

The role of case pedagogy in teacher development towards autonomy in a pre-service teacher education initiative at the MA level

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ABSTRACT

Teacher education (both pre-service and in-service) is vital for the development of learner autonomy as it can help to equip prospective and experienced teachers with the professional knowledge, skills and competences necessary to foster autonomous learning in their classroom practice. To do this, there must be a paradigm shift in teacher education from transmissive approaches to autonomy-oriented, inquiry-based approaches in which (student) teachers can build their own knowledge through pedagogical experience. Case pedagogy can be an effective approach to achieve this objective. The major aim of the present paper is to discuss how pedagogical inquiry through the use of cases (both case analysis and case construction) has become an essential tool for contributing to pre-service teachers' development towards autonomy in foreign language education in a pre-service teacher education initiative for autonomy at the MA level implemented at the University of Granada (Spain). The paper discusses how case pedagogy has helped a group of 24 student teachers to gain confidence to promote learner autonomy, overcome the 'problem of enactment' and their initial reservations about learner autonomy, give them a first-hand experience of teacher autonomy in their professional development, centre teaching on learning, develop a critical view of language education, and think critically about their beliefs about language teaching and learning.

Keywords: language teacher education; learner autonomy; pedagogical inquiry; pre-service teachers; teacher autonomy