns (Figure 4.19: Note 1), while blue bars signify autonomy levels (Note 2).

The second section of the table concerns a student's qualitative information as regards feelings/opinions on eight topics; topics are listed in the far left column, which is shaded lilac. A student's opinions are divided into two categories, positive and negative. The column on the far right indicates whether comments concerning an issue/topic are mostly negative or positive. Positive comments are indicated by the colour green, accompanied by a plus/addition symbol (Note 3) and negative comments are indicated by the colour red, accompanied by a minus/subtraction symbol (Note 4). Where a student provides both positive and negative feedback regarding a topic, this is indicated by a cell which is shaded both green and red. In the case of a student providing equal amounts of positive and negative feedback, this is indicated by a cell which is shaded half green and half red (Note 5). If the cell is predominantly shaded green, this indicates that the student's opinions were mostly positive (Note 6), whereas a cell that is mostly shaded red indicates overall negative opinions relating to the issue in question (Note 7). A row that contains a grey grid indicates that a student has not provided negative or positive feedback in relation to a particular topic (Note 8).

### 4.8.1 Observations regarding student profiles

The student profiles (presented above) indicated the treatment group's positivity/negativity towards the ISs, in relation to selecting materials, planning tasks, setting goals, self-evaluating, the teacher's role, working in groups and use of the ISs in future. The profiles indicated whether students' responses were entirely positive/negative, predominately positive/negative or equally positive/negative towards the ISs. In order to further examine positivity and negativity towards the ISs, entirely positive and

predominately positive comments were combined to produce a single "positive" category and the same was produced in respect of negative comments (Table 4.46).

**Table 4.46** Percentages of positive and negative comments towards the ISs

| Topics | Positive | Negative |
|---|---|---|
| Selecting materials | 83.33% | 11.11% |
| Planning learning tasks | 72.22% | 11.11% |
| Goal-setting | 77.78% | 11.11% |
| Self-evaluating | 83.33% | 16.67% |
| Teacher's role | 83.33% | 11.11% |
| Working in groups | 66.67% | 5.56% |
| Using ISs in future | 66.67% | 33.34% |

The majority of students provided positive feedback regarding their experiences of the ISs. More than two-thirds, and in most cases more than three-quarters, of students were positive regarding all seven topics listed in the Table (4.64). Fifteen out of eighteen students (83.33%) provided positive comments regarding selecting materials, self-evaluating and the teacher's role, fourteen students (77.78%) were positive towards setting learning goals, thirteen students (72.22%) were positive regarding planning tasks, and twelve students (66.67%) provided positive feedback towards working in groups and using the ISs in future.

As regards negative comments, six out of eighteen students (33.34%) were negative towards using the ISs in future, three students (16.67%) were negative regarding self-evaluating, two students (11.11%) indicated that they were negative towards selecting materials, planning tasks, goal-setting and the role of the teacher, and one student (5.56%) provided negative feedback regarding working in groups.

The student profiles also included quantitative data relating to levels of motivation and autonomy. High-level autonomy, more so than high-level motivation, was an indicator of positivity towards the ISs. As regards students with high levels of both post- motivation and autonomy (Leticia, María and Pilar), they were positive towards intervention tasks such as selecting materials, planning learning tasks, setting learning goals and self-evaluating. As regards students with high levels of post- autonomy only (Ana, Bibiana, Elena, Ramona and Sofía), three students were positive towards selecting materials, planning learning tasks, setting learning goals and self-evaluating (Bibiana, Elena and Ramona), two students were positive regarding self-evaluating (Ana and Sofia) and one student was positive towards selecting materials (Ana). As regards students with high levels of post- motivation only, two

were positive towards setting learning goals (Cristina and Silvia) and one provided positive feedback regarding self-evaluating (Cristina).

Figure 4.20 shows the post- motivation and autonomy levels of students who wanted to continue using the ISs and those who wanted to resume the traditional learning approach.

**Figure 4.20** Comparing motivation and autonomy with desire to use the ISs or the traditional approach
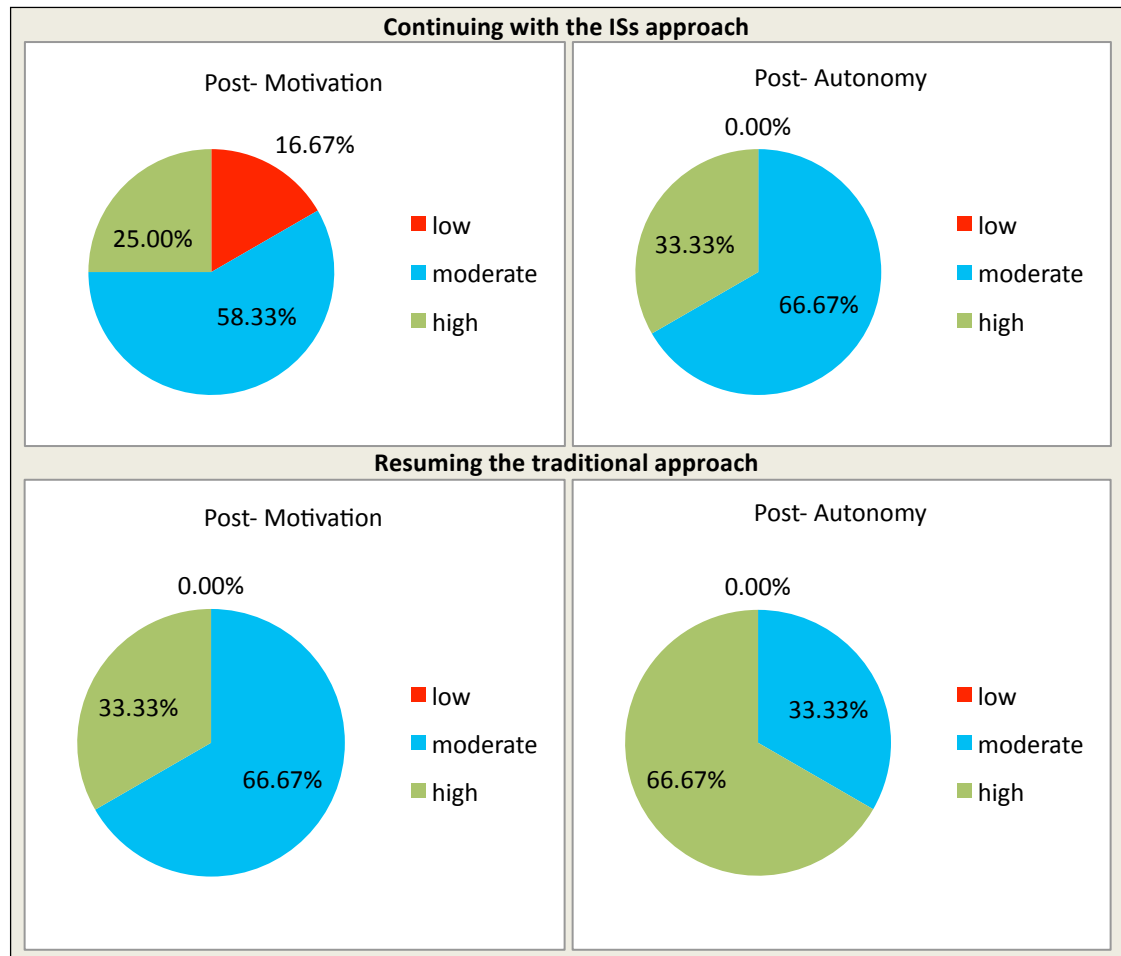


Twelve out of eighteen students expressed a desire to continue using the ISs (Bibiana, Esperanza, Isabel, Juana, Leticia, Magda, María, Pabla, Paula, Pilar, Salma and Yolanda), while six students expressed a desire to resume the traditional approach (Ana, Cristina, Elena, Ramona, Silvia and Sofía). As regards the students who preferred the ISs approach, 58.33% had moderate-level motivation, 25.00% had high levels of motivation and 16.67% had low-level motivation. As regards their autonomy levels, 66.67% had moderate levels, 33.33% had high levels and 0.00% had low-level autonomy. These results indicate that the

majority of students who wanted to continue with the ISs had moderate levels of both motivation and autonomy. As regards the six students who preferred the traditional approach, 66.67% had moderate-level motivation, 33.33% had high levels of motivation and 0.00% had low-level motivation. As regards their autonomy, 66.67% had high levels, 33.33% had moderate levels and 0.00% had low-level autonomy. These results indicate that the majority of students who wanted to resume the traditional approach also had moderate levels of motivation; however, these students had predominately high levels of autonomy.

Three out of eighteen students had high levels of both autonomy and motivation in post- results (Leticia, Maria and Pilar). All three of these students indicated that they wanted to continue using the ISs. Out of five students who had high levels of autonomy (Ana, Bibiana, Elena, Ramona and Sofía) only one student (Bibiana) indicated that she wanted to use the ISs during the next academic year. Two students had high levels of motivation only (Cristina and Silvia) and neither expressed a desire to continue using the ISs.

As regards the twelve students who wanted to continue with the ISs approach, two students (Isabel and Pilar) had gains in their motivation, however only one of these students (Isabel) maintained her gains in the follow-up results. Four out of the twelve students had gains in their autonomy (Bibiana, María, Pilar and Salma), however only two of them (Pilar and Salma) maintained their gains.

As regards the six students who wanted to resume the traditional approach, three of them (Ana, Ramona and Silvia) had gains in their motivation, however only one of these students (Silvia) maintained her gains. Two out of six students had gains in their autonomy (Ana and Elena) and both maintained their gains.

## 4.9 Summary of Results

The results of the present study were presented in eight sections: 1) results of the Learner Motivation questionnaire; 2) results of the Learner Autonomy questionnaire; 3) results of the follow-up survey; 4) results of the goal-setting and evaluation records; 5) student reflections; 6) interviews; 7) researcher observations; and 8) student profiles. The results are summarised in the sections that follow.

### 4.9.1 Learner Motivation

The Learner Motivation questionnaire was employed to investigate the motivational types (intrinsic or instrumental) and levels (low/moderate/high) of the treatment group (n=18) and the comparison group (n=14). Regarding motivational *types*, neither group had a noticeable tendency towards intrinsic or instrumental motivation prior to or at the end of the period of time in which the ISs were implemented. T-tests indicated statistically significant increases in the intrinsic and instrumental motivation of the treatment group following the use of the ISs, while there were no statistically significant changes in the comparison group's results.

The results on motivational *levels* indicated that the majority of participants from both groups had moderate-level motivation prior to and at the end of the period of time in which the ISs were implemented. The results of the treatment group showed that low-level motivation decreased, while moderate- and high-level increased. There were no changes in the comparison group's categories of motivation. T-tests showed that the treatment group's increase in motivational levels was statistically significant. The follow-up results suggested that gains in motivation were maintained seven months after the experiment was completed, at which time the treatment group had a different teacher and no longer engaged with the ISs (Section 4.3).

### 4.9.2 Learner Autonomy

The Learner Autonomy questionnaire was used to investigate students' autonomy levels (low/moderate/high). The majority of participants from both groups were moderately autonomous prior to and at the end of the period of time in which the ISs were implemented. The treatment group's results showed that high-level autonomy increased,

while low- and moderate-level autonomy decreased. There was an increase (from three to ten) in the number of treatment group students who indicated that they practised Spanish with friends, made suggestions to the teacher (from six to ten), took opportunities to speak Spanish (from eight to twelve) and discussed learning problems with their classmates (from thirteen to seventeen). In addition, t-tests indicated that the increase in autonomy in the treatment group was statistically significant with the follow-up results suggesting that the gains in autonomy were maintained.

There was an increase in low-level autonomy in the comparison group, while there was a decrease in moderate levels of autonomy and no change in high-level autonomy. However, these changes were not statistically significant and therefore could have occurred by chance.

### 4.9.3 Goal-setting and Evaluations

The goal-setting records were completed by the treatment group only, as a tool for planning and evaluating strategies to achieve personal goals. First students set goals, then they assessed their progress toward attaining them and finally, they reflected on why goals were (or were not) achieved. All eighteen students eventually reported achieving their learning goals. Reasons that students gave for achieving their goals included: putting in effort and/or persevering; finding the content easy/familiar; working well as a group; receiving support from the teacher; and enjoying learning activities/tasks. After students had reflected on why they had achieved their goals, they were asked to contemplate what they would continue doing in future and what they would do differently. In response to what they would continue doing, there was a decrease (from nine to six) between the evaluation sessions in weeks seven and sixteen in the number of students who stated that they would work in groups, however, it remained the most popular suggestion. In relation to what they would do differently, there was a decrease (from four to zero) in the number of students who indicated that they would ask their teacher to assist their learning, while there was an increase (from one to two) in the number of students who claimed that they would plan more individual, rather than group, learning tasks.

### 4.9.4 Student Reflections and Interviews

The student reflection form was completed by the treatment group only, as a tool for reflecting on learning. Four major themes emerged: *taking responsibility for learning*, *the role of the teacher*, *working in groups*, and *future learning*.

Interviews were carried out to investigate the students' and teacher's views on the ISs. All of the participants in the treatment group and comparison group were interviewed in order to establish how they felt about *selecting materials, planning learning tasks, setting learning goals, self-evaluating, the role of the teacher* and *continuing with the ISs approach* during the next academic year. The majority of students in the treatment group expressed positive opinions regarding all six topics of conversation, with twelve students expressing a desire to continue using the ISs during the next academic year.

During her interview, the teacher indicated that the ISs positively influenced the treatment group's learning behaviour by introducing a routine and that group work, in particular, was helpful in generating motivation. She also expressed a sense of enjoyment in taking a more facilitative role. The teacher said that she would recommend the ISs to other Spanish teachers within the school and promote its use for TY in particular.

### 4.9.6 Researcher observations

The researcher's observations indicated that students became more efficient at sourcing and selecting materials over time. Improvement in their ability to plan learning tasks was also observed, as students became more efficient at planning which tasks to do and thus, had more time to allocate to completing the tasks. Eventually, students got into a routine of carrying out their responsibilities without instruction/prompting. They sought the teacher's approval regarding selecting materials, planning tasks and setting goals and responded positively to her comments/feedback.

### 4.9.7 Student Profiles

Finally, this section summarises the information contained in the student profiles which were created for the treatment group. Firstly, a summary dealing with the ISs and levels of motivation and autonomy is presented, followed by a summary of learners' attitudes towards (six aspects of) the treatment and finally, a summary of their views on whether or not they would like to continue using the ISs.

With respect to *the ISs and levels of autonomy and motivation*, the profiles showed that changes in levels of post-treatment motivation and autonomy occurred in one direction only (i.e. from lower to higher levels).

*Learners' attitudes towards the ISs* relate to six aspects of the treatment (selecting learning materials; planning learning tasks; setting learning goals; self-evaluating; the teacher's role; and working in groups). In relation to the first aspect, *selecting learning materials*, fifteen students were positive, two were negative and one had mixed attitudes (positive and negative) towards this task.

The majority of students provided positive feedback on their experiences of the ISs. Thirteen students were positive towards *planning learning tasks*, the second aspect of the treatment, while two students were negative about it and three had mixed views. Fourteen students were positive towards the third aspect of the ISs treatment, *setting learning goals*, while two had negative views and two had mixed views. The fourth aspect was *self-evaluating*. Fifteen students were positive towards it, and three students had negative views. Fifteen students were positive towards the fifth aspect, *the role of the teacher*, while two students had negative views and one had a mixed view. Twelve students were positive towards the sixth aspect, *working in groups*, while one student had negative views, two students had mixed views and three students did not share their views on working in groups.

The student profiles also indicate *whether or not students want to continue using the ISs approach*. Twelve students expressed a desire to continue using the ISs, while five expressed a desire to resume the traditional approach and one student was undecided. The majority of students who wanted to continue with the ISs had moderate levels of motivation and autonomy. The majority of students who preferred the traditional approach had high levels of autonomy and moderate levels of motivation.

# 5. Discussion

This study investigated the effect of two ISs on adolescent language learners' autonomy and motivation. The ISs were *delegation of material and task selection (to the student)* and *promotion of self-evaluation.* The study used a quasi-experimental design to examine the impact of the ISs on the participants. One teacher and thirty-two students partook in this experiment, which was carried out over a sixteen-week period and included both a treatment group (n=18) and a comparison group (n=14) in its design. The teacher used the ISs with the treatment group, but she did not depart from her traditional approach with the comparison group (the traditional approach involved the teacher teaching the L2 through direct instruction. Lessons were systematically structured around the content in the students' language textbooks and learning was standardised). Data was gathered using questionnaires and student reflection forms, as well as post-experiment interviews and researcher observations. Types and levels of motivation and levels of learner autonomy were examined in a classroom setting where Spanish is learned as a foreign language. All participants (including the teacher) gave their opinions regarding the ISs. The results of this study are presented in Chapter Four.

This chapter begins by discussing the findings relating firstly to *motivation* and secondly to *autonomy*. A similar approach is taken for both in that quantitative findings which were obtained using the questionnaires are discussed to begin with. The qualitative findings obtained using reflections and the interviews are then integrated into the discussion. Finally, the teacher's views and the researcher's observations are discussed. The central focus of this section is consideration of whether or not the ISs influenced students' motivation and autonomy and if so, in what ways.

Potential links between autonomy and motivation and the notion of identity or self in language learning are then considered in light of the findings of this and previous studies. The final section discusses potential/possible implications of the findings of this study for language learners and teachers.

## 5.1 Motivation and the Intervention Strategies

The first important finding of this study is that there was an increase in post- treatment motivation levels. More than half of the treatment group's levels of motivation increased and more than a quarter of students moved into a higher category of motivation as a result of these changes. Thus, there were decreases in the low-level category of motivation and increases in the moderate- and the high-level categories.

Looking at some of the questionnaire responses in more detail, there were a number of noteworthy changes between pre- and post-treatment. For instance, the number of students who indicated that they "just skim over" [16]their Spanish homework fell from more than one-third to less than a quarter of the treatment group. The decrease in the number of those describing themselves as 'just skimming over' their homework could be attributed to students' involvement in decision-making relating to their learning. In other words, it is possible that students became more responsible learners as a result of having more control over their learning. Thus, one possible interpretation of these findings is that giving students a say in managing and regulating their own learning generated motivation causing a decrease in the number of learners who did not put effort into completing their homework.

The number of students suggesting that they would *occasionally watch a Spanish TV station* increased from more than a quarter to almost half of the treatment group. Innate *transportable identities* are awakened when learners take choices and express individuality in their learning (Richards 2006). Perhaps students' willingness to watch TV programmes in Spanish can be seen as an extension of such transportable identities, which may have developed as a result of engaging in learning as "people" who speak freely as themselves and listen to others speak as themselves, as opposed to using textbook models of dialogues to communicate. It is likely that watching a Spanish TV show would stimulate personal involvement, as learners tend to choose to watch programmes in which they have an interest. When teachers encourage students to make choices about their learning and incorporate their personal interests into learning, it allows learners to engage their transportable identities (Murray 2011a, 2011b; Ushioda 2011; Richards 2006). Thus, making choices about their learning and pursuing topics that interested them may have

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[16] "Just skim over it" was one of three responses that students could choose to complete the following sentence: "When it comes to Spanish homework I…" (see Appendix B: item 12).

invoked the students' transportable identities. Transportable identities are transportable from one environment to another (Ellis 2012), thus students may have transported their identity as a learner of Spanish into their afterschool environments with an increase in the number of students who would choose to watch a Spanish TV programme.

There was also an increase (from 17% to one third) in the number of students who claimed that they would volunteer if the teacher wanted someone to do a Spanish assignment. It may be the case that the increase in the number of participants responding in this way was an outcome of giving students the opportunity to choose whether or not to participate in the activity. Having the opportunity to choose to identify themselves as someone who wanted to participate or as someone who did not want to participate in this task possibly increased their willingness to engage. One student indicated that learners had become more independent and mature through taking responsibility for their own learning due to the fact that their teacher did not direct them in this process. She stated "the teacher isn't saying you better learn something and do well or she'll send a letter home... you're trusted to just do it yourself... you have to be more mature". Her comments indicate that the students had adopted a more "mature" role. Thus, allowing students to take greater responsibility for their own learning may have motivated them to take their language study more seriously. This point is also reflected in the teacher's comments and the researcher's observations, with both of them suggesting that students engaged more in class and were more participative than usual in classroom activities when engaging with the ISs.

Interestingly, levels of motivation in the comparison group also increased at the moderate-level and fell at the low-level. In contrast to the treatment group, their high-level motivation decreased slightly. These changes did not result in a change of category for any of the students nor were they found to be statistically significant and thus we cannot be sure that they did not occur by chance. While we cannot say for certain that exposure to the ISs generated the increase in motivation in the treatment group, the fact that there was no corresponding change in motivation in the comparison group during the same period of time suggests that the ISs were responsible.

The students' levels of motivation did not change in a statistically significant manner between the end of the treatment and the follow-up test seven months later (Section 4.3). There are at least two potential reasons for this. Firstly, it may be that engagement with the ISs impacted on motivation at a sufficiently deep level to ensure that the changes observed

in the motivation levels were maintained over time. Alternatively, the fact that, at the time the follow-up measure took place, these students had entered the senior cycle phase of their secondary education which leads to the Leaving Certificate examination, a stage which generally requires a high level of effort and commitment from learners, may also have influenced this result. In terms of their own identity, TY students do not have to sit formal state examinations at the end of this year and, as a result, may perceive it as less important than other years. This is reflected for example in the fact that according to the teacher in this study, TY students typically lack interest in L2 learning and the teacher therefore may need to engage with strategies other than a focus on the final examination in order to motivate this particular cohort. Leaving Certificate students, in contrast, generally, at least in relative terms, tend to sense the importance of working towards their final examination, something which may also have accounted for their maintenance of the higher levels of motivation between the post-test results and the follow-up test. This finding may of course also be a result of a combination of these two factors.

The quantitative findings also indicate that there were statistically significant increases in the treatment group's intrinsic and instrumental motivation. However, just under two-thirds of students continued to show no intrinsic motivation while half showed no instrumental motivation. Overall, the comparison group had higher intrinsic and instrumental motivation both pre- and post- than the treatment group. There was no change in their intrinsic motivation while their instrumental motivation decreased slightly. These changes were not statistically significant. While the treatment group did not show tendencies towards either type of motivation (intrinsic or instrumental), this had no bearing on their capacity to generate enhanced levels of motivational intensity towards classroom tasks.

A second important finding is that most students in the treatment group were positively disposed towards the ISs. In examining the impact of the ISs on students' motivation and autonomy, the two ISs were not looked at in isolation, but instead as an approach centred around their use which has six central aspects. These were selecting materials, planning learning tasks, setting personal goals, evaluating learning, changes in the teacher's role and working in groups. The qualitative findings suggest that, in overall terms, students reacted positively to the six central aspects associated with a teaching approach centred around the use of the ISs which emerged as major themes in the course of this study.

More than three-quarters of students expressed positive opinions about *selecting materials*. Four students indicated that they liked it because it allowed them to personalise their learning and express their individuality. One student said "I was able to find stuff that suited me and stuff I cared about", expressing a sense of opportunity to personalise lessons and incorporate personal interests, and another student stated "we were choosing what suits us", indicating that students selected materials that suited their preferences. The notion that making choices about their learning allows students to personalise their learning (Murray 2011a, 2011b; Ushioda 2011; Richards 2006) is supported by these findings. Six students expressed enthusiasm at no longer being restricted to using the textbook, a book which the teacher suggested during her interview they were not interested in following. One student wrote "it's far better than using the book" and another student commented "I liked choosing my own things... because I don't like the book". The majority of content in school materials is not particularly self-relevant nor does it stimulate identity dynamics (Brophy 2009), thus it is unsurprising that students responded positively to the opportunity to select their own materials.

Almost three-quarters of the treatment group spoke positively about *planning learning tasks*. Nine students indicated that they enjoyed incorporating their personal interests into learning activities, as articulated by one student as follows: "[I enjoyed planning learning tasks because] we did things that relate to what we're into". It may be that personalising their learning in this way allowed students to express their transportable identities, allowing them to learn as themselves rather than as generic students. Two expressed concern about planning learning tasks in groups and suggested that their group members were unwilling to take their ideas on board. As research has shown us, power in decision making is not always distributed fairly, even in classrooms that seek to promote autonomy (McCaslin 2009). In this study, individual differences emerged when students attempted to personalise planning tasks in groups, resulting in conflict. The comparison group also expressed fears that potential problems could arise from planning tasks in groups with one student proposing designating group leaders and changing those leaders frequently in order to ensure that choice would be shared more equitably. While there were concerns regarding sharing responsibility for planning learning tasks, more than two-thirds of students were positively disposed towards performing the task itself, with two students expressing enthusiasm about engaging in this process with their peers. Reflecting on the experience of

this study, it may be the case that it is better to allow students to decide for themselves whether they want to plan their learning tasks in groups or on their own. On the other hand, classroom contexts by their nature depend on cooperation among peers given that learners are working towards achieving common goals. Some of the students in this study indicated that they took their group members' needs and preferences into account when planning learning tasks. Traditional classroom curricula are designed to appeal to general rather than specific learners' preferences. Planning which learning tasks to use essentially allowed the students to design their own curriculum and make it relevant to them. Given that almost three-quarters of students spoke positively about having the freedom to plan learning tasks, this activity is likely to have contributed to the increased levels of motivation displayed by the treatment group.

More than three-quarters of students were positive towards *setting learning goals*. All of the students in the treatment group indicated that they achieved their goals. Two students, however, expressed concern about the limited freedom they experienced when setting goals. One of the students stated "I thought we couldn't really set goals that we wanted to because it all had to meet what the teacher said we had to do" and another stated "really the book still decides...well the Department of Education does. They say that we need to cover these things, so then our goals have to be about them". They were referring to the fact that the teacher instructed them to use learning aims listed in a Leaving Certificate textbook as a guide for setting learning goals (Chapter Four, Section 4.4). The impact on teaching and learning caused by examinations and assessment in general is known as washback (Wei 2014). Standardised tests such as the Irish Leaving Certificate tend to influence teachers' behaviour, sometimes causing them to ignore content that is not explicitly geared towards success in the examination (Pan 2009; Cheng and Curtis 2004). In this study, the two students who expressed concern about the limited freedom they experienced when setting goals were frustrated because they believed that they did not have complete freedom when it came to choosing what was covered in the Spanish classroom in general terms. They would have preferred to have been completely unconstrained.

When asked about how they managed to achieve their goals, a third of students reported that they did so because they found the content easy due to the fact that they had previously covered parts of it. In the context of secondary education settings, learners have very little freedom when it comes to choosing what to do because they have to follow

curricular guidelines in order to prepare for national examinations (Dam 2011). Perhaps these students would have tackled more challenging content had they not been restricted in their goal-setting. However, going by the student interviews, it seems that students' discontentment relating to goal-setting restrictions was not due to the fact that they could not set sufficiently challenging goals, but rather because that they could not fully take the opportunity to personalise their learning.

One third of students claimed to have achieved their goals due to working well in groups. Although the number of students indicating that they would continue working in groups as a strategy for achieving goals fell from half to one-third between weeks seven and sixteen, it remained the most popular strategy. Half of students indicated that they liked setting goals because it allowed them to focus on individual, as opposed to group, learning. Thus, there appeared to be an apparent contradiction between students achieving their goals due to working in groups versus students using their personal goals to focus on individual work. This may be due to the fact that students felt that they could perform certain learning tasks more efficiently when working alone, as one student commented "I don't like doing everything as a group" and another stated "we should get to know the topics as far as we can ourselves and then do a few things as a group".

There was a decrease (from less than a quarter to none) in the number of students who proposed asking for the teacher's help as a strategy for achieving their goals. This decrease is reflected in the teacher's interview as she described feeling that the learners became more efficient at performing IS tasks as they became increasingly familiar with using the ISs. The researcher's observations also suggest that learners became more efficient at using the ISs over time, which could explain why there was a decrease in the number of students relying on their teacher's and peers' assistance as a strategy for achieving goals.

More than three-quarters of students were positive about *evaluating their own learning*. Students felt that self-evaluating allowed them to improve the quality of their learning. While three students acknowledged that the teacher assisted them in evaluating their learning, one of out of the three students suggested that she would have liked more input from her teacher, stating "I would've liked more…correcting and tests from the teacher. I wanted her to test me by asking me stuff, quizzing me on the things we were doing". This student also expressed a preference for having the teacher take sole responsibility for evaluating students' learning in future learning. One student felt that the teacher had not

assisted students in evaluating their learning during the duration of the experiment and expressed a desire for the teacher's input in this process.

The teacher suggested that she would have liked written work handed up to her regularly for evaluation. The comparison group also suggested that it would be useful to supplement self-evaluations with evaluations performed by the teacher. This is not unusual in self-evaluation with frequent expression of a desire for external validation from an 'expert' such as a teacher or examining body (McCaslin 2009). The teacher and students felt that it was important that learner evaluations were approved by the teacher or accompanied by a separate teacher evaluation in order to ensure that learners were progressing adequately. The treatment group spoke positively overall in relation to reflecting on their own leaning.

More than three-quarters of students had positive views about *changes in the teacher's role*. Students indicated that they continued to learn successfully without the teacher's traditional input and that they appreciated her supportive role. However, it may also be the case that one-third of students gave themselves easy learning targets, which may have allowed them to achieve this success. Some learners felt that their teacher's new role allowed them to control the pace at which they worked. The researcher observed positive teacher-student dynamics, suggesting that the teacher showed an interest in the students' plans and ideas about their learning to which learners appeared to respond positively. The teacher's awareness of and attention to students' interests perhaps roused their transportable identities and sense of interpersonal validation which research has shown (e.g. Ushioda 2011) can have a strong motivational impact on learners.

The researcher observed the students actively availing of the teacher's assistance when selecting materials, planning learning tasks and setting goals. However, a sense of struggle in adapting to changes in the teacher's role was also implied, as one student suggested that their teacher was unwilling to relinquish control, while two others suggested that she had conceded too much control, preferring her traditional role.

Two thirds of students were positive towards *working in groups*. Students indicated that they enjoyed generating ideas and planning tasks in groups. Two students enjoyed sharing their ideas with their group possibly due to the sense of interpersonal validation they experienced as a result. Two students preferred to limit group work due to other students' not taking their ideas on board. Thus, it would appear that some students were

restricted in their participation because power in decision-making regarding the choice of materials was not equitably distributed within groups. This lack of interpersonal validation appears to have suppressed desire to engage in group learning in the case of some of the participants. Again, this goes back to the notion of an equitable distribution of power in decision-making and the notion of struggle. The teacher, on the other hand, felt that group work was positive and suggested that group members encouraged each other to participate, indicating that, in her view, individual differences did not result in frequent struggle. Some students possibly learned to negotiate and cope with group conflict by compromising and choosing to identify as collectively as a group. The results would appear to indicate that the majority of students found it motivating to work in groups.

The third major finding is that two-thirds of the treatment group expressed a desire to continue *using the ISs* in the future. Students indicated that they wanted to continue due to experiencing a sense of enjoyment in having more control over their learning (four students), increased motivation (two students) and improved student behaviour (one student). Two students were encouraged by their belief that the ISs were flexible and could adapt to different students' and teachers' needs and three students were encouraged by the fact that the ISs were effective, as they successfully learned the target content using this approach. One out of these three students felt that the ISs would offer a superior approach to the traditional approach when studying coursework for the Leaving Certificate. In addition to these factors, one student was also encouraged by the knowledge that the teacher was still available to facilitate their learning. The researcher's observations indicated that students asked for their teacher's assistance when performing some of the IS tasks. Although she assumed a different role, the teacher's continued presence is perhaps what motivated learners to express an interest in using the ISs during the Senior Cycle stage of their education.

The majority of students who wanted to use the ISs in future had moderate levels of motivation with neither of the two students who had high levels of motivation expressing a desire to continue using the ISs. However, higher levels of motivation would nonetheless appear to play a role in the preference expressed by the majority of the participants to continue using the ISs. In other words, the majority of those students whose motivation had increased expressed positive views regarding all aspects of the ISs as well as a desire to continue using them.

One-third of students, on the other hand, expressed a preference for a return to a more traditional approach where the teacher selects the content and identifies the learning goals within the constraints of curriculum and syllabus. Some students expressed concern about working in groups, due to not getting along with their group members. While one student suggested that she herself did not experience any difficulties in working as a group, she expressed a preference for a return to a more teacher-centred approach because she was aware that conflict had arisen in other groups. She stated "this approach all depends on who's actually in your group… I was lucky with the girls I got, but I don't think some of the girls in other groups were thrilled". Although the students did not tend to elaborate on why they didn't like group work or didn't want to continue with it, in the case of the one or two who did, it would appear that social identities were sometimes the source of friction within groups. Negotiation and compromise may not have been possible in all cases as one student suggested that members of her group were not willing to take her ideas on board, possibly because of her social status within the group. She stated "no one likes my ideas and they don't listen to me because I'm not popular enough or cool enough for them", suggesting that there were complex social identities at play.

Some students expressed concerns about [other] teachers' willingness to relinquish control. They felt that there was a possibility that some teachers would not wish to concede power in the classroom. The ISs certainly challenge traditional roles and identities; however, in this study the teacher described how she enjoyed taking a more facilitative and peripheral role by adopting a new identity or at least adapting her existing identity to the context. However, she also admitted that her new role was difficult to get used to at first because she had grown accustomed to assuming a (if not *the*) central role within the classroom. These findings suggest that rethinking identities and learning allowed the teacher to adapt to a new role as a facilitator of learning.

Concerns about following the ISs when preparing for the LC also arose. It would appear that the fact that they would have to prepare for the LC examination had a negative effect on students' willingness to depart from a more traditional learning approach. Identities, as well as washback, seemed to influence students' preference for using the ISs during the next academic year. Students were concerned about using the ISs whilst identifying as Leaving Certificate students, as opposed to TY students. They may have felt that their LC years were a dangerous time to be experimenting with less standard

approaches to teaching and learning. They did also express a concern that their Spanish learning approach would be inconsistent with their overall learning approach at the school, suggesting perhaps that students envisaged conflict between their identity as a Spanish learner and their broader identity as a student of the school. Irish schools historically have a more teacher-centred, authoritarian ethos than some of their international counterparts, such as Denmark, Sweden and Norway, where learners' autonomy is encouraged (Smith 2008). The TY initiative has a similar ethos in terms of encouraging learner autonomy in that it is intended to promote self-directed learning (see Section 3.1). Perhaps if students were introduced to the ISs at the beginning of the Junior Cycle it could potentially counteract fears about the inconsistency of their approach to learning Spanish compared with the more traditional and teacher-centred way in which they currently approach their other subjects.

### 5.1.1 The Teacher's View on the ISs and Learner Motivation

The teacher suggested that the ISs positively influenced behaviour in the treatment group. She indicated that students had become noticeably more interested and motivated about learning Spanish when using this learning approach. She described how students worked well in groups, encouraged each other and had become more focused on tasks when using the ISs approach. In her view, the students in the treatment group had also become increasingly engaged with the language learning process and she also observed that they were considerably more participative than previously in classroom activities. The teacher described the students as being noisy, unwilling to participate in learning and difficult to control before the treatment was introduced. She also added that students' previous somewhat lacklustre behaviour may have been at least partially attributable to the fact that they were in TY and were, therefore, not sitting or preparing for examinations. These findings support the view that autonomy and motivation are interdependent or related (Walters and Bozkurt 2009; Nakata 2006; Ushioda 2006; Wachob 2006) due to the fact that students displayed low levels of motivation before engaging with the ISs and increased levels of motivation subsequent to engaging in autonomous learning.

The teacher suggested that the ISs could be improved by requiring students to submit written work to her, explaining that some of the students had been doing this during the

treatment phase and that it helped her to indentify learners who were having difficulties. The teacher suggested that she would be recommending the ISs approach to other Spanish teachers within the school; she stated "I think it is a great idea and the proof is in the pudding and I've seen it for myself... this has been brilliant for me and for them [*the students*]". The teacher added that group work, in particular, was helpful in generating motivation and suggested that she would recommend an approach based on the ISs for TY in particular. The teacher's views regarding group work support the arguments of researchers such as Ellis (2012), Dörnyei and Murphey (2003) and Vygotsky (1978) who contend that working in groups can be a powerful source of motivation in the classroom. The teacher's interview confirmed the finding that motivation levels had increased in the treatment group and also confirmed that the majority of students were positive towards using the ISs.

## 5.1.2 The Researcher's Observations on the ISs and Learner Motivation

The researcher observed a marked change in students' behaviour over time, as they became more engaged and participative in their learning. At the beginning of the experiment the students would stop working while they waited for their teacher to assist them, but as they became more familiar with their duties and tasks they continued working until their teacher was available to assist them. The students appeared to remain focused on their tasks and the majority of time their behaviour was desirable. Occasionally they would produce noise levels which were above an acceptable level, but they seemed to respond quickly and quieten down when the teacher asked them to reduce their volume. The researcher observed a sense of enthusiasm about engaging with the ISs and suggested that students appeared generally positive and motivated towards participating in the IS tasks. The researcher's observations confirmed the finding that motivation levels had increased in the treatment group.

## 5.2 Autonomy and the Intervention Strategies

A fourth key finding is that there was an increase in the treatment group's levels of autonomy after engagement with the ISs. Almost three-quarters of the group's levels of autonomy increased and one-third of students moved into a higher category of autonomy as a result of these changes. Thus, there were decreases in the number of participants in the low-level category of autonomy and increases in the numbers in the moderate- and the high-level categories.

Looking at individual items, the biggest increase occurred in the number of students indicating that they *practised Spanish with friends* (from 17% to more than half of students). Perhaps the increase on this item was an outcome of students engaging in group work which can provide them with more opportunities to speak their target language (Brisk 2010; Schultz 2001). The students were required to work in groups of three when engaging with the ISs and peer learning increases the number of opportunities to practise the language (Long and Porter 1985). The notion of transportable identity may also have come into play, as studies in this area suggest that students who personalise their learning by expressing personal interests are more likely to become willing and natural communicators (Richards 2006). Freire (2005) suggests that authentic dialogues occur among peers in classroom settings which encourage the development of autonomy. In the case of the current study, learners may have practised Spanish with friends more frequently due to the fact that they had the opportunity to engage in authentic dialogue and to express personal opinions in class. Students indicated that they used their freedom in selecting materials to incorporate their personal interests into learning. The process of co-constructing their education and making it relevant to their own lives results in a change in power relationships and increases the number of opportunities for learners to practise speaking using authentic dialogue (Norton 2013), thus freedom in choosing and planning self-relevant materials and tasks may have produced more opportunities for authentic communication to occur naturally, which in turn led to an increase in the number of students who reported practising Spanish with friends.

The number of students who claimed that they *made suggestions to the teacher* increased from one-third to more than half of students. As we have seen, the ISs involved the students making decisions about their learning which is perhaps the reason for the increase in the number of students volunteering suggestions to the teacher. The researcher

observed an improved teacher-student relationship as the students seemed eager to seek their teacher's advice regarding IS tasks. The teacher was enthusiastic about these interactions and was observed praising and encouraging students' efforts to manage their own learning particularly at the beginning of the process. Students themselves indicated that their teacher became significantly more approachable and in their words "kinder" in her behaviour towards them. Thus, students possibly volunteered more suggestions because they trusted the teacher and felt more involved in their learning, as it became more centred around their needs. Perhaps students' willingness to make suggestions to their teacher can be seen as an outcome of having more choice in their learning which stimulates personal involvement. When students are encouraged to get involved in making decisions about their learning, they can engage their transportable identities (Murray 2011b; Richards 2006). The students may have felt more involved in their learning, feeling free to give their opinions and personal views on their learning. Social relationships of power influence how students learn a language (Taylor 2013; Norton and McKinney 2011; Freire 2005), thus the students in the current study may have felt that they could freely make suggestions to the teacher because they were working with her, co-constructing lessons and making decisions about their own learning.

There was also an increase (from less than half to two-thirds) in the number of students who claimed that they *took opportunities to speak Spanish*. Students indicated that they actively pursued opportunities to speak Spanish. Also the fact that they were working in groups meant that they had more opportunities to speak Spanish as they were interacting with others. One student indicated that she used the process of planning learning tasks as an opportunity to engage to a greater extent than previously with oral tasks. She stated "we always concentrate on more reading and writing and even the listening you know, so it was good to speak more Spanish". This suggests that students took responsibility for their learning by thinking about and taking decisions about the types of activities they engaged in. The researcher observed that students often discussed personal plans for the weekend and gossiped when speaking Spanish, but that the teacher did not appear to mind as long as students spoke Spanish. For example, she did not request that they desist nor was she observed attempting to direct the topic or content of the students' conversations back to the task at hand. According to Freire (2005, 1970), learners invest more in learning and communicating when they can engage in genuine conversation. In this study, learners

indicated that they used activities such as selecting materials, planning learning and setting personal goals as an opportunity to incorporate personal interests. The process of making their lessons more relevant to their personal lives may have encouraged students to communicate authentically because of the fact that they were genuinely interested in their learning.

All but one student described discussing learning problems with friends in the post-treatment questionnaire, while only one-third of students had given this response pre-treatment. It may be that students were more willing to air their concerns with each other as they got into a routine of working in groups and identified as group members. Potentially supporting this argument around greater group cohesion is the fact that receiving help from group members was a popular reason given by students for achieving their personal goals. Learners in the current study indicated that they received help from their group members during learning tasks, supporting Vygotsky's (1978) and Lantolf and Thorne's (2007) claims that classroom autonomy allows learners to improve their learning through social interaction and collaboration with more competent peers.

There was no statistically significant change in levels of autonomy directly following exposure to the ISs and seven months later when the follow-up tests were conducted (Section 4.3). As argued above regarding a similar maintenance over time of gains in motivation, the fact that the gains in autonomy were maintained may indeed be related to the students' experiences of using the ISs. Of course, it may also be an outcome of the importance placed on achievement at the senior stage of secondary education. In this latter case, gains in autonomy may have been maintained due to learners identifying as Leaving Certificate students, which again brings the notions of both identity and washback into the fold. A combination of both factors, i.e. engagement with the ISs and entry into the senior cycle, is also again a possibility and indeed possibly the more likely one with the students potentially carrying an enhanced experience and awareness of language learning with them into their relatively more demanding and intensive final phase of compulsory education.

In the comparison group, three students moved into a new category of autonomy. Two of these students moved down a category (from moderate to low), while one moved up a category (from low to moderate). Despite these changes in their categories, overall changes in the comparison group's autonomy levels were not found to be statistically significant. This finding viewed in the light of the fact that the comparison group had also entered the

senior cycle at the time of the follow-up survey suggests that the maintenance of gains in both autonomy and motivation over time were at least partially the result of exposure to the treatment.

### 5.2.1 The Teacher's View on the ISs and Learner Autonomy

The teacher suggested that the students' engagement in autonomous behaviour increased over time as they became increasingly used to taking responsibility for their own learning and engaging in self-regulatory tasks. She stated "they are in the swing of things when they come in... they just got on with it...I really didn't expect that". Her comments suggest that the students were genuinely taking responsibility for and self-regulating their own learning, without a need for prompting by the teacher. The teacher suggested that prior to the experiment the students had been apathetic towards engaging in any level of learning at all, never mind making suggestions, which suggests that the ISs foster learner autonomy. The teacher's view reflects the claims of Taylor (2013) that giving them more autonomy and freedom in their learning can counteract students' loss of interest in learning during adolescence.

The teacher suggested that the approach was difficult to get used to at first, stating "when you're used to doing things one way it can be hard to just start doing things another way". She suggested that she and her students quickly adapted to the new approach, stating "we got the hang of it". The teacher's comments confirmed that she did not dominate the learning environment and that the students had become central to their own learning, she said "I could sit back a bit more and let them get on with", supporting Little's (1990) view that autonomy is not something that teachers can do to learners and supporting the outlook of many researchers (e.g. Murphy 2008; Ushioda 2006; Little 2000 *etc.*) that the development of autonomy requires the teacher to take on a more facilitative and less dominant role. The teacher's interview confirmed the finding that autonomy levels had increased in the treatment group.

### 5.2.2 The Researcher's Observations on the ISs and Learner Autonomy

The researcher indicated that, during the opening weeks of the experiment, when a group was waiting for the teacher's assistance they did not continue working until their teacher arrived to provide support. However, as the experiment progressed, students continued working while awaiting the teacher's advice/help. The researcher observed that the students were not efficiently taking responsibility for their own learning in the beginning, but that they became more efficient at self-regulating their learning over time. Observations suggested that students began working as soon as they entered the classroom even if their teacher had not arrived by that time. These actions appeared to be an expression of autonomy. Thus, the researcher's observations confirm the finding that autonomy levels had increased in the treatment group.

## 5.3 Identity, Autonomy and Motivation in language Learning

Ushioda (2011) argues that autonomous learners are motivated learners and vice-versa, suggesting that the relationship between these concepts is mutual. In this study, there was an increase in levels of both autonomy and motivation following the use of the ISs. In order to promote autonomy, one must "foster students' ability to take responsibility for regulating their motivation and learning behaviour" (Ushioda 2011, p.224). This statement suggests that autonomy and motivation are interrelated and dependent on each other. While we cannot say for certain that there was a mutual relationship or meaningful correlation between the increases in these variables, the findings of this study support the view that autonomy and motivation are connected, perhaps even "two sides of the one coin".

Elaborating on this point a little further, the most recent literature on autonomy and motivation focuses on how these concepts are linked to *learner identity* (Taylor 2013; Ushioda 2011; Dörnyei 2009; Eccles 2009; LaGuardia 2009; McCaslin 2009). Researchers are becoming increasingly concerned with linking motivation to identity, as opposed to achievement (Ushioda 2011; Brophy 2009). Identity is also a key characteristic of autonomy (Riley 2003), as learners are encouraged to be themselves in autonomous environments in order to become part of what they are learning (Little 2002). The concept of *transportable identity* is brought into play when teachers encourage learners to make choices about their learning, to speak as themselves and engage with them as people (Richards 2006). In Richards's (2006) study, the teacher showed an interest in the students' personal interests and ideas about their learning to which they appeared to respond positively. In the case of the current study, the teacher's awareness of and attention to students' interests may have roused their transportable identities and sense of interpersonal validation, which can positively impact learners' motivation (Murray 2011b; Ushioda 2011; Richards 2006). The students personalised their lessons by setting personal goals, selecting materials and planning learning tasks which were suited to their own needs and interests.

Researchers (e.g. Ushioda 2011; Richards 2006) are of the view that promoting autonomy encourages students to express their own personal and valued identities and that students who personalise their learning by expressing personal interests and individuality are more likely to become willing and natural communicators. This is particularly relevant in L2 classrooms compared to other academic subjects, as L2 learning by its very nature allows students more opportunity to express themselves. Language is a medium of

expression and knowledge of an L2 allows students to express their identity and sense of self in that language. In the present study, individuality, in many cases, was pitched against group work and used as leverage for arguing one's own position against other members of the group. For example, students set learning goals that enabled them to plan individual, as opposed to group, tasks. There seemed to be a real conflict between the two for some students. According to McCaslin (2009), a group of students that appears friendly and helpful to some students can seem intimidating to others, thus negotiation and compromise may be necessary. However McCaslin acknowledges that resolution and negotiation may not always be possible. In this study, one student suggested that she preferred to work alone as members of her group would not allow her to have input in generating ideas simply because of how they perceived her social and popularity status. This would suggest that complex social identities were at play which meant that some students were restricted in their participation, as power in choice-making was not equitably distributed within groups. This lack of interpersonal validation may have suppressed some students' desire to engage in group learning.

Changes in motivation towards learning an L2 are related to changing identities (Lamb 2009). In the present study, the TY students developed their transportable identities by personalising and becoming involved in their learning as themselves. The students' levels of motivation increased possibly after they had developed their transportable identities; however, it is not possible to be certain whether or not the changes in their motivation occurred as a result of their changing identity. This would be a fruitful area for further research.

Finally, it is difficult to distinguish between motivation and autonomy. For example, if a student enjoys or is enthusiastic about self-regulatory tasks, it is challenging to determine whether it is an indicator that she is experiencing autonomy or motivation, or both. In this study, students frequently expressed a sense of motivation and willingness to engage in tasks associated with autonomous learning, such as managing and making choices about their learning and setting and evaluating learning goals. In such cases, it was difficult, if not impossible, to determine whether their sense of willingness to take responsibility for their own learning was a sign of learner autonomy or learner motivation or indeed both. Thus, it was difficult to tell where one concept ended and the other began. Ushioda's (2011) assertion that there is a mutual relationship between motivation and autonomy, or even that

autonomy and motivation are two ways to describe the same concept would appear to be confirmed by the findings of this study.

This study also appears to support Ushioda's (2011) claim that autonomy and motivation are mutually linked to learner identity. Learners' transportable identities were invoked while they engaged in autonomous learning and their levels of motivation and autonomy increased during the same period of time. The ISs allowed learners to engage their transportable identities by personalising their learning. The students expressed a sense of motivation in making choices about and personalising their learning, thus autonomous learning played an important role in motivating students and shaping their identities.

## 5.4 Summary of Findings

The following is a list of the main findings which were discussed in this chapter:

- There was an increase in post- treatment motivation levels. More than half of the treatment group's levels of motivation increased and more than a quarter of students moved into a higher category of motivation as a result of these changes.

- There was an increase in the treatment group's levels of autonomy after engagement with the ISs. Almost three-quarters of the group's levels of autonomy increased and one-third of students moved into a higher category of autonomy as a result of these changes.

- There was no statistically significant change in levels of autonomy or motivation directly following exposure to the ISs and seven months later when the follow-up tests were conducted. The fact that the comparison group had also entered the senior cycle at the time of the follow-up survey, suggests that the maintenance of gains in both autonomy and motivation over time were at least partially the result of exposure to the treatment.

- The findings of this study support the view that autonomy and motivation are connected, due to the fact that there was an increase in levels of both autonomy and motivation following the use of the ISs.

- Most of the students reacted positively to the six central aspects (selecting materials, planning learning tasks, setting personal goals, evaluating learning, changes in the teacher's role and working in groups) associated with a teaching approach centred around the use of the ISs.

- Two-thirds of the treatment group expressed a desire to continue *using the ISs in the future*. Students indicated that they wanted to continue due to experiencing a sense of enjoyment in having more control over their learning, increased motivation and improved student behaviour.

- Complex social identities were apparent which resulted in some students being restricted in their participation, as power in choice-making was not fairly distributed within groups. Individuality was used as leverage for arguing one's own position against other members of the group.

- It is difficult to distinguish between motivation and autonomy. Students seemed to show motivation towards engaging tasks associated with autonomous learning such as goal-setting, selecting materials, planning learning tasks and self-evaluating their learning. In such cases, it was difficult to tell where one concept ended and the other began.

- The TY students developed their transportable identities by personalising and becoming involved in their learning as themselves.

- This study also appears to support Ushioda's (2011) claim that autonomy and motivation are mutually linked to learner identity. Learners' transportable identities were invoked while they engaged in autonomous learning and their levels of motivation and autonomy increased during the same period of time.

## 5.5 Implications for Language Teachers and Learners

The findings of this study have important implications for language teaching and learning and support, in particular, the argument that in order to improve students' behaviour and increase their interest in L2 learning in a secondary school setting, they must be allowed to have greater input into the learning process, with teachers playing a more facilitative role.

In addition, research suggests that some secondary school language learners lack motivation (Guilloteaux 2007; Osborne 2005; Dörnyei 2003). The findings from this study indicate that the ISs used in this study, or elements of them, could be considered for inclusion in secondary schools as a strategy for tackling problematic student behaviour and low levels of motivation. Furthermore, as we have seen, Leni Dam first engaged in autonomous practices due to her teenage students' lack of motivation (Dam 1995). Similar to the situation in this study, she found that getting her students involved in making decisions about their learning increased their motivation and improved their behaviour. Prior to using the IS treatment, the teacher in the present study indicated that the students had been difficult to control due to their lack of interest in learning the L2. However, the students appeared to become more responsible learners as a result of having more control over their learning. Thus, it would appear that participation in autonomous learning environments appears capable of increasing motivational levels.

Also of note is the fact that while some of the participants in this study reported that they would have preferred to have had complete freedom in selecting learning goals and choosing which content to cover, this may not be feasible or indeed desirable given their lack of experience in this area, their potential lack of an overview of the entire subject area and, indeed, the high stakes involved if examination performance is negatively affected. While students may not necessarily like the idea of adhering to a syllabus, teacher input and experience remains important given that teachers are particularly well positioned to provide constructive input when it comes to realistic goal-setting and content choice. As Ushioda (2011, p.224) states, "[C]learly, it is not our business to let students simply do what they want to do. Rather, our responsibility as educators is to socialize motivation for culturally-valued goals and activities – that is, to bring students to endorse and internalize curriculum goals and values". Realistically, the ISs would have to co-exist with existing syllabi drawn up by Departments of Education. Although two students in this study felt that they were

restricted in setting learning goals, such restrictions did not prevent the majority of students declaring that they wanted to continue using the ISs in future. As we have seen in fact, the majority of students expressed positive views regarding participating in all of the IS tasks.

Moving to the issue of a need or otherwise for explicit strategy training in the classroom, conflicting views exist. Researchers including Dam (2007) and Holec (1981) consider it unnecessary as articulated by Holec (1980, p.42) as follows, "By trial and error he trains himself progressively". Gholami and Biria (2013), on the other hand, claim that practicing explicit strategy training enhances levels of learner autonomy. The learners in this study did not receive training in relation to any aspects of the ISs and neither the teacher nor the students raised it as an issue or suggested that it might be required. However, it may nevertheless be the case that explicit strategy training would have facilitated the process of engagement with the ISs to an even greater extent than was observed in the current study. Again, the need for, or, optimum nature of explicit strategy training for second level language learners is something with which future research could fruitfully engage.

In terms of chronology and timing within an education system, the teacher who participated in this particular study indicated that she would recommend the ISs approach used in this study to other Spanish teachers within the school and promote its use for TY in particular. Incorporating these ISs into first year classes would allow teachers and students to experiment and become familiar with them, so that the ISs might be altered as appropriate and carried through to the subsequent academic years. Therefore, introducing students to the ISs as early as possible in their secondary education could reduce their concerns about using the approach during the senior cycle of their learning.

Additional implications for language teaching and learning centre around the fact that classroom practices that promote autonomy are more likely to contribute to identity-formation and motivation than are learning environments that seek to control students' behaviour (Ushioda 2011; Brophy 2009). In this study, using practices to promote autonomy encouraged students to express their own preferred identities and actively participate in their learning by making choices and evaluating their experiences.

Finally, it should be noted that the ISs, which were implemented in this study, are of course not the only solution when it comes to tackling students' lack of interest and/or motivation in L2 learning. The researcher does not propose that teachers strictly follow the

procedures that were introduced in this study, but recommends instead that elements of the course of action taken in this study could be introduced or these ISs could be used as a guide to introducing autonomy into L2 classrooms in a systematic manner.

# 6. Concluding Remarks

This study investigates the impact of a teaching approach which has as its focus two particular ISs on adolescent learners' autonomy and motivation in the Spanish language classroom. The ISs in question were *delegation of material and task selection to the student* and *promotion of self-evaluation*. In addition, six significant elements associated with an approach involving the use of these ISs emerged from the qualitative data. These were selecting materials, planning learning tasks, setting personal goals, evaluating learning, changes in the teacher's role and working in groups.

A range of research instruments were used with a view to addressing the following questions:

1) Do the ISs influence learner motivation and, if so, how?

2) Do the ISs influence learner autonomy and, if so, how?

The findings of this study indicate that the ISs were effective in generating *learner motivation* and fostering *learner autonomy* in that there was a significant increase in the treatment group's levels of both motivation and autonomy following engagement with the ISs. The findings also suggest that the participants were primarily positively disposed towards using the ISs with two-thirds of the participants expressing a desire to continue using the ISs in the future. The remainder of this section considers the contribution to research made by this study and discusses directions for future research.

It is argued here that this study contributes to the process of closing the gap between theory and practice in this field, in that much of what has been written is theory based as opposed to evidence based (King 2011; Cheng and Dörnyei 2007; Guilloteaux 2007). In particular, up until now, there has been scant research investigating the effectiveness or impact of strategies designed to enhance autonomy and motivation particularly among adolescent language learners in compulsory education. This study investigates ways of fostering autonomy and generating motivation among this group by implementing particular ISs in the L2 classrooms. As such, it extends our understanding of practices that enhance levels of autonomy and motivation. Indeed, there is a well-documented need (see for example Guilloteaux 2007; Osborne 2005; Dörnyei 2003) to find ways of increasing

classroom engagement and motivation among teenagers in secondary schools, particularly in language classrooms. Therefore, the findings of this study have potentially important implications for secondary level language curriculum and syllabus design, as the results appear to confirm the effectiveness of an approach centred around the use of these ISs in positively influencing the adolescent participants' levels of autonomy and motivation, as well as in improving their in-class behaviour in general. Specifically, these findings support the argument that allowing students to have greater input into the learning process can improve their in-class behaviour and increase their interest in L2 learning in a secondary school setting and could, therefore, be considered for inclusion in secondary schools as a strategy for tackling problematic student behaviour and low levels of motivation. At the very least, the case-study could function as a guide to evaluating autonomy in secondary L2 classrooms in a systematic manner.

Also of note is the fact that in this study, two-thirds of the treatment group expressed a desire to continue using the ISs in future explaining that this was because of experiencing increased levels of personal motivation, improved classroom dynamics and an improved learning environment. This study finds that one of the reasons for the increase in the treatment group's motivation was a shift in the traditional teacher-student identities caused by the use of the ISs. While the teacher described how she enjoyed adopting a new identity by playing a less central role in students' learning, she also acknowledged that assuming her new identity was difficult to get used to at first. The majority of students spoke positively about changes in their teacher's role suggesting that rethinking learner and teacher identities allowed the teacher to adapt to a new role as a facilitator of learning. The students' levels of motivation and autonomy increased during a period of time in which they assumed a new identity, allowing them to become agents in charge of shaping their individual and collective language learning experiences. This phenomenon was frequently referred to as an important motivating factor by the students and has commonly been associated with enhanced motivation (Fumin and Li 2012; Brown 2006; Little 2002; Noels 2001). Thus, an additional significant aspect of this study concerns the fact that it contributes to our understanding the interrelationships between motivation, autonomy and identity in L2 language learning.

Teasing this out a little further, we have seen above the suggestion (for example Ushioda 2011) that autonomy and motivation are highly interrelated, co-existing along a

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continuum. The findings of this study tend to confirm this view in this context, as it was difficult to distinguish between autonomy and motivation and difficult to detect examples of either one in isolation. For example, it was impossible to determine if students were motivated because they were engaging in autonomous learning or if they were engaging in autonomous learning because they were motivated. We have also discussed the fact that researchers are becoming increasingly concerned with linking motivation and autonomy to identity (Taylor 2013; Ushioda 2011; Dörnyei 2009; Eccles 2009; LaGuardia 2009; McCaslin 2009). This study contributes to our understanding of the relationship between the three variables in question in that it lends support to Lamb's (2009) and Ushioda's (2011) claim that autonomy and motivation are both linked to learner identity. In particular, the findings suggest that the ISs allowed learners to become personally involved in their learning and that autonomous learning played an important role in motivating students and shaping their identities. The TY students developed and activated their transportable identities in the classroom by using the ISs to personalise and become more involved in their learning, supporting Brophy's (2009) assertion that learning content which is self-relevant can stimulate identity dynamics. In the case of the current study, the students were motivated about engaging in autonomous learning tasks such as selecting materials and planning learning tasks because it allowed them to personalise their lessons and thus, activate their identities as language learners.

All of the areas discussed above merit further research. Specifically, and bearing in mind the limitations of this study, future studies investigating these issues should be conducted on a larger sample of students and perhaps teachers. Secondly, it would be advisable to include both male and female participants in future studies. Thirdly, a larger scale study could produce more generalisable results and make a more substantial contribution to our knowledge about the influence of ISs on learner autonomy and motivation. Given that performance in examinations is an important aspect of secondary level education, it would also be advisable to measure students' success in learning via written, aural and oral testing in future studies. This would potentially allow us to take impact on academic performance into consideration when examining the effectiveness of the ISs in improving classroom engagement. Finally, a number of students and the teacher who participated in this study felt that students would benefit from introducing the ISs earlier in their secondary school years suggesting that future research should also consider

the implications of introducing the ISs at an earlier stage, for example in the Junior cycle or in an appropriate form perhaps even at primary level.

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**Research Ethics Forms**



**DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY**

**Information for Parents/Guardians**

**Research Study Title:**

Fostering Autonomy, Generating Motivation and Shaping Identities in the Adolescent Language Classroom: An Experimental Research Project.

**Researcher:**

Máirín Kelly

XXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXX

XXXXXXXXXXX@hotmail.com

087 XXXXXXX

**University Department:**

SALIS (School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies)

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Dublin City University

*"Dear parent/guardian, should you have any concerns/questions regarding the research study outlined in the following pages, please feel free to contact me using the phone number or email address provided above".*

---

Máirín Kelly

**Details of what involvement in the Research Study requires:**

With your consent, your daughter/dependent is invited to assist in a student PhD research study scheduled to take place from January until May 2011. The study seeks to examine the influence of classroom intervention strategies on both learner autonomy and motivation, looking specifically at adolescent language learners in secondary education contexts. All participating students are required to complete four questionnaires (completing two of the four on two separate occasions). Approximately half of student-participants will be selected at random to provide additional written accounts of their learning experience within the classroom on six separate occasions. A random sample of 10-15 of the participating students will be individually interviewed and their responses audio-recorded. These activities will take place during students' scheduled Spanish lessons.

**Potential risks to participants from involvement in the Research Study:**

There are **no** specific risks associated with this study. Participating students will be assigned Spanish female names as aliases for labelling research forms. As they will not use their real names, each student's research results will be confidential and their anonymity guaranteed. When the research thesis is completed in full, the researcher will subsequently dispose of all data by deleting audio and shredding print data.

**Benefits to participants from involvement in the Research Study:**

A growing trend in decreasing levels of motivation among secondary school language learners means more must be learned about *how* to motivate them. This study's findings may provide researchers and practitioners with implications for future teaching and research. It is important to encourage learners to practise autonomy and enhance motivational levels and the learning process in general. A direct benefit of involvement in this research study is the insight it gives participating students into taking greater responsibility for their learning and an awareness of their personal learning style(s) and preference(s).

**Involvement in the Research Study is voluntary:**

While I would be grateful if your daughter/dependent participated in this study, she is free to refuse to partake. Even if she decides to participate, she may withdraw from the research at any time. There is no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the study have been completed. Your daughter/dependent's involvement/non-involvement in this project will in no way affect your ongoing relationship with the school.

**NOTE: If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:**

*The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000.*

**DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY**

**Information for Students**

**Research Study Title:**

Fostering Autonomy, Generating Motivation and Shaping Identities in the Adolescent Language Classroom: An Experimental Research Project.

**Researcher:**

Máirín Kelly

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**University Department:**

SALIS (School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies)

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Dublin City University

*"Dear student, a "questions and answers" session will be made available to you and your teacher should you have concerns/questions that you would like to raise regarding the research study outlined in the following pages".*

Máirín Kelly

**Details of what involvement in the Research Study requires:**

You are invited to assist in a student PhD research study scheduled to take place from January until May 2011. The study seeks to examine the influence of classroom intervention strategies on both learner autonomy and motivation, looking specifically at adolescent language learners in secondary education contexts. All participating students will be required to complete four questionnaires (completing two of the four on two separate occasions). Approximately half of student-participants will be selected at random to provide additional written accounts of their learning experience within the classroom on six separate occasions. A random sample of 10-15 of the participating students will be individually interviewed and their responses audio-recorded. These activities will take place during your scheduled Spanish lessons.

**Potential risks to participants from involvement in the Research Study:**

There are **no** specific risks associated with this study. Should you agree to participate, you will be assigned a Spanish female name as an alias for labelling research forms. As you will not use your real name, your research results will be confidential and your anonymity guaranteed. When the research thesis is completed in full, the researcher will subsequently dispose of all data by deleting audio and shredding print data.

**Benefits to participants from involvement in the Research Study:**

A growing trend in decreasing levels of motivation among secondary school language learners means more must be learned about *how* to motivate them. This study's findings may provide researchers and practitioners with implications for future teaching and research. It is important to encourage learners to practise autonomy and enhance motivational levels and the learning process in general. A direct benefit of involvement in this research study is the insight it gives participating students into taking greater responsibility for their learning and an awareness of their personal learning style(s) and preference(s).

**Involvement in the Research Study is voluntary:**

While I would be grateful if you participated in this study, you are free to refuse to partake. Even if you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the research at any time. There is no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the study have been completed. Your involvement/non-involvement in this project will in no way affect your ongoing relationship with the school in any way.

**NOTE: If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:** *The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000.* 6

**DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY**

**Information for Teacher-participant**

**Research Study Title:**

Fostering Autonomy, Generating Motivation and Shaping Identities in the Adolescent Language Classroom: An Experimental Research Project.

**Researcher:**

Máirín Kelly

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XXXXXXXXXXX@hotmail.com

087 XXXXXXX

**University Department:**

SALIS (School of Applied Language and Intercultural Studies)

Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Dublin City University

*"Dear teacher, should you have concerns/questions regarding the research study outlined in the following pages, please feel free to contact me using the phone number or email address provided above".*

_____

Máirín Kelly

**Details of what involvement in the Research Study requires:**

You are invited to assist in a student PhD research study scheduled to take place from January until May 2011. The study seeks to examine the influence of classroom intervention strategies on both learner autonomy and motivation, looking specifically at adolescent language learners in secondary education contexts. You will be required to depart from your traditional teaching approach with one of the two TY (Transition Year) Spanish classes that you currently teach, instead using two specific intervention strategies (content negotiation and promotion of self-evaluation) to teach the class. You will be provided with detailed instructions as to how to implement the intervention strategies and the researcher will provide you with verbal feedback on your success in doing so following each lesson. The researcher will assist you with incorporating activities into your lesson plans that correspond to the intervention strategies. In terms of the other TY Spanish class that you also teach, you will be required to continue with your traditional teaching approach. The researcher will observe the lessons of both class groups. You will be asked to give your opinion via interview regarding the intervention strategies' influence on the students' learning; your responses are to be audio-recorded. Also, you will be required to provide written comments on the students' progress on two separate occasions.

**Potential risks to participants from involvement in the Research Study:**

There are **no** specific risks associated with this study. Your real name will not be used for labelling research forms, nor will it feature in any aspect of the research study; as such, your identity will be confidential and your anonymity guaranteed. When the research thesis is completed in full, the researcher will subsequently dispose of all data by deleting audio and shredding print data.

**Benefits to participants from involvement in the Research Study:**

A growing trend in decreasing levels of motivation among secondary school language learners means more must be learned about *how* to motivate them. This study's findings may provide researchers and practitioners with implications for future teaching and research. It is important to encourage learners to practise autonomy and enhance motivational levels and the learning process in general. A direct benefit of involvement in this research study is the insight it gives the participating teacher into promoting learner autonomy and motivation.

**Involvement in the Research Study is voluntary:**

While I would be grateful if you participated in this study, you are free to refuse to partake. Even if you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the research at any time. There is no penalty for withdrawing before all stages of the study have been completed. Your involvement/non-involvement in this project will in no way affect your ongoing relationship with the school in any way.

**NOTE: If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:** *The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000.*

**DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY**

**Teacher's Informed Consent Form**

**Purpose of the research:**

You are invited to participate in a research study investigating the autonomy and motivational levels of adolescent foreign language learners in secondary school settings. The purpose of this study is to explore language learners' autonomy and motivation in relation to the strategies and practices employed by their teacher.

**Confirmation of particular requirements:**

Should you choose to take part in the study, you will be required to…

…alter your traditional teaching approach under direction of the researcher

…provide written accounts of your opinion on students' progress

…give your opinions via interview.

**Teacher: please tick [√] the appropriate box below**

1. Have you read the Plain Language Statement

Yes ☐          No ☐

2. Do you understand the information provided?

Yes ☐          No ☐

3. Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?

Yes ☐          No ☐

4. Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?

Yes ☐          No ☐          Not Applicable ☐

**Confirmation that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary:**

Again, you can refuse to participate or withdraw from the research at any time. Your involvement/non-involvement in this project will in no way affect your ongoing relationship with the school.

<u>**Signature:**</u>

*"I have read and understand the information in this form. The researcher has answered my questions and concerns. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project"*

**Teacher's Signature:** _____

**Name in Block Capitals:** _____

**Date:** _____

**NOTE: If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact: *The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000.***

**DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY**

**Students' Informed Assent Form**

**Purpose of the research:**

You are invited to participate in a research study investigating the autonomy and motivational levels of adolescent foreign language learners in secondary school settings. The purpose of this study is to explore language learners' autonomy and motivation in relation to the strategies and practices employed by their teacher.

**Confirmation of particular requirements:**

Should you choose to take part in the study, you will be required to…

…complete questionnaires

…possibly provide written accounts of your learning experience within the classroom

…possibly give your opinions via interview.

**Student: please tick [√] the appropriate box below**

1. Have you read the Plain Language Statement

     Yes ☐       No ☐

2. Do you understand the information provided?

     Yes ☐       No ☐

3. Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?

     Yes ☐       No ☐

4. Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?

     Yes ☐       No ☐       Not Applicable ☐

**Confirmation that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary:**

Again, you can refuse to participate or withdraw from the research at any time. Your involvement/non-involvement in this project will in no way affect your ongoing relationship with the school.

<u>**Signature:**</u>

*"I have read and understand the information in this form. The researcher has answered my questions and concerns. Therefore, I consent to take part in this research project"*

**Student's Signature:**      _____

**Name in Block Capitals:**      _____

**Date:**      _____

**NOTE: If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact: *The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000.***

# DUBLIN CITY UNIVERSITY

## Parent/Guardians' Informed Consent Form

**Purpose of the research:**

To recap, your daughter is invited to participate in a research study investigating the autonomy and motivational levels of adolescent foreign language learners in secondary school settings. The purpose of this study is to explore language learners' autonomy and motivation in relation to the strategies and practices employed by their teacher.

**Confirmation of particular requirements:**

Student participants are required to…

…complete questionnaires

…possibly provide written accounts of your learning experience within the classroom

…possibly give your opinions via interview.

**Student: please tick [√] the appropriate box below**

1. Have you read the Plain Language Statement

Yes ☐          No ☐

2. Do you understand the information provided?

Yes ☐          No ☐

3. Have you had an opportunity to ask questions and discuss this study?

Yes ☐          No ☐

4. Have you received satisfactory answers to all your questions?

Yes ☐          No ☐          Not Applicable ☐

**Confirmation that involvement in the Research Study is voluntary:**

Again, each student can refuse to participate or withdraw from the research at any time. Your daughter/dependent's involvement/non-involvement in this project will in no way affect your ongoing relationship with the school in any way.

**<u>Signature:</u>**

*"I have read and understand the information in this form. The researcher has answered my questions and concerns. Therefore, I consent to my daughter/dependent taking part in this research project"*

**Parent/Guardian's Signature:** _____

**Name in Block Capitals:** _____

**Date:** _____

**NOTE: If you have concerns about this study and wish to contact an independent person, please contact:** *The Secretary, Dublin City University Research Ethics Committee, c/o Office of the Vice-President for Research, Dublin City University, Dublin 9. Tel 01-7008000.*

# Background Questionnaire

**Name:** _____ (Spanish alias)

**Please complete <u>all</u> questions.**

1. What is your date of birth?     _____

2. What is/are your native/first language(s)?_____

3. When did you start studying Spanish?     month_____ year_____

4. Why did you choose to study Spanish?

   _____

   _____

   _____

5. Have you visited a country where Spanish is widely spoken? If yes, please give details.

   _____

   _____

6. Please list the 3 subjects you like most beginning with your most preferred.     (a) _____
   (b) _____
   (c) _____

7. Please list the 3 subjects you like least beginning with your least preferred. (a) _____

(b) _____

(c) _____

8. How would you describe your previous academic results in Spanish?
[Please tick one √]

Extremely poor _____

Poor _____

Below average _____

Average _____

Above average _____

Good _____

Excellent _____

9. What is the highest grade you have achieved in a Spanish exam?
[Please tick one √]

A ____ B ____ C ____ D ____ E ____ F ____

10. Apart from Spanish, do you study another foreign language (**NOT** including Irish)? If yes, please give details.

_____

_____

_____

# Learner Motivation Questionnaire

**Name:** _____ (Spanish alias)

**Please tick the appropriate box.**

**1.** I love learning Spanish very much

| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**2.** I think it is very interesting to learn Spanish

| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**3.** Learning Spanish makes me feel satisfied

| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**4.** Learning Spanish is a challenge that I love to take

| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

1 of 5

**5.** Studying Spanish is important only because I'll need it for my future career.

| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**6.** Studying Spanish is important because it will make me a more knowledgeable person.

| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**7.** Studying Spanish is important because I think it will someday be useful in getting a good job.

| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

**8.** Studying Spanish is important for me because other people will respect me more if I have knowledge of a foreign language.

| Strongly | Agree | Somewhat | Somewhat | Disagree | Strongly |
|----------|-------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

*Please tick [ ✓] the appropriate box.*

**9.** I actively think about what I have learned in my Spanish class:

a) Very frequently……………………………………………………………..…..... ☐

b) Hardly ever…………………………………………………………………............ ☐

c) Once in awhile…………………………………………………………….............. ☐

**10.** If Spanish were not taught in school, I would:

a) Pick up Spanish in everyday situations (i.e., read Spanish books and newspapers, try to speak it whenever possible, etc.)……………………..………………………………………….. ☐

b) Not bother learning Spanish at all…………………………………………..…......... ☐

c) Try to obtain lessons in Spanish somewhere else………………………………........ ☐

**11.** When I have a problem understanding something in Spanish class, I:

a) Immediately ask the teacher for help…………………………………………........... ☐

b) Only seek help just before the exam…………………………………….................... ☐

c) Just forget about it…………………………………………………………................... ☐

**12.** When it comes to Spanish homework, I:

a) Put some effort into it, but not as much as I could………………………….............. ☐

b) Work very carefully, making sure I understand everything…………………........ ☐

c) Just skim over it…………………………………………………………………………………….... ☐

**13.** Considering how I study Spanish, I can honestly say that I:

a) Do just enough work to get along…………………………………………........................ ☐

b) Will pass on the basis of sheer luck or intelligence because I do very little work..... ☐

c) Really try to learn Spanish....……………………………………………………………............ ☐

**14.** If my teacher wanted someone to do an extra Spanish assignment, I would:

a) Definitely not volunteer……………………………………………………..................... ☐

b) Definitely volunteer…………………………………………………………................... ☐

c) Only do it if the teacher asked me directly……………………………………….... ☐

**15.** After I get my Spanish assignment back, I:

a) Always rewrite them, correcting my mistakes…………………………………......... ☐

b) Just throw them in my desk and forget them…………………………………............. ☐

c) Look them over, but don't bother correcting mistakes………………………......... ☐

**16.** When I am in Spanish class, I:

a) Volunteer answers as much as possible……………………………..……………

b) Answer only the easier questions…………………………………………........

c) Never say anything………………………………………………………………

**17.** If there were a local Spanish language TV station, I would:

a) Never watch it………………………………………………………..…………..

b) Turn it on occasionally……………………………………………..……..........

c) Try to watch it often………………………………………………..…………

**18.** When I hear Spanish song on the radio, I:

a) Listen to the music, paying attention only to the easy words………………….......

b) Listen carefully and try to understand all the words……………………………......

c) Change the station…………………………………………………..…………………

The questionnaire has been adapted from the Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (Gardner 1985; Gardner and Smythe 1981) and Deci and Ryan's motivational scales (1985).

**Deci, E.L. and Ryan, R.M. 1985**. *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior.* New York: Plenum.

**Gardner, R.C. 1985**. *Social psychology and second language learning: The role of attitudes and motivation*. London: Edward Arnold.

**Gardner, R.C. and Smythe, P.C. 1981**. On the development of the Attitude/ Motivation Test Battery. *Canadian Modern Language Review*, 37, pp.510-525.

# Learner Autonomy Questionnaire

**Name:** _____ (Spanish alias)

**Please tick the appropriate box [√].**

## <u>OUTSIDE</u> of class do you...

1. ...revise what you have learnt regularly?          Yes ☐     No ☐

2. ...use a dictionary when you do homework?          Yes ☐     No ☐

3. ... read newspapers/magazines/web pages in Spanish? Yes ☐     No ☐

4. ...send emails or write letters in Spanish?          Yes ☐     No ☐

5. ...watch movies/TV shows in Spanish?          Yes ☐     No ☐

6. ...listen to Spanish songs?          Yes ☐     No ☐

7. ...practise Spanish with friends?          Yes ☐     No ☐

# <u>INSIDE</u> of class do you…

8. …participate in class?                                         Yes ☐     No ☐

9. …ask questions if you do not understand?       Yes ☐     No ☐

10. …try to work out the meaning of words
    you do not understand?                                     Yes ☐     No ☐

11. … note down new words and their meaning?   Yes ☐     No ☐

12  …make suggestions to the teacher?              Yes ☐     No ☐

13  …take opportunities to speak Spanish?          Yes ☐     No ☐

14  …discuss learning problems with classmates?  Yes ☐     No ☐

The questionnaire has been adapted from those developed by Spratt, Humphreys and Chan (2002), and Gallacher (2004).

**Gallacher, L. 2004.** *Learner Training with Young Learners* [Online]. Available from:

http://www.teachingenglish.org.uk/think/articles/learner-training-young-learners [Accessed 02 December 2009].

**Spratt, M., Humphreys, G., Chan, V. 2002.** Autonomy and motivation: which comes first? *Language Teaching Research.* 6, pp.245-266.

# Goal Setting and Evaluation Record

**Name:** _____ (Spanish alias)

**Goal Setting**

There are no right or wrong answers

List three realistic goals that you want to achieve in _____ weeks time.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Describe how you will achieve each of these goals.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

**Assessment of Goals**

Review your personal goals. For each goal, indicate if you are meeting it.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

If you are meeting that goal, describe ways in which you will continue to do so. If you are not

meeting that goal, indicate what you will change to make sure that goal is met.

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Please make any changes to your goals or adjust them if necessary. Please write your redefined

goals below:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

**Final Session:**

Were the goals met?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Why or Why not?
(THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS)

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

What can you do differently in future and what will stay the same for you?
(THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS)

_____

_____

_____

Teacher Feedback:

_____

_____

_____

# Results of the First Goal-Setting Session (Weeks 1-7)

### 1. Ana

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

Assessment Stage

● Memorising/studying content

Finding content difficult

● ▬ - Ask for group's help
★ - Adjust goal

Neglecting relevant learning content

▬ - Devote more time to learning relevant content
★ - Adjust goal

**Achievement**

Why?

| - Put in a lot of effort - Help from group | - Put in a lot of effort - Help from group | - Put in a lot of effort - Help from group |
|---|---|---|

What will stay the same?

| Working in groups | Pay more attention to goals |
|---|---|

What to do differently?

### 2. Bibiana

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

Assessment Stage

● Memorising/studying content

● Enjoyable learning activities

Neglecting relevant learning content

▬ ★ Adjust goal

**Achievement**

Why?

| Found conent easy | Help from group | Adjusted plans |
|---|---|---|

What will stay the same?

| Work ethic | Put more effort into planning |
|---|---|

What to do differently?

### 3. Cristina

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

Assessment Stage

● Working in a group

● Enjoying learning activities

● Practising speaking Spanish

**Achievement**

Why?

| Already familiar with content | Memorised/studied content | Practised speaking Spanish |
|---|---|---|

What will stay the same?

| Practising speaking Spanish | Source larger quantity of learning materials |
|---|---|

What to do differently?

### 4. Elena

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

Assessment Stage

● Finding content easy

Neglecting relevant learning content

▬ ★ Set about learning relevant content

**Achievement**

Why?

| Already familiar with content | Memorised/studied content | Translated texts from L1 to L2 |
|---|---|---|

What will stay the same?

| Working in groups | Incorporate new content more often rather than previously learned content |
|---|---|

What to do differently?

● Reason student is on track towards achieving goal

▬ Issue encountered on track towards achievement

★ Course of action taken to get back on track

1 of 5

## 5. Esperanza

Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3

*Assessment Stage*

● Group work   ● Group work

Not satisfied with progress

★ Devote more time to learning relevant content

**Achievement**

*Why?*

Help from group | Enjoyed learning tasks | - Help from teacher<br>- Help from group

*What will stay the same?*

Practising speaking Spanish | Plan more writing activities

*What to do differently?*

## 6. Isabel

Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3

*Assessment Stage*

● Enjoying learning activities   ● Enjoying learning activities   ● Enjoying learning activities

**Achievement**

*Why?*

Persevered | Put in a lot of effort | - Enjoyed learning tasks<br>- Help from teacher

*What will stay the same?*

Working in groups | Ask for teacher's guidance

*What to do differently?*

## 7. Juana

Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3

*Assessment Stage*

● Putting in a lot of effort and persevering   ● Putting in a lot of effort and persevering

Neglected relevant learning content

★ Ask teacher for help

**Achievement**

*Why?*

Followed study plan | Used learning materials well | Put in a lot of effort and persevered

*What will stay the same?*

Working in groups | - Plan more reading activities<br>- Ask for teacher's help

*What to do differently?*

## 8. Leticia

Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3

*Assessment Stage*

● Putting in a lot of effort and persevering   ● Putting in a lot of effort and persevering   ● - Using online resources well<br>- Teacher's help

**Achievement**

*Why?*

Practised speaking Spanish | Used online resources well | Enjoyed learning tasks

*What will stay the same?*

Planning learning

*What to do differently?*

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● Reason student is on track towards achieving goal

▬ Issue encountered on track towards achievement

★ Course of action taken to get back on track

## 9. Magda

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

*Assessment Stage*

- Following study plan
- Following study plan
- Following study plan

**Achievement**

*Why?*

| Put in a lot of effort | Put in a lot of effort | Put in a lot of effort |
|---|---|---|

*What will stay the same?*

| Working in groups | Develop listening skills |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

## 10. Maria

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

*Assessment Stage*

- Practising speaking Spanish
- Memorising/ studying content

**Achievement**

*Why?*

| Memorised/ studied content | Memorised/ studied content | Enjoyed learning tasks |
|---|---|---|

*What will stay the same?*

| Working in groups | Plan more speaking activities |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

## 11. Pabla

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

*Assessment Stage*

- Putting in a lot of effort
- Putting in a lot of effort
- Putting in a lot of effort

**Achievement**

*Why?*

| Put in a lot of effort | Put in a lot of effort | Put in a lot of effort |
|---|---|---|

*What will stay the same?*

| Working in groups | Plan more speaking activities |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

## 12. Paula

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

*Assessment Stage*

- Choosing good quality learning materials
- Memorising/ studying content
- Group work

**Achievement**

*Why?*

| Worked well as a group | Help from teacher | Enjoyed learning tasks |
|---|---|---|

*What will stay the same?*

| All aspects of learning approach | |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

---

- Reason student is on track towards achieving goal
- Issue encountered on track towards achievement
- Course of action taken to get back on track

## 13. Pilar

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

*Assessment Stage*

- Memorising/ studying content
- Enjoying learning activities
- Group work

**Achievement**

| Followed study plan | Managed time well | Managed time well |
|---|---|---|

*Why?*

*What will stay the same?*

| Using variety of learning resources (books, Internet, CDs etc) | Manage time better (allot specific amounts of time to activities) |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

## 14. Ramona

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

*Assessment Stage*

- Group work
- Group work
- Group work

**Achievement**

| Worked well as a group | Put in a lot of effort | Encouragement from teacher |
|---|---|---|

*Why?*

*What will stay the same?*

| Manage time better |
|---|

*What to do differently?*

## 15. Salma

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

*Assessment Stage*

- Paying attention to goal
- Paying attention to goal
- Paying attention to goal

**Achievement**

| Paid attention to goals | Paid attention to goals | Paid attention to goals |
|---|---|---|

*Why?*

*What will stay the same?*

| Setting learning goals | Include activities to suit learning preferences |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

## 16. Silvia

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

*Assessment Stage*

- Following study plan
- Following study plan
- Following study plan

**Achievement**

| Help from group | Help from group | Practised speaking Spanish |
|---|---|---|

*Why?*

*What will stay the same?*

| Working in groups | Incorporate more individual work |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

- Reason student is on track towards achieving goal
- Issue encountered on track towards achievement
- Course of action taken to get back on track

## 17. Sofia

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|--------|--------|--------|

*Assessment Stage*

- Teacher's help (Goal 1)
- Group work (Goal 2)
- Practising speaking Spanish (Goal 3)

**Achievement**

*Why?*

| Followed study plan | Followed study plan | Followed study plan |
|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|

*What will stay the same?*

| Working in groups | Ask for teacher's feedback and advice |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------|

*What to do differently?*

## 18. Yolanda

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|--------|--------|--------|

*Assessment Stage*

- Group work (Goal 1)
- Practising speaking Spanish
- Practising writing Spanish (Goal 2)
- Practising speaking Spanish (Goal 3)

**Achievement**

*Why?*

| Put in a lot of effort | Put in a lot of effort | Put in a lot of effort |
|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|

*What will stay the same?*

| Setting goals | Ask for teacher's advice more often |
|---------------|-------------------------------------|

*What to do differently?*

---

● Reason student is on track towards achieving goal
▬ Issue encountered on track towards achievement
★ Course of action taken to get back on track

**Appendix G**

# Results of the Second Goal-Setting Session (Weeks 8-16)

## 1. Ana

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

*Assessment Stage*

- ● - Memorising/ studying content
  - Enjoying learning activities
- ● Memorising/ studying content
- ● - Group work
  - Teacher's help

**Achievement**

*Why?*

| Determined to improve language level | Determined to improve language level | Determined to improve language level |
|---|---|---|

*What will stay the same?*

| Working in groups | Work independently (as well as in groups) |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

## 2. Bibiana

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

*Assessment Stage*

- ● Finding content easy (mostly revision)
- ● Managing time well
- ● Group work

**Achievement**

*Why?*

| Put in a lot of effort | Put in a lot of effort and persevered | Worked well as a group |
|---|---|---|

*What will stay the same?*

| | Be more assertive in group situations |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

## 3. Cristina

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

*Assessment Stage*

- ● Memorising/ studying content
- ● Memorising/ studying content
- ● Practising speaking Spanish

**Achievement**

*Why?*

| Followed study plan | Followed study plan | Followed study plan |
|---|---|---|

*What will stay the same?*

| Practising speaking Spanish | |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

## 4. Elena

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

*Assessment Stage*

- ● Putting in a lot of effort
- ● Putting in a lot of effort
- ● Putting in a lot of effort

**Achievement**

*Why?*

| Already familiar with content | Help from teacher | Enjoyed learning activities |
|---|---|---|

*What will stay the same?*

| | Incorporate more creative tasks (e.g. artwork) |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

---

● Reason student is on track towards achieving goal

▬ Issue encountered on track towards achievement

★ Course of action taken to get back on track

## 5. Esperanza

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|--------|--------|--------|

*Assessment Stage*

- ● Group work
- ● Using materials well
- ● Putting in a lot of effort

### Achievement

*Why?*

| Practised speaking Spanish | Used learning materials well | Found content easy |
|---|---|---|

*What will stay the same?*

Taking responsibility for own learning

*What to do differently?*

## 6. Isabel

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|--------|--------|--------|

*Assessment Stage*

- ● Putting in a lot of effort
- ● Putting in a lot of effort
- ● Putting in a lot of effort

### Achievement

*Why?*

| Already familiar with content | - Put in a lot of effort<br>- help from teacher | Put in a lot of effort |
|---|---|---|

*What should continue?*

Working in groups

*What should change?*

Include activities to suit learning preferences

## 7. Juana

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|--------|--------|--------|

*Assessment Stage*

- ● Practising writing Spanish

### Achievement

*Why?*

| Followed study plan | Memorised/studied content | Put in a lot of effort |
|---|---|---|

*What will stay the same?*

Working as a group

*What to do differently?*

## 8. Leticia

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|--------|--------|--------|

*Assessment Stage*

- ● Putting in a lot of effort
- ● Putting in a lot of effort
- ● Putting in a lot of effort

### Achievement

*Why?*

| Practised speaking Spanish | Used materials well | Already familiar with content |
|---|---|---|

*What will stay the same?*

Setting tasks that are challenging

*What to do differently?*

---

● Reason student is on track towards achieving goal

▬ Issue encountered on track towards achievement

★ Course of action taken to get back on track

## 9. Magda

Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3

*Assessment Stage*

Goal not challenging (already achieved at this point)

- Following study plan (Goal 1)
- Following study plan (Goal 2)
- Adjust goal (Goal 3)

**Achievement**

*Why?*

Put in a lot of effort | Put in a lot of effort | Put in a lot of effort

*What will stay the same?*

Plan more listening activities

*What to do differently?*

## 10. Maria

Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3

*Assessment Stage*

- Practising speaking Spanish
- Practising writing Spanish

Putting in a lot of effort

- Group work
- Memorising/ studying content

**Achievement**

*Why?*

Memorised/ studied content | Memorised/ studied content | Memorised/ studied content

*What will stay the same?*

- Working in groups
- Practising speaking Spanish

- Plan less reading activities
- Plan less writing activities

*What to do differently?*

## 11. Pabla

Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3

*Assessment Stage*

Group work | Group work | Group work

**Achievement**

*Why?*

Put in a lot of effort | Put in a lot of effort | Put in a lot of effort

*What will stay the same?*

Working in groups

Plan more speaking activities

*What to do differently?*

## 12. Paula

Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3

*Assessment Stage*

Using learning materials well | Memorising/ studying content | Group work

**Achievement**

*Why?*

Worked well as a group | Help from teacher | Enjoyed learning activities

*What will stay the same?*

All aspects of learning approach

*What to do differently?*

● Reason student is on track towards achieving goal

▬ Issue encountered on track towards achievement

★ Course of action taken to get back on track

## 13. Pilar

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |

*Assessment Stage*

● Memorising/ studying content     ● Memorising/ studying content     ● Using learning materials well

### Achievement

*Why?*

| Memorised it easily | Selected good quality materials | Already familiar with content |
|---|---|---|

*What will stay the same?*

| Having a say in learning materials | |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

## 14. Ramona

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |

*Assessment Stage*

● Group work     ● Group work     ● Group work

### Achievement

*Why?*

| Found content easy | Worked well as a group | Help from group |
|---|---|---|

*What will stay the same?*

| Taking responsibility for own learning | |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

## 15. Salma

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |

*Assessment Stage*

● Paying attention to goal     ● Paying attention to goal     ● Paying attention to goal

### Achievement

*Why?*

| Paid attention to goals | Paid attention to goals | Paid attention to goals |
|---|---|---|

*What will stay the same?*

| Setting learning goals | |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

## 16. Silvia

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |

*Assessment Stage*

● Following study plan     ● Following study plan     ● Following study plan

### Achievement

*Why?*

| Help from group | Practised speaking Spanish | Practised speaking Spanish |
|---|---|---|

*What will stay the same?*

| Working in groups | Incorporate more individual work |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

● Reason student is on track towards achieving goal
▬ Issue encountered on track towards achievement
★ Course of action taken to get back on track

## 17. Sofia

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

*Assessment Stage*

- 🟢 Group work
- 🟢 Group work
- 🟢 Group work

| Achievement | | |
|---|---|---|
| - Paid attention to goal<br>- Determined to achieve goal | - Paid attention to goal<br>- Determined to achieve goal | - Paid attention to goal<br>- Determined to achieve goal |

*Why?*

*What will stay the same?*

| Working hard | |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

## 18. Yolanda

| Goal 1 | Goal 2 | Goal 3 |
|---|---|---|

*Assessment Stage*

- 🟢 Following study plan
- 🟢 Following study plan
- 🟢 Following study plan

| Achievement | | |
|---|---|---|
| Put in a lot of effort | Put in a lot of effort | Put in a lot of effort |

*Why?*

*What will stay the same?*

| Setting learning goals | Put more effort into sourcing good quality materials |
|---|---|

*What to do differently?*

---

🟢 Reason student is on track towards achieving goal
🟥 Issue encountered on track towards achievement
⭐ Course of action taken to get back on track

# Reflection Record

**Name:** _____ (Spanish alias)

| |
|---|
| **What I have done**<br>(Describe activities you have taken part in) |
| **What I have learned**<br>(Summarise what you think you have learned in a few words)<br>THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS |
| **Reflections**<br>(Comment on how useful and enjoyable the activities were. Any problems?)<br>THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS |

This reflection record has been adapted from the *University of Hong Kong's* "record of work" form (Benson 2001 p.158).

**Benson, P. 2001.** *Teaching and Researching Autonomy in Language Learning.* Harlow: Pearson Education Ltd.

1 of 1

# Student Interview Form

**Treatment group questions:**

1. How do you feel about...

       a. ...selecting learning materials?

       b. ...planning learning tasks?

       c. ...setting learning goals?

       d. ...self-evaluating?

NOTES:

2. You've done something different in your Spanish lessons over the past four months. What do you think your teacher's role has been?

NOTES:

3. How would you feel about continuing with this learning approach next year?

NOTES:

4. Would you change anything about the learning approach?

NOTES:

**Comparison group questions:**

1. How would you feel about...
    a. ...selecting learning materials?
    b. ...planning learning tasks?
    c. ...setting learning goals?
    d. ...self-evaluating?

NOTES:

2. Let's say you were to take this learning approach, what do you think your teacher's role would be?

NOTES:

3. How would you feel about using this learning approach next year?

NOTES:

4. How do you think it would go if this learning approach went ahead next year?

NOTES:

# Teacher Interview Form

1. What was your experience of this experiment?

NOTES:

2. Do you think the students' learning was influenced?

3. How do you think the students' learning was influenced?

NOTES:

4. Would you continue with this approach in future?

NOTES:

5. Would you change anything about the approach?

NOTES:

# Student Profiles

## Profile 1: Ana

| Quantitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | | | |

| Qualitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **+/-** |
| Selecting materials | • Attractive alternative to textbook<br>• Students normally learning more effectively | | + |
| Planning tasks | • Incorporate activities would not get to do (e.g. role-plays) | • Dislikes planning tasks in groups (group members "pushy", uncooperative) | -<br>+ |
| Goal-setting | • Focus on individual learning/needs | • Too much writing (completing forms) | -<br>+ |
| Self-evaluating | • Reflect on value of learning activities<br>• Reflect on (lack of) progress | • Too much writing (completing forms) | -<br>+ |
| Teacher's Role | • Helped student achieve goal<br>• Offers support and guidance<br>• No longer teaching/instructing<br>• Teacher is "different" (kinder) | | + |
| Group Work | • Group helped student achieve goal<br>• Group members help/correct each other | • Groups not getting along<br>• Preference for individual work | -<br>+ |
| Using ISs in future | | • Prefers traditional approach for LC<br>• Depends on others (group work a concern) | - |

**Quantitative Results**

The bar chart indicates Ana's pre-, post- and follow-up results for motivation and autonomy levels. As regards motivation, Ana's results indicated that, despite moving out of the low- into the moderate-level category in the post- results, she did not maintain her gain in motivation, returning to the low-level category in the follow-up results.

As regards autonomy, results indicated that Ana moved from the moderate- to high-level category in the post- results. The follow-up results indicated that she maintained her gain in autonomy, remaining in the high-level category.

**Qualitative Results**

Ana's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward *selecting learning materials* and *the teacher's role*. As regards *planning learning tasks*, *setting learning goals* and *working in groups*, results indicated that she was equally positive and negative in her attitudes toward these topics. As regards *self-evaluating*, Ana expressed a mixture of positive and negative opinions, expressing overall positive attitudes toward this topic.

As regards *using the learning approach in future*, Ana indicated expressed concerns regarding working in groups and using the ISs when preparing for Leaving Certificate examinations, indicating that she preferred the traditional approach.

## Profile 2: Bibiana

| Quantitative Information |
| --- |



| Qualitative Information | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Topic/Issue** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **+/-** |
| Selecting materials | • Enjoys this task (did not elaborate) | | + |
| Planning tasks | • Encourages students to think about learning aims<br>• Students decide how to allocate their time (when and for how long to do activities)<br>• Can strike a balance between activities they enjoy and those they do not | | + |
| Goal-setting | • Focus on individual learning (irrelevant whether others are progressing towards their goals) | | + |
| Self-evaluating | • Reflect on value of learning activities<br>• Treated as mature/responsible individuals | | + |
| Teacher's Role | • Monitors/controls noise levels<br>• Teacher is "different" (kinder, more patient) | | + |
| Group Work | • Group helped her achieve goals | • Group not taking ideas on board | -<br>+ |
| Using ISs in future | • ISs are effective (more motivated)<br>• ISs are flexible (adapt to suit learner/teacher needs) | | + |

**Quantitative Results**

The bar chart shows Bibiana's pre-, post- and follow-up results for levels of motivation and autonomy. As regards motivation, Bibiana's results suggested that her pre- level was moderate and that it remained at the same level in post- and follow-up results.

As regards autonomy, results indicated that Bibiana moved from the moderate- to high-level category in the post- results. The follow-up results indicated that she did not maintain her gain in autonomy, returning to the moderate-level category.

**Qualitative Results**

Bibiana's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward *selecting learning materials*, *planning learning tasks*, *setting goals*, *self-evaluating* and *the teacher's role*. As regards *working in groups*, results suggested that she was equally positive and negative in her attitude toward this topic.

As regards *using the learning approach in future*, Bibiana suggested that she wanted to continue with the ISs, indicating that she felt more motivated about learning Spanish and believed that the ISs could be adapted or adjusted if necessary.

# Profile 3: Cristina

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">Quantitative Information</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">



High
Moderate
Low

Pre-    Post-    Follow-up

■ Motivation
■ Autonomy
</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4" align="center">Qualitative Information</td></tr>
<tr><td><strong>Topic</strong></td><td align="center"><strong>Positive</strong></td><td align="center"><strong>Negative</strong></td><td><strong>+/-</strong></td></tr>
<tr><td>Selecting materials</td><td></td><td>• Preference for using textbook<br>• Dislikes act of sourcing materials</td><td>-</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="2">Planning tasks</td><td>• Enjoys this task (did not elaborate)</td><td>• Challenging to make lessons enjoyable/stimulating</td><td>-</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>• Does not perform task well</td><td>+</td></tr>
<tr><td>Goal-setting</td><td>• Focus on individual learning</td><td></td><td>+</td></tr>
<tr><td>Self-evaluating</td><td>• Reflect on value of learning activities</td><td></td><td>+</td></tr>
<tr><td>Teacher's Role</td><td>• Offers support and guidance<br>• Monitors/controls behaviour<br>• No longer teaching/instructing</td><td></td><td>+</td></tr>
<tr><td>Group Work</td><td>• Helped student achieve goal<br>• Group members help each other (generate/share ideas, peer correct)</td><td></td><td>+</td></tr>
<tr><td>Using ISs in future</td><td></td><td>• Prefers traditional approach<br>• ISs better suited for TY<br>• Continuity concerns (has not used ISs in previous years, or in other subjects)</td><td>-</td></tr>
</table>

## Quantitative Results

The bar chart indicates Cristina's pre-, post- and follow-up results for motivation and autonomy levels. As regards motivation, Cristina's pre- results indicated that she had a high level. Her motivation remained in the high-level category in post- and follow-up results.

As regards autonomy, Cristina's results indicated that she had a moderate level of autonomy and that her level remained in the same category for post- and follow-up results.

**Qualitative Results**

Cristina's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward *setting learning goals*, *self-evaluating*, *the teacher's role* and *working in groups*. Her results suggested that she was entirely negative in her attitude toward *selecting learning materials*. As regards *planning learning tasks*, Cristina expressed a mixture of positive and negative opinions, expressing overall negative opinions on this topic.

As regards *using the learning approach in future*, Cristina expressed concerns regarding introducing the ISs so late into her secondary education, and about using the ISs in academic years other than TY. She also expressed concern about not using a similar approach in other subjects, indicating that she preferred to use the traditional approach in future.

**Profile 4: Elena**

| Quantitative Information |
|---|



| Qualitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **+/-** |
| Selecting materials | • Enjoys this task (did not elaborate) | | + |
| Planning tasks | • Personalise lessons<br>• Practise LC-oriented activities | | + |
| Goal-setting | • Focus on individual learning | | + |
| Self-evaluating | • Reflect on effectiveness of learning activities | | + |
| Teacher's Role | • Helped student achieve goals<br>• Offers support and guidance (facilitated materials selection process) | | + |
| Group Work | ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨ | ▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨▨ | ▨▨ |
| Using ISs in future | | • Depends on others (students using ISs as an excuse to do very little, depends on teacher willingness to relinquish control) | - |

**Quantitative Results**

Elena's pre-, post- and follow-up results for motivation and autonomy levels are indicated via the bar chart. As regards motivation, Elena's results indicated that she remained in the moderate-level category in pre-, post- and follow-up results. Elena's autonomy results suggested that she moved from the moderate- to high-level category in the post- results. The follow-up results indicated that she maintained her gain in autonomy, remaining in the high-level category.

**Qualitative Results**

Elena's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward five topics (*selecting learning materials*, *planning learning tasks*, *setting learning goals*, *self-evaluating*, and *the teacher's role*). She did not make positive or negative comments regarding the issue of working in groups. As regards *using the learning approach in future*, Elena expressed concerns regarding students using the ISs as an excuse to do very little work during class and concerns about teachers' willingness to relinquish control.

## Profile 5: Esperanza

| Quantitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
|  | | | |

| Qualitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **+/-** |
| Selecting materials | • Selecting appropriate materials helped her achieve goals<br>• Attractive alternative to textbook | | + |
| Planning tasks | • Personalise lessons<br>• Enables learners to develop each language skill (aural/oral/reading/writing) | • Challenging to keep lessons interesting/enjoyable | -<br><br>+ |
| Goal-setting | • Focus on individual learning<br>• Challenges/pushes students | | + |
| Self-evaluating | • Assess progress toward achieving goals | | + |
| Teacher's Role | • Helped student achieve goals<br>• Still involved in evaluating Students<br>• Monitors and controls learner behaviour (makes sure students work during class) | | + |
| Group Work | • Group helped her achieve goal | | + |
| Using ISs in future | • ISs are effective: improved student behaviour<br>• ISs are enjoyable | | + |

**Quantitative Results**

    Esperanza's pre-, post- and follow-up results for motivation and autonomy levels are indicated in the bar chart. As regards motivation, Esperanza's results indicated that she remained in the moderate-level category in pre-, post- and follow-up results.

    Results also indicated that Esperanza's autonomy level remained in the moderate category in post- and follow-up results.

**Qualitative Results**

Esperanza's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward *selecting learning materials*, *setting learning goals*, *self-evaluating*, *the teacher's role* and *working in groups*. As regards *planning learning tasks*, results indicated that Esperanza expressed a mixture of positive and negative opinions, conveying overall positive attitudes toward this topic.

As regards *using the learning approach in future*, Esperanza indicated that she wanted to continue using the ISs, suggesting that she believed they improved students' behaviour and that she enjoyed learning in the setting of a student-centred classroom.

# Profile 6: Isabel

| Quantitative Information |
|---|



| Qualitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **+/-** |
| Selecting materials | • Personalise lessons<br>• Good quality materials facilitate tasks planning | • Too much selection to choose from | -<br>+ |
| Planning tasks | • Personalise lessons<br>• Enjoys planning learning tasks in a group | • Not sure if covering enough content<br>• Dislikes this task ( "time wasting", "boring") | -<br>+ |
| Goal-setting | • Setting goals encourages student to put more effort into planning learning tasks | • Restricted by syllabus | -<br>+ |
| Self-evaluating | • Focus on individual learning (not judged against other students' performances) | | + |
| Teacher's Role | • Helped student attain goal<br>• Offers support and guidance (facilitated materials selection process) | • Need more input from teacher | -<br>+ |
| Group Work | • Growing sense of trust among members | | + |
| Using ISs in future | • Teacher plays an important role (security in knowing teacher is nearby) | | + |

## Quantitative Results

The bar chart indicates Isabel's pre-, post- and follow-up results for motivation and autonomy levels. As regards motivation, Isabel's results indicated that she moved out of the low- into the moderate-level category in the post- results, and maintained her gain in motivation in the follow-up results. As regards autonomy, results indicated that Isabel's level (moderate) in the pre- results was unchanged in post- and follow-up results.

**Qualitative Results**

Isabel's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward *self-evaluating* and *working in groups*. As regards *planning learning tasks* and *setting learning goals*, results indicated that she was equally positive and negative in her attitude toward these topics. As regards *selecting materials* and *the teacher's role*, Isabel expressed a mixture of positive and negative opinions, expressing overall positive attitudes toward these topics. As regards *using the learning approach in future*, Isabel suggested that she wanted to continue using the ISs, while at the same time expressing a sense of security in knowing that the teacher would be there to facilitate and support students.

## Profile 7: Juana

| | Quantitative Information | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| |  | | |
| | Qualitative Information | | |
| **Topic** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **+/-** |
| Selecting materials | • Access useful online resources<br>• Not restricted to textbook<br>• Personalise lessons (find materials to suit personal interests)<br>• Describes this task as "most useful part" of ISs<br>• Helped her achieve learning goal | | + |
| Planning tasks | • Students decide how to allocate their time | | + |
| Goal-setting | • Focus on individual learning (use personal goals to influence tasks planning in groups) | | + |
| Self-evaluating | • Reflect on value of learning activities | | + |
| Teacher's Role | • Helped her achieve goal<br>• Offers support and guidance (helps students who have difficulty, facilitates selection of materials) | | + |
| Group Work | • Would continue group work as a strategy to achieve goals | | + |
| Using ISs in future | • ISs are effective (her learning improved) | | + |

**Quantitative Results**

Juana's pre-, post- and follow-up results for motivation and autonomy levels are displayed in the bar chart. With regard to motivation, results indicated that she remained in the low-level category in pre-, post- and follow-up results. As regards autonomy, results indicated Juana's pre- level (moderate) was also unchanged in post- and follow-up results.

**Qualitative Results**

Juana's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward six topics (*selecting learning materials*; *planning learning tasks*; *setting learning goals*; *self-evaluating*; *the teacher's role;* and *working in groups*). As regards *using the learning approach in future*, Juana indicated that she wanted to continue using the ISs, suggesting that she learned more effectively in a learner-centred setting.

## Profile 8: Leticia



| Quantitative Information |
|---|

| Qualitative Information |
|---|

| Topic | Positive | Negative | +/- |
|---|---|---|---|
| Selecting materials | • Enjoys opportunity to use online resources<br>• Has become familiar with online resources to use in self-directed learning at home<br>• Helped her achieve learning goal | | + |
| Planning tasks | • Students decide how to allocate their time | | + |
| Goal-setting | • Gives students clear targets to aim for | | + |
| Self-evaluating | • Enjoys reflecting on learning progress | | + |
| Teacher's Role | • Helped student achieve goals<br>• Offers support and guidance<br>• Monitored/controlled behaviour (held students accountable for misbehaving, made sure students worked during class) | | + |
| Group Work | | | |
| Using ISs in future | • Students take ownership of their learning (enjoyed having more control)<br>• Wants to see online element introduced (interactive portfolio) | | - |

**Quantitative Results**

The bar chart (Table 4.53) indicates Leticia's pre-, post- and follow-up results for motivation and autonomy levels. Leticia's pre- results indicated that she had a high level of motivation; her level remained in this category for post- and follow-up results. Leticia's pre- results indicated that she had a high level of autonomy. Post- and follow-up results suggested that her level remained high.

**Qualitative Results**

Leticia's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward five topics (*selecting learning materials*; *planning learning tasks*; *setting learning goals*; *self-evaluating*; and *the teacher's role*). She did not make positive or negative comments regarding the issue of working in groups.

As regards *using the learning approach in future*, Leticia indicated that she wanted to continue using the ISs, expressing enthusiasm about students taking ownership of their own learning and suggesting that students could interact online, displaying group ideas/work and giving and receiving feedback from other groups.

## Profile 9: Magda

| Quantitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|



| Qualitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **+/-** |
| Selecting materials | • Not restricted to textbook | | + |
| Planning tasks | • Plan LC-oriented activities<br>• Personalise lessons (plan enjoyable/ exciting activities) | | + |
| Goal-setting | | • Dislikes this responsibility ("boring") | - |
| Self-evaluating | | • Dislikes this responsibility ("boring") | - |
| Teacher's Role | • Offers support and guidance | | + |
| Group Work | • Enjoyed planning tasks in groups | | + |
| Using ISs in future | • Takes ownership of learning (enjoys having more control, believes students should push/challenge themselves) | | + |

**Quantitative Results**

The bar chart indicates Magda's pre-, post- and follow-up results for levels of motivation and autonomy. As regards motivation, Magda's results indicated that she remained in the low-level category in pre-, post- and follow-up results.

Magda's results regarding autonomy suggested that she remained in the moderate-level category in pre-, post- and follow-up results.

**Qualitative Results**

Magda's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward *selecting learning materials*, *planning learning tasks*, *the teacher's role* and *working in groups*. Her results also suggested that she was entirely negative regarding her opinion on *setting learning goals* and *self-evaluating*.

As regards *using the learning approach in future*, Magda indicated that she wanted to continue using the ISs, indicating that she felt that it was important for students to take control of their own learning and create opportunities to challenge and push themselves.

## Profile 10: María

| Quantitative Information |
|---|



| Qualitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **+/-** |
| Selecting materials | • Attractive alternative to textbook | | + |
| Planning tasks | • Planned LC oriented activities<br>• Attractive alternative to following lessons plans in textbook | | + |
| Goal-setting | • Gives students clear targets to aim for | | + |
| Self-evaluating | • Enjoys this task (did not elaborate) | | + |
| Teacher's Role | • Monitors and controls student behaviour | | + |
| Group Work | • Group helped her achieve her goal | | + |
| Using ISs in future | • Did not elaborate | | + |

**Quantitative Results**

The bar chart indicates María's pre-, post- and follow-up results for motivation and autonomy levels. As regards motivation, María's results indicated that her level was high in pre- results and remained so in post- and follow-up results.

As regards autonomy, results indicated that María moved from the moderate- to high-level category in the post- results. The follow-up results indicated that she did not maintain her gain in autonomy, returning to the moderate-level category.

**Qualitative Results**

Maria's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward six topics (*selecting learning materials*; *planning learning tasks*; *setting learning goals*; *self-evaluating*; *the teacher's role*; and *working in groups*).

As regards *using the learning approach in future*, María indicated that she wanted to continue with the ISs, but did not elaborate.

## Profile 11: Pabla

| Quantitative Information |
|---|



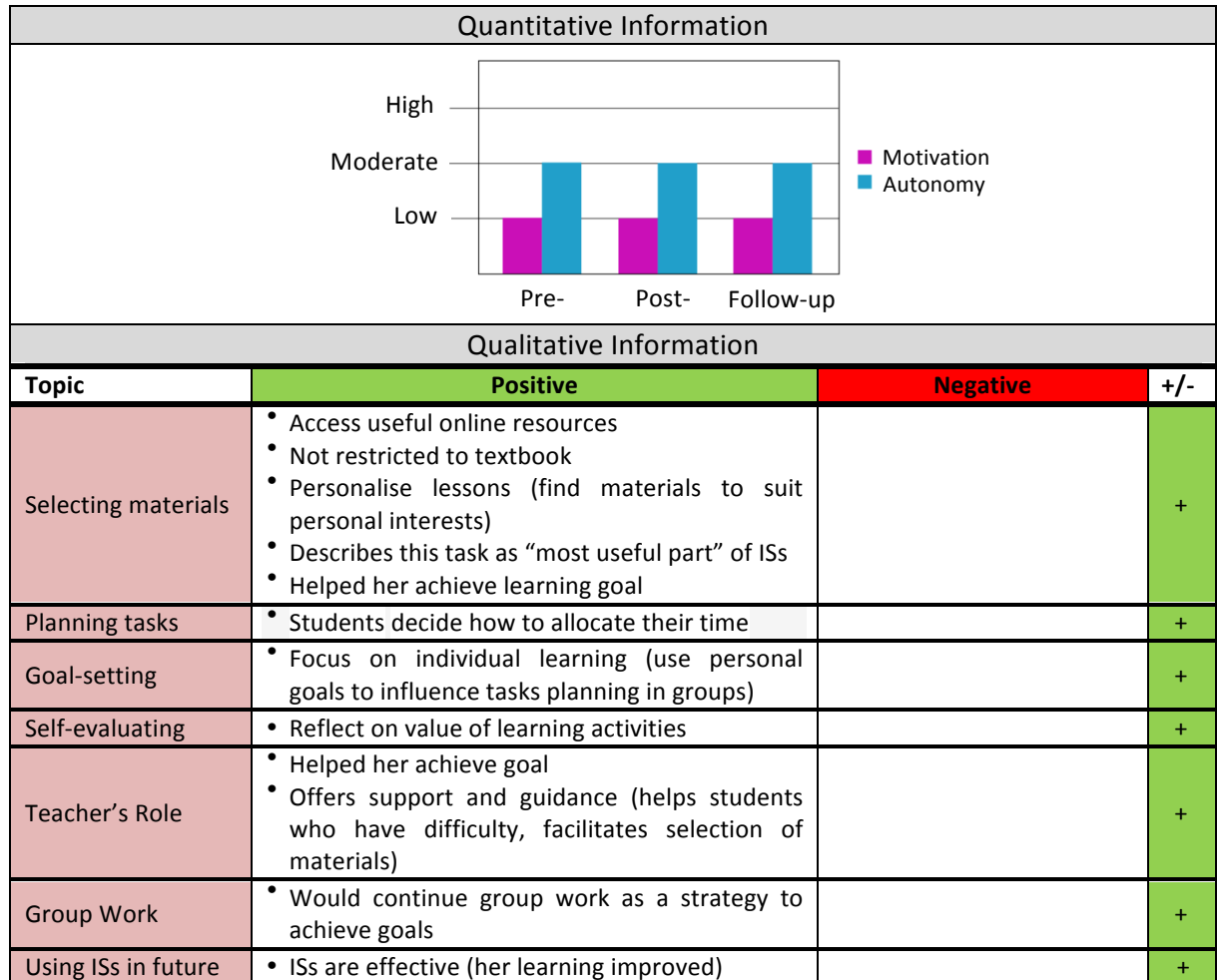| Qualitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **+/-** |
| Selecting materials | • Enjoys this task (did not elaborate) | | + |
| Planning tasks | • Personalise lessons (plan activities to suit personal interests) | | + |
| Goal-setting | • Enjoyed this task (did not elaborate) | | + |
| Self-evaluating | • Reflects on effectiveness of learning activities (explained meaning of phrases/words) | | + |
| Teacher's Role | • Offers support and guidance | | + |
| Group Work | • Group helped her achieve goal | | + |
| Using ISs in future | • Proposed having bigger groups and rotating members between groups so as to generate ideas and get to know other students better | | + |

## Quantitative Results

The bar chart indicates Pabla's pre-, post- and follow-up results for motivation and autonomy levels. Pabla's results indicated that she remained in the moderate-level category in pre-, post- and follow-up results.

As regards autonomy, results indicated that there was no change in Pabla's pre- level (moderate) in post- or follow-up results.

## Qualitative Results

Pabla's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward six topics (*selecting learning materials*; *planning learning tasks*; *setting learning goals*; *self-evaluating*; *the teacher's role*; and *working in groups*).

As regards *using the learning approach in future*, Pabla indicated that she wanted to continue using the ISs, suggesting that she would like to see an increase in the number of students per group. She also suggested that group members should change frequently with students moving between groups in order to get to know each other better.

## Profile 12: Paula

| Quantitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|



| Qualitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **+/-** |
| Selecting materials | • Using online resources that she has become familiar with in order to engage in self-directed learning at home<br>• Helped her achieve learning goal | | + |
| Planning tasks | • Enjoyed planning tasks (did not elaborate) | | + |
| Goal-setting | • Gives students clear targets to aim for | | + |
| Self-evaluating | • Enjoyed sharing reflections with teacher | | + |
| Teacher's Role | • Helped student achieve goal<br>• Still involved in evaluation process<br>• Offers support/guidance (provides feedback, advice and help)<br>• Plays a "really big role" | | + |
| Group Work | • Helped her achieve a goal<br>• Helped each other stay motivated | | + |
| Using ISs in future | • Taking ownership of their learning (engaging in self-directed learning at home)<br>• ISs are effective: "feeling very motivated" | | + |

**Quantitative Results**

The bar chart indicates Paula's pre-, post- and follow-up results for motivation and autonomy levels. As regards motivation, Paula's results indicated that she remained in moderate-level category in pre-, post- and follow-up results. Results regarding autonomy suggested that her pre- level (moderate) was unchanged in post- and follow-up results.

**Qualitative Results**

Paula's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward six topics (*selecting learning materials*; *planning learning tasks*; *setting learning goals*; *self-evaluating*; *the teacher's role*; and *working in groups*). As regards *using the learning approach in future*, Paula indicated that she wanted to continue using the ISs, indicating that she felt more motivated towards learning Spanish and engaged in self-regulated learning outside of school hours.

## Profile 13: Pilar

| Quantitative Information |
|---|



| Qualitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **+/-** |
| Selecting materials | • Not restricted to textbook<br>• Helped her achieve learning goal | | + |
| Planning tasks | • Personalise lessons<br>• Attractive alternative to following lesson plans in textbook (plan "exciting" activities) | | + |
| Goal-setting | • Focus on individual learning | | + |
| Self-evaluating | • Reflect on value of learning activities | | + |
| Teacher's Role | • Supports/guides (explaining meaning of words/phrases) | | + |
| Group Work | • Group helped her achieve goal | | + |
| Using ISs in future | Did not elaborate | | + |

**Quantitative Results**

The bar chart indicates Pilar's pre-, post- and follow-up results for motivation and autonomy levels. As regards motivation, Pilar's results indicated that, despite moving out of the moderate- into the high-level category in the post- results, she did not maintain her gain in motivation, returning to the moderate-level category in the follow-up results.

As regards autonomy, results indicated that Pilar moved from the moderate- to high-level category in the post- results. The follow-up results indicated that she maintained her gain in autonomy, remaining in the high-level category.

**Qualitative Results**

Pilar's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward six topics (*selecting learning materials*; *planning learning tasks*; *setting learning goals*; *self-evaluating*; *the teacher's role*; and *working in groups*).

As regards *using the learning approach in future*, Pilar indicated that she wanted to continue with the ISs, but did not elaborate.

## Profile 14: Ramona

| Quantitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|



Bar chart with y-axis categories High, Moderate, Low and x-axis Pre-, Post-, Follow-up. Legend: Motivation (magenta), Autonomy (blue).

| Qualitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **+/-** |
| Selecting materials | • Personalise lessons (select materials they find enjoyable/interesting)<br>• Students should be responsible for this | | + |
| Planning tasks | • Enjoys controlling pace<br>• Personalise lessons<br>• Take on challenges (plan challenging tasks) | • Not sure if covering enough content | -<br><br>+ |
| Goal-setting | • Gives students clear targets to aim for | | + |
| Self-evaluating | • Reflect on value of learning activities<br>• Reflect on progress | | + |
| Teacher's Role | • Helped student achieve goal (teacher encouraged/motivated student)<br>• Offers support/guidance (identifying students who need help, giving advice/feedback)<br>• Monitors and controls student behaviour (making sure students are working in class)<br>• Change in responsibilities (no longer teaching/instructing or controlling pace) | | + |
| Group Work | • Group helped her achieve goals<br>• Group members help/correct each other | | + |
| Using ISs in future | | • Prefers traditional approach with teacher at centre of learning<br>• Depends on ability of group members to get along | - |

**Quantitative Results**

The bar chart indicates Ramona's pre-, post- and follow-up results for motivation and autonomy levels. As regards motivation, Ramona's results indicated that she moved out of the low- into the moderate-level category in the post- results, but did not maintain her gain in motivation, returning to the low-level category in the follow-up results.

As regards autonomy, results indicated that Ramona's pre- results placed her in the high-level category; her autonomy level did not change in post- or follow-up results.

**Qualitative Results**

Ramona's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward *selecting learning materials*, *setting learning goals*, *self-evaluating*, *the teacher's role* and *working in groups*. As regards *planning learning tasks*, Ramona expressed a mixture of positive and negative opinions, expressing overall positive attitudes toward this topic.

As regards *using the learning approach in future*, Ramona indicated that did not wish to continue with the ISs, expressing concerns regarding working in groups and indicating that she preferred the teacher-centred approach to learning.

# Profile 15: Salma

| Quantitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|



| Qualitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **+/-** |
| Selecting materials | • Students should be responsible for selecting, rather than have materials selected for them | | + |
| Planning tasks | • Personalise lessons<br>• Attractive alternative to lessons in textbook | | + |
| Goal-setting | • Finds this process interesting<br>• Gives students clear targets to aim for | • Too much writing (completing form) | -<br>+ |
| Self-evaluating | | • Too much writing (completing form) | - |
| Teacher's Role | | • Unwilling to relinquish control (attempting to control pace)<br>• Distrusting of students (overly monitoring students, suspicious due to reputations/past behaviour) | - |
| Group Work | | | |
| Using ISs in future | • Enjoys taking ownership of learning | | + |

**Quantitative Results**

The bar chart indicates Salma's pre-, post- and follow-up results for motivation and autonomy levels. Salma's level of motivation was moderate in pre- results and there was no change in her level in post- or follow-up results.
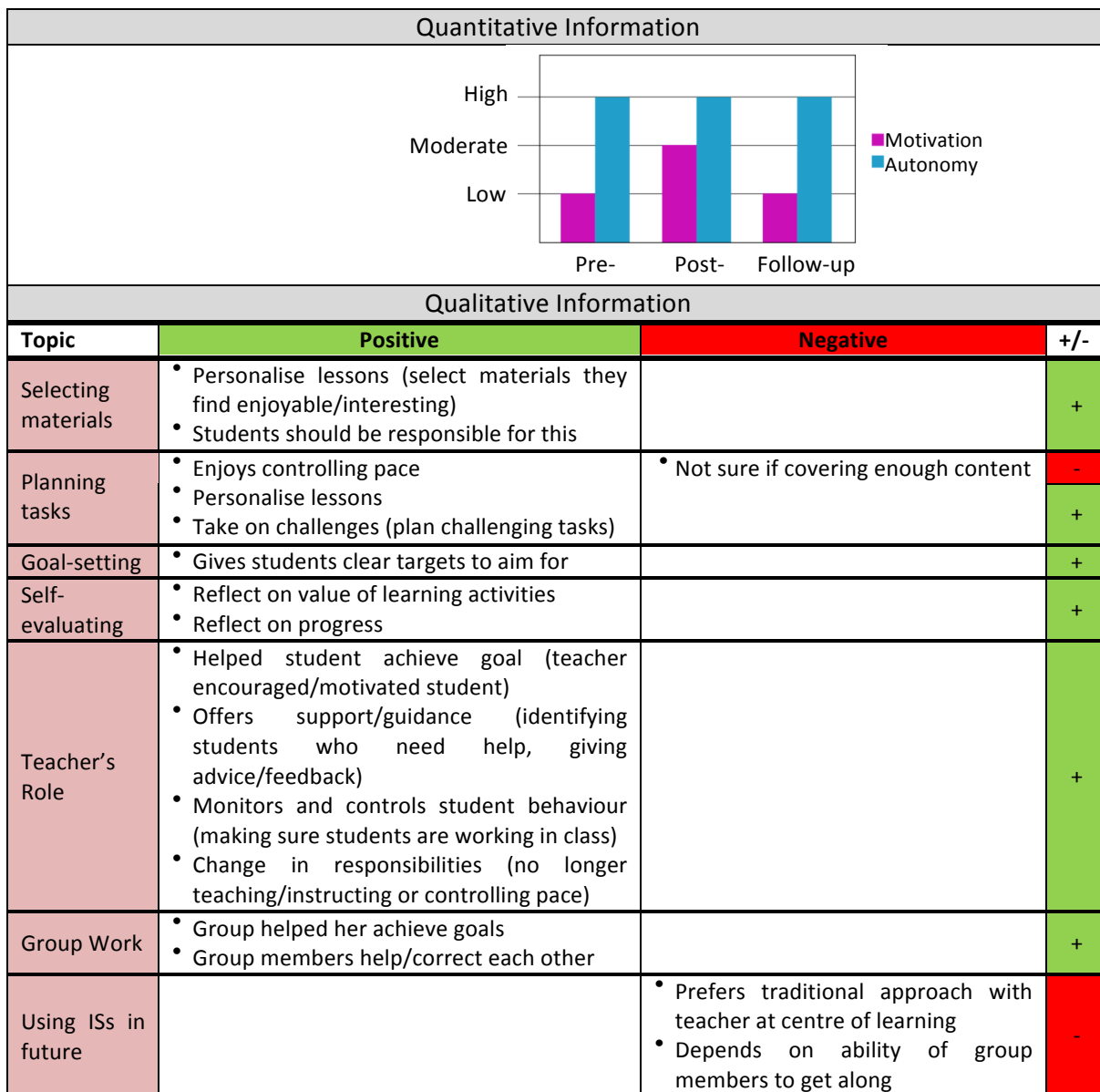
As regards autonomy, results indicated that Salma moved from the low- to moderate-level category in the post- results. The follow-up results indicated that she maintained her gain in autonomy, remaining in the moderate-level category.

**Qualitative Results**

Salma's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward *selecting learning materials* and *planning learning tasks*. Her results also suggested that she was entirely negative regarding *self-evaluating* and *the teacher's role*. As regards *setting learning goals*, Salma expressed a mixture of positive and negative opinions, expressing overall positive attitudes toward this topic. She did not make positive or negative comments regarding the issue of working in groups.

As regards *using the learning approach in future*, Salma indicated that she wanted to continue with the ISs, expressing enthusiasm about taking control of her own learning.

## Profile 16: Silvia

| Quantitative Information |
|---|



High
Moderate
Low

Pre-   Post-   Follow-up

■ Motivation
■ Autonomy

| Qualitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **+/-** |
| Selecting materials | | • Growing disinterest (novelty at first) | - |
| Planning tasks | | • Dislikes planning tasks in a group<br>• Students should not be responsible for planning learning tasks<br>• Does not perform the task well | - |
| Goal-setting | • Focuses on individual learning (gives student influence when planning tasks) | | + |
| Self-evaluating | | • Need more input from teacher | - |
| Teacher's Role | • Facilitated materials selection process | • Prefers teacher's traditional role (performs well in traditional setting)<br>• Wants teacher to be more involved in evaluating learning and planning tasks | -<br><br>+ |
| Group Work | • Group helped her achieve goal | • Preference for working alone<br>• Group members not getting along | -<br>+ |
| Using ISs in future | | • Teacher should be responsible for evaluating learning<br>• Unnecessary to use materials other than textbook<br>• Dislikes working in groups so often | - |

**Quantitative Results**

The bar chart indicates Silvia's pre-, post- and follow-up results for motivation and autonomy levels. As regards motivation, Silvia's results indicated that she moved out of the moderate- into the high-level category in the post- results. She maintained her gain in motivation, remaining in the high-level category in the follow-up results.
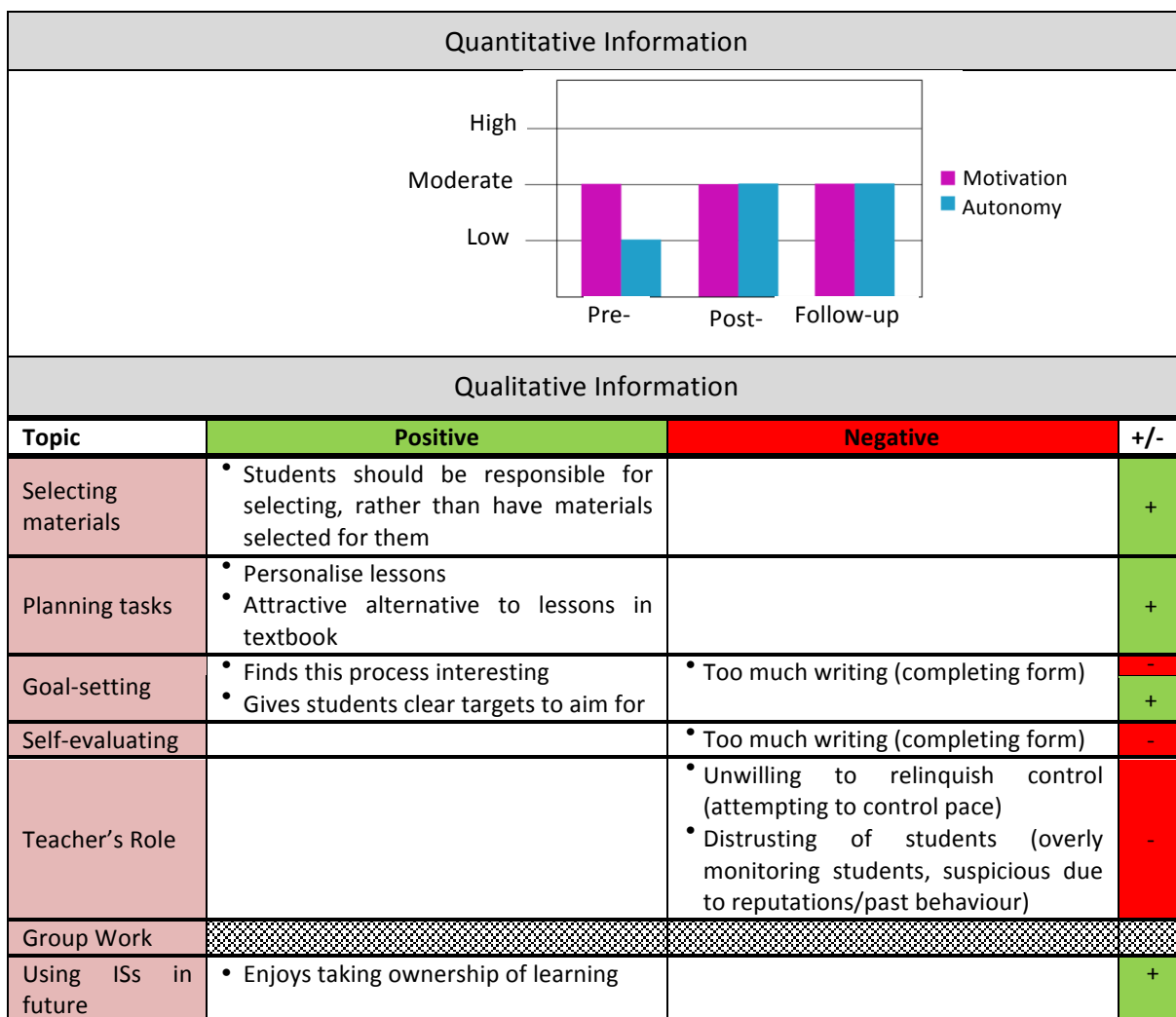
As regards autonomy, results indicated that Silvia's pre- level (moderate) was unchanged in post- and follow-up results.

**Qualitative Results**

Silvia's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward *setting learning* goals and entirely negative in her attitude toward *selecting learning materials*, *planning learning tasks* and *self-evaluating*. As regards *the teacher's role* and *working in groups*, Silvia expressed a mixture of positive and negative opinions, expressing overall negative attitudes toward these topics.

As regards *using the learning approach in future*, Silvia indicated that she wanted to resume the traditional teacher-centred approach, expressing concerns regarding working in groups, as well as concerns about learners selecting materials and evaluating learning.

## Profile 17: Sofía

| Quantitative Information |
|---|



| Qualitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **+/-** |
| Selecting materials | • Believes having a say in choice of materials is best part of ISs | • Dislikes doing this task in groups | - |
| | | | + |
| Planning tasks | • Enjoys this task (did not elaborate) | • Dislikes planning tasks in groups | - |
| | | | + |
| Goal-setting | | • Restricted by syllabus<br>• Finds goal-setting "strange"<br>• Teacher's responsibility to set goals | - |
| Self-evaluating | • Reflect on value of learning activities | | + |
| Teacher's Role | • Helped her achieve her goal<br>• Monitors and controls noise levels | • Prefer T to resume traditional role<br>• Did not have enough input (should be responsible for setting goals) | - |
| | | | + |
| Group Work | • Helped student achieve personal goal<br>• Useful for generating/sharing ideas | • Dislikes people in her group | - |
| | | | + |
| Using ISs in future | | • Prefers traditional approach<br>• LC concerns (not tested enough, teacher knows best for LC, too experimental) | - |

**Quantitative Results**

The bar chart indicates Sofía's pre-, post- and follow-up results for motivation and autonomy levels. Sofia's results indicated that she remained in the moderate-level category in pre-, post- and follow-up results.
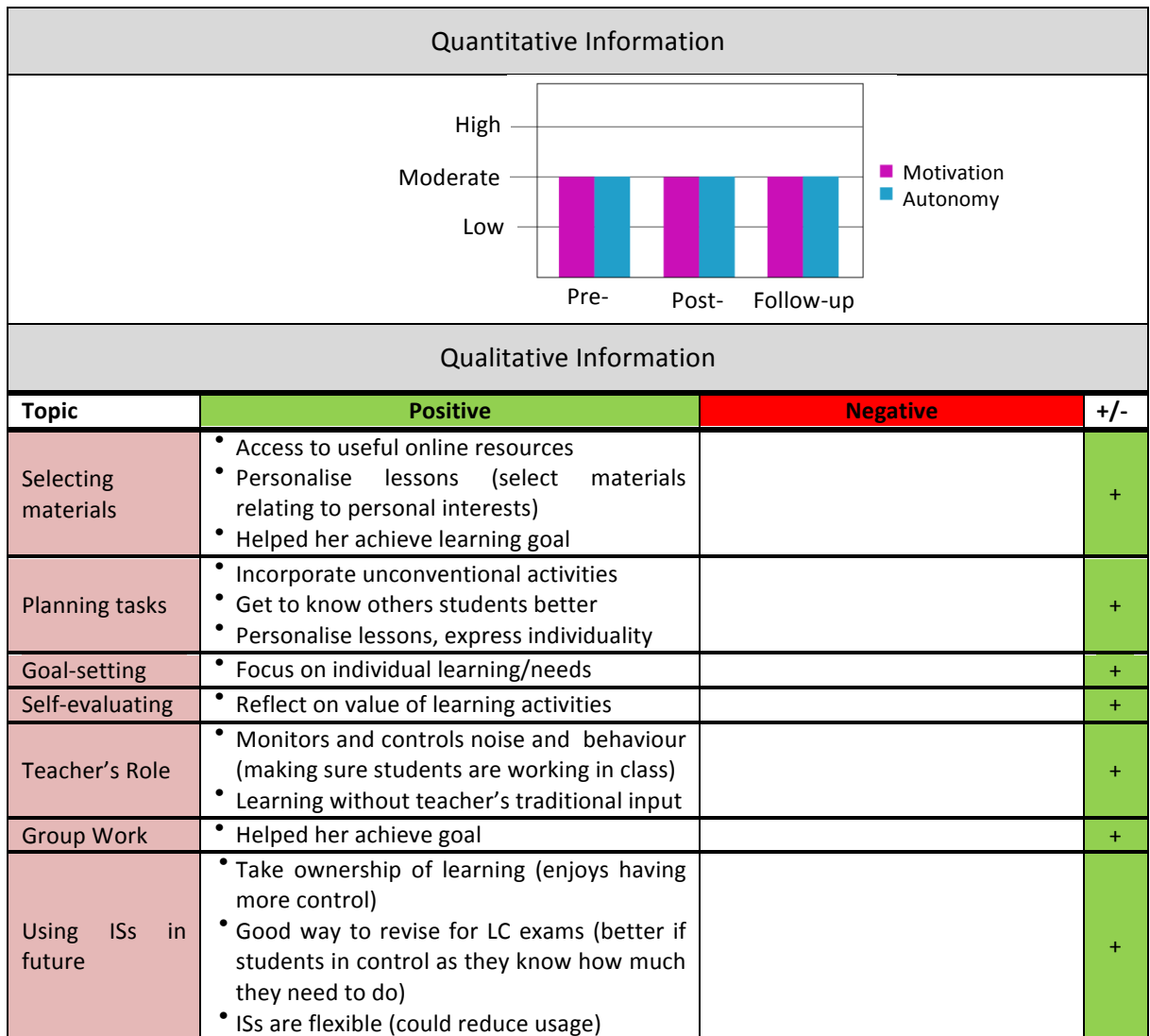
With regard to autonomy, Sofía's pre- level was high and this level was maintained in post- and follow-up results.

**Qualitative Results**

Sofia's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward *self-evaluating* and entirely negative in her attitude toward *setting learning goals*. As regards *selecting learning materials, planning learning tasks* and *the teacher's roles*, results indicated that she was equally positive and negative opinions in her attitude towards these topics. As regards *working in groups*, Sofía expressed a mixture of positive and negative opinions, expressing overall positive attitudes toward this topic.

As regards *using the learning approach in future*, Sofia indicated that she did not want to continue using the ISs, expressing concerns regarding using the ISs when preparing for Leaving Certificate examinations.

## Profile 18: Yolanda

| Quantitative Information |
|---|



| Qualitative Information | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Topic** | **Positive** | **Negative** | **+/-** |
| Selecting materials | • Access to useful online resources<br>• Personalise lessons (select materials relating to personal interests)<br>• Helped her achieve learning goal | | + |
| Planning tasks | • Incorporate unconventional activities<br>• Get to know others students better<br>• Personalise lessons, express individuality | | + |
| Goal-setting | • Focus on individual learning/needs | | + |
| Self-evaluating | • Reflect on value of learning activities | | + |
| Teacher's Role | • Monitors and controls noise and behaviour (making sure students are working in class)<br>• Learning without teacher's traditional input | | + |
| Group Work | • Helped her achieve goal | | + |
| Using ISs in future | • Take ownership of learning (enjoys having more control)<br>• Good way to revise for LC exams (better if students in control as they know how much they need to do)<br>• ISs are flexible (could reduce usage) | | + |

**Quantitative Results**

The bar chart indicates Yolanda's pre-, post- and follow-up results for motivation and autonomy levels. As regards motivation, Yolanda's post- and follow-up results indicated no change in her level (moderate) since the pre- results.

With regard to autonomy, results also indicated her pre- level (moderate) was maintained in post- and follow-up results.

**Qualitative Results**

Yolanda's results indicated that she was entirely positive in her attitude toward six topics (*selecting learning materials*; *planning learning tasks*; *setting learning goals*; *self-evaluating*; *the teacher's role*; and *working in groups*).

As regards *using the learning approach in future,* Yolanda indicated that she wanted to continue using the ISs, suggesting that she enjoyed taking responsibility for her own learning and believed that the ISs would be useful when preparing for LC examination. She suggested that the ISs were flexible in that their usage could be reduced in order to suit learner/teacher needs.