

educational community, negotiation and compromise, moral sensitivity to problem situations, openness to diversity and critical awareness of contexts, participation in decision-making and voice. All this is in the service of (inter)personal empowerment and social transformation.

3.3.2 Enabling pedagogy for autonomy

Smyth (1987: 6) points out that “the notion that there are some groups who are equipped through intelligence and training to articulate what another group *should do and think*, is an anti-educational view”. This is a reminder of what this section is intended to be: a springboard for critical reflection about enabling pedagogy for autonomy, rather than a prescriptive set of rules. Practical approaches represent *local pedagogies* and only teachers can decide whether the enabling conditions we propose are relevant or not, depending on their own visions of education and working circumstances. In a very real sense, there cannot be *one* “practical theory” of pedagogy for autonomy that embraces the diversity of discourses and practices we encounter in schools. But there can be tools for reflection, like Table 4 presented below, that enhance dialogue among educators, make diversity more explicit, and encourage the construction of common understandings. Our proposal is driven by both theory and experience of working with school teachers (see Jiménez Raya & Vieira, 2015; Lamb, 2010a/b, 2012; Vieira, 2014a, 2014b) and it can also be useful to teacher educators as “teachers of teachers”, having in mind a pedagogy of teacher education that aims at promoting teachers’ autonomy as learners, or “teacher-learner autonomy” (Smith, 2000; Smith & Erdogan, 2008).

Rather than assuming the need to fulfil all the conditions on the Table below, our aim is to portray the *complexity* involved in teaching towards autonomy, thus discouraging a simplistic view. Moreover, if we see pedagogy for autonomy as a never-ending process whereby resistance is linked to transformation rather than resignation (Lamb, 2000a: 127), then

(...) the most appropriate way for each one of us to teach is exactly the way that we do teach – provided only that we are committed to an ongoing investigation of just what it is that we do, with a view to enhancing the processes and outcomes both for our students and for ourselves. (Edge, 1999: 41)

This idea suggests that teachers’ approaches to autonomy are deeply rooted in their professional history and will always be, in this sense, *autobiographical*.

The enabling conditions formulated as questions in Table 4 are grouped into four main dimensions of professional autonomy:

- Developing a critical view of (language) education*
- Managing local constraints so as to open up spaces for manoeuvre*
- Centring teaching on learning*
- Interacting with others in the professional community*

For each enabling condition, we invite you to ask yourself three questions:

- Am I willing to...?* [self-reflection on personal values, beliefs, dispositions...]
- Am I able to...?* [self-reflection on ability to enact values, beliefs, dispositions...]
- Do I have the opportunity to...?* [self-reflection on professional situations and self-agency]

You may also ask yourself *how relevant* these aspects are/might be for you and your students and *why*, and rephrase or expand them, cross them out or add new ones to the list.

Table 4. Reflection on conditions for enabling pedagogy for autonomy

A. DEVELOPING A CRITICAL VIEW OF (LANGUAGE) EDUCATION <i>Am I willing...am I able...do I have the opportunity to...</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand myself and my students as agents of educational and social change? • see teaching as an enquiry-oriented activity (as situations are often unique, uncertain and problematic)? • keep informed about approaches to language education and how they can promote learner autonomy? • realise the role of language education in promoting plurilingual/cultural competence? • be open and encourage learners’ openness to linguistic and cultural diversity? • take a critical stance towards values and ends of language education in school curricula? • take a critical stance towards the educational value of syllabi, textbooks or other instructional materials? • encourage learners to be critical towards social and educational values and practices?

B. MANAGING LOCAL CONSTRAINTS SO AS TO OPEN UP SPACES FOR MANOEUVRE

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

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

C. CENTRING TEACHING ON LEARNING

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

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

D. INTERACTING WITH OTHERS IN THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY

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

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

In going through the Table (as teachers or teacher educators), we may find that:

- for each item, though "willingness", "ability" and "opportunity" may be interconnected, the presence of one does not guarantee the presence of the others;
- lack of "opportunity" becomes more evident when teacher choice is limited, or in school cultures that favour conservatism, individualism and isolation; it depends largely on external constraints, but also on how we view our role in relation to constraints (self-agency);
- different approaches may emphasise the various conditions differently, and some approaches may be more far-reaching than others in terms of promoting teacher/learner autonomy;
- trying to find reasons for our responses and reflecting on why some conditions are/might be relevant for us and our students leads to the kind of self-questioning suggested by Smyth (1989, see section above);
- "yes/no" answers will often turn into "maybe/ possibly" answers as we start to envisage possibilities that move our mind from what we usually think and do towards what we *can* think and do;
- the questions may help us identify personal strengths and needs, and thus establish priorities in terms of future (self-)development.

As we suggested before, developing autonomy is about shortening the distance between reality (what *is*) and our ideal (what *should be*), by extending the limits of freedom and exploring new territories (what *can be*). In practical terms, this often means taking small steps, as in the examples presented