EXPLORATORY PRACTICE AND ITS IMPACT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS: A COLLECTIVE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

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EXPLORATORY PRACTICE AND ITS IMPACT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS: A COLLECTIVE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

EXPLORATORY PRACTICE AND ITS IMPACT ON TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS: A COLLECTIVE CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

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In the 21st century educational contexts, it is widely considered as essential that teachers need continuous professional development. Nonetheless, they perhaps also need continuous empowerment, assistance and voice.

To this end, teacher research has come to the foreground with a zeitgeist to empower teachers and give them an opportunity to become researchers of their own contexts and problems and/or joys. Exploratory Practice, a relatively newer form of teacher research, promises to take this even a step or two further. Not only it offers to help teachers to integrate [teacher] research and pedagogy thus enhancing both their pedagogical and research-related knowledge and experience but involve the allegedly most important but often forgotten constituent into the game – learners. This paper critically examines the bittersweet professional development stories of three teachers working in tertiary education and brings forth their detailed cases as their voice, empowerment and dilemma.

Keywords: Exploratory Practice, Professional Development, Teacher Research, Teacher Self and Identity, Teaching and Learning

ÖZ

KEŞİFÇİ UYGULAMA VE ÖĞRENME VE ÖĞRETME SÜRECİ ÜZERİNDEKİ ETKİLERİ: KOLEKTİF VAKA İNCELEMESİ

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Bu çalışma ile Türkiye'de bir yüksek öğretim kurumunda, öğretmenlerin Keşifçi Uygulama kullanarak öğretmen araştırmaları ve mesleki gelişim süreçleri uygulamalarını ve bu süreçlerde Keşifçi Uygulamanın öğrenme ve öğretme sürecinde ve öğretmenlerin kimlik ve benlik edinimi ve geliştirmesi üzerindeki etkilerinin gözlemlenebilmesi hedeflenmektedir. Bu süreç oldukça kritiktir zira öğretmenlerin mesleki gelişim faaliyetlerinde bulunmaları çalıştıkları kurumlar tarafından zaruri bir ihtiyaç olarak görülmekte ve genelde zorunlu kılınabilmektedir. Öte yandan öğretmenler bu hususta fazlasıyla rahatsız olabilmekte ve ciddi ihtilaflar yaşanabilmektedir. Bu bağlamda bu çalışma ile Keşifçi Uygulamanın tanımlanan bir kurumdaki öğretmenler üzerinde nasıl bir etki yarattığı da araştırılmaktadır.

Nitel araştırma ölçüt ve değerlendirmelerinin kullanıldığı bu çalışma söz konusu etki alanına vaka incelemelerini baz almaktadır ve benzer çalışmalardan yararlanarak yine gelecekteki benzer çalışmalara reheberlik edebilmek gayesindedir.

Anahtar sözcükler: Keşifçi Uygulama, Mesleki Gelişim, Öğretmen Araştırmaları, Öğretmen Benlik ve Kimlik, Öğrenme ve Öğretme Süreci

To my dear wife İdil A. BİÇER and my son Aren BİÇER

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List of Abbreviations

PD	Professional Development
EP	Exploratory Practice
AR	Action Research
RP	Reflective Practice
LS	Lesson Study
EAR	Exploratory Action Research
ELT	English Language Teaching
EFL	English as a Foreign Language
L1	First Language
L2	Second Language
IbL	Inquiry-Based Learning
IbPD	Inquiry-Based Professional Development
PBL	Problem-Based Learning
PEPAs	Potentially Exploitable Pedagogic Activities
SLTE	Second Language Teacher Education
QoL	Quality of Life
ProDev	Professional Development
PerDev	Personal Development

Chapter 1

Introduction

There are forms of teacher research such as Lesson study and Reflective Practice that actually somehow achieve to go about integrating and implementing research and pedagogy, however, EP is poised to lift this even much higher. It, as a form of practitioner/teacher research, has been for some time trying to ensure such help is delivered to learners as well as teachers. Trying to perfect language teaching and learning practices aside, it is also implicitly heavily political without ever needing overtly to be so but since EP's other major concern is to offer an equal playing field for its co-researchers. That may then be why it is extremely apt to run and take part in it as a learner, teacher and/or mentor.

EP practitioners do this in the classroom without having to go out of their way or trying to run a survey or questionnaire that is separate to the routine class pedagogy. EP breaks the cycle by integrating research and pedagogy through routine everyday class activities called as potentially exploitable pedagogic activities (PEPAs) as well as a puzzle that lies in the heart to facilitate a learner/learning-led teacher research and pedagogy.

With its emphasis on aspects such as quality of life (QoL) for teachers and learners and classroom practice equality and other critical principles it has so far garnered substantial attention both in language teacher research and education in general (Hanks, 2015a).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

Ever since Dewey and Freire implied that, by positioning teachers as professionals that carefully need to take care of teaching and learning process in the classroom, teachers need empowerment, the language teaching circles have been

taking steady but slow action for it to come to being. Teachers and teacher educators round the world have been peeling their eyes and frying their brains to be able to carry out professional development (PD) that is both effective and sustainable.

In the ever challenging and constantly changing climate of English language teaching (ELT) research and pedagogy, teachers have long been turning to PD activities either willingly or by force.

Most institutions in the 21st century teaching and learning continuum are either voluntarily or involuntarily forcing their teaching staff to undertake PD even if they do not wish to (Day and Sachs, 2005). In such a climate where teachers are coerced into this by appraisal schemes or power of suggestion, teachers need more support from all the constituents involved in order to become real owners of their own classroom and whatever that might effectively take part in it.

Allwright (2010) claims learning is often at its best when done so through reflection since only that way learners may claim true ownership and responsibility of their very profession or rationale behind their learning.

Inquiry-based learning and PD activities as teacher research take much less formal stance since its main rationale is perhaps to render learning as well as teaching a meaningful and memorable process with empowerment and support from other constituents. Leaners need empowerment in the same sense too and perhaps need it much more than their teachers in the 21st century teaching and learning contexts where they are allegedly at the epicentre.

Borg (2010) and Smith (2011) both feel teacher research shall be the next big thing and much has been received with such acclaim in order to help learners all across the board as well as experienced professionals and young and less experienced teachers. It strives to explore then resolve a teaching and learning question or inquiry.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

This study thrives in bringing forth the collective case study analyses of three teachers teaching languages at the same institution in tertiary education. As their narratives and stories unravel and seep through with the help and support of their mentors, they become better able to materialise their teaching persona in the classroom taking full advantage of their self and identity formation and development alongside enhancing their good practice by investigating their own puzzles, problems and/or validation points through pedagogic point of view and implementation.

It is a qualitative research study particularly in search of different and new impact areas of EP and its further use and dissemination.

1.3 Research Questions

This study investigates the following qualitative research questions and their threads:

1. In what ways did engaging in EP in the classroom influence teachers?
2. What factors influenced their process of learning to do EP?

1.4 Significance of the Study

Teachers are ever so busy and often tasked by their managers with carrying out PD and this may unfortunately often be mandatory or without enough and truly motivational support and guidance. When they engage in PD schemes and activities against their will, the end result is often a disappointment and waste of time (Borg, 2015). Hence as a profession teaching requires them to constantly change and keep up with the most up-to-date developments in their line of work. Whether experienced or not most are unfortunately left alone with forming and building up their professional and personal selves and identities in their classrooms.

Teacher research may provide a sustainable and empowering new method of PD for teachers rendering them as reserachers as well (Smith, 2015a). It integrates research with pedagogy so while teachers are researching everyday problems or joys

of their own making or suffering, they also stand a chance to hon their teaching skills in their own contexts. This thus facilitates a valuable opportunity for them to create a huge impact on themselves and their learners as well as whole teaching and learning process. Their classrooms become truly student-centred and even student-fronted/led breaking away from top-down initiatives and making way for IbL and IbPD.

EP is even a step further (Hanks, 2015b) as it incorporates PEPAs as research methodology – data collection tools – and no other external intervention thus even further empowers its practitioners highlighting pedagogy. There is also novel emphasis in it for students as they become co-reserachers in a much more even playing field. It enables both teachers and learners to seek and construct their academic, professional and personal selves and identities making learning and teaching a whole new story.

This research aims to bring forth the different impact areas of EP particularly on teachers' self and identity formation and construction as well as its sheer impact on teaching and learning process.

CHAPTER 2

Literature Review

2.1 PD, teacher research, pedagogy and EP triangle

It has certainly been a long debate of interest in ELT [research] that, to cope with the demanding and continually altering climate of the profession of teaching, teachers need [sustainable] continuous professional development. However, realistically speaking, this may not be easy to sustain in an ever time-crunched and often volatile professional life of a teacher's. Or may it be?

The idea of PD is of course not a new one. Day and Sachs (2005) claim it has somewhat been around for almost a century. However, as time passes and learners and contexts change perhaps so should the teachers and the learning contexts and environments. Thus, arguably, teachers need 21st century retention of PD in 21st century teaching and learning climate.

Recently, there is undoubtedly a big shift from concepts such as training to education, supervision to mentoring and coaching etc. Time-tuned needs and realities aside, there is now clearly a more emphasis on equal distribution of roles and an ever more even playing field.

Teachers can engage in professional development by doing and engaging with it, by reading about or using it (Borg, 2010). Nowadays, they already somewhat widely are and even maybe beyond but further-reaching impact is still perhaps yet to come. Notwithstanding, thanks to a fairly newer but largely popular form of professional development – teacher research – it might soon fully materialise. Before we take a look at the literature of teacher research and EP, perhaps we should first stop at an umbrella term that encapsulates many relevant ramifications within a more critical way – inquiry-based learning and professional development.

To Capps et al. (2012), inquiry-based learning is a multi-faceted process where learners ask questions, investigate, find answers, build new understandings, meanings, knowledge and experience and transmit their new learning to others to yield viable solutions to improve teaching and learning processes and the environment of the classrooms or schools. Three major types of inquiry-based learning come to view: problem-based learning, project-based learning and learning by design (Brigid and Darling-Hammond, 2008). Inquiry-based learning that supports and reinforces professional development as such might be more effective since it places inquiry at the heart rendering the whole study much more independent yet individualistic yet still informing good research and teaching practice.

This shift surfaced towards the end of 90s in response to [non-inquiry based] generic and often one-shot (Borg, 2015) PD of earlier phase to be able to further empower teachers to develop personally and professionally in their own contexts and classrooms. Thanks to teacher research it gained considerable momentum more recently.

Supporters of inquiry-based learning [and PD] do so for they believe it will encourage teachers to claim ownership of their own learning and development process. Smith (2011) and Wyatt and Dikilitas (2015) argue this type of learning is as well critical as teacher need self-initiated, directed and monitored PD more than ever to be able to work as autonomous, self-efficacious life-long-learning professionals.

Still, until more recently, both teachers and learners have really struggled to be able to further probe into everyday [in-class] problems of their own making or suffering perhaps a little more personally and discreetly. Academia, on the other hand, has arguably been very wary of such practice-oriented and less formal research activity as teacher research (Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993). Academic circles began to acknowledge teacher research more widely perhaps towards the end of 90s in an attempt to probably be able to help free teachers off their dependency on generic, theory-stuck formal research and collective teacher training and development activities (Allwright, 1997) and equip them with more independence to become

problem-solvers of their own unique contexts and situations as needs slowly began to override the ways. Action research was quick and probably first to rise to mainstay prominence and was later followed by other similar forms as such, namely, reflective practice/teaching, Lesson Study and Exploratory Practice.

But what is teacher research then? "It is intentional and systematic inquiry done by teachers with the goals of gaining insights into teaching and learning, becoming more reflective practitioners, effecting changes in the classroom or school, and improving the lives of children (cited in Cochran-Smith & Lytle, 1993 & 1999). Its research stems from teachers' own questions about and reflections on their everyday classroom practice. They seek practical solutions to issues and problems in their professional lives" (cited in Corey 1953; Stringer, 2007) (Teacher Research, NAEYC, 2017).

It is argued major components of teacher research explored here are: "conceptualization, in which teachers identify a significant problem or interest and determine relevant research questions; implementation, in which teachers collect and analyze data; and interpretation, in which teachers examine findings for meaning and take appropriate actions (cited in McLean 1995). Teacher research is systematic in that teachers follow specific procedures and carefully document each step of the process—from formation of a question, through data collection and analysis, to conclusions and outcomes" (Teacher Research, NAEYC, 2017).

The foci of this paper, EP, a form of teacher research as well, is, as Hanks (2015a) submits, a form of practitioner research in language education which aims to integrate research, learning and teaching. Developed in the early 1990s (Allwright, 1993; Allwright & Bailey, 1991; Allwright & Lenzuen, 1997), at least partly in response to dissatisfaction with more traditional forms of classroom based research, it promotes the idea of teachers (and learners) puzzling about their language learning/teaching experiences, using "normal pedagogic practices as investigative tools" (Allwright, 2003, p. 127). Hanks (2015b, 2017) argues this move takes teacher research (Johnson & Golombek, 2002; Stenhouse, 1975), action research (Burns,

2010; Carr & Kemmis 1986), and reflective practice (Edge, 2011; Schön, 1983 & 1987) a step further.

Classic teacher research, particularly perhaps the earlier implementations – though this paper should still be veering off on the side of caution during time of this argument – at most maybe saw the classroom practice separate from research still (Hanks, 2015b) and never had its integrity rendered seamless and neither were its constituents. EP is probably anything but. It is an alternative (method) to other (older) forms of teacher research and is relatively a `newcomer` (Hanks, 2013). Hanks posits EP brings together [classic] research and teaching simply by allowing its practitioner to undertake [teacher] research using every day in–class pedagogical activities called potentially exploitable pedagogic activities (PEPAs) and does not require further ado. Allwright and Hanks (2009) also submit it is perhaps the only form of [teacher] research that actually does not reduce itself only to the profession of teaching and chooses to adopt on the contrary a far wider scope [by proposing the practitioner research concept] in order that it simply broadens its professional and scientific trajectory and implementation blueprint. Even though it does have similar concerns in roots, EP distances itself from its siblings greatly in that it does not detach pedagogy from research and strives to mobilise all involved in the learning and teaching process equally and actively thus perhaps achieves that long desired pedagogic fluidity that is both good for teachers and students in the learning and teaching environment. Further, it does not limit itself but takes many levels and layers of learner involvement so highly that it undeniably encapsulates to achieve and readily offers such a deep understanding and analysis of a problem (puzzle) (Miller, 2009) without having to worry over the ever dependent and variable solutions (Slimani-Rolls, 2005) arguably always inherent in the process of [teacher] research in the first place anyway (Miller & Bannell, 1998).

Lesson Study, another form of teacher research too, as Dudley (2011) suggests, is perhaps more akin to EP since it too integrates data collection thus research into pedagogy for a group of teachers often teach a course or class through collaborative planning, execution and debriefing again departing from a question or inquiry so falls as well under inquiry-based learning and teaching/PD.

Back to EP, Hanks (2015b) posits, over the past two decades, EP has been developed in discussions with teachers from around the world (Allwright, 2003 & 2005; Hanks, 2009; Slimani-Rolls, 2003 & 2005; Wu, 2004; Zhang, 2004), with particular input from the EP Group in Rio de Janeiro (Kuschnir & Machado, 2003; Lyra, Fish Braga & Braga, 2003; Miller, 2003 & 2009). She asserts the EP framework is based on the following principles:

Seven principles for inclusive practitioner research:

Principle 1: "Quality of life" (QoL) for language teachers and learners is the most appropriate central concern for practitioner research in our field.

Principle 2: Working primarily to understand the "QoL" as it is experienced by language learners and teachers, is more important than, and logically prior to, seeking in any way to improve it.

Principle 3: Everybody needs to be involved in the work for understanding.

Principle 4: The work needs to serve to bring people together.

Principle 5: The work needs to be conducted in a spirit of mutual development.

Principle 6: Working for understanding is necessarily a continuous enterprise.

Principle 7: Integrating the work for understanding fully into existing curricular practices is a way of minimizing the burden and maximizing sustainability.

(see Allwright & Hanks, 2009, p. 149-154, original emphases)

Incidentally, to sync curriculum design and development process with teaching and learning process, better outcomes, academic rigour and concern to include learners in the making and running of curricula and syllabi is not a new argument. However, it is difficult to say it has so far garnered enough attention and effort from the constituents of language learning and teaching. Learners have long

been and today still largely and overtly continue to be stripped off their very right to an inclusive and negotiated curriculum design and development and its implementation (Carroll and Ryan, 2007). Simultaneously, policy and decision makers in schools around the globe whether it is an academic or an administrative one are still pushing their own agendas and continuing to ignore this fact reservedly. Bovill et al. (2011) point to the necessity of co-creation of teaching and learning programmes and curricula [and/or syllabi] especially with help from learners arguing it is the only tangible way to help learners achieve without overreliance on often too generic learning material and its synthetic teacher-student interaction. Allwright and Bailey (1991) hint on the same problem suggesting this is probably made further valid as lack of it hinders facilitation of important learner and learning objectives such as learner agency, self-efficacy and autonomy, which are primarily among some of the core and critical staples of teacher research, and particularly EP, in an informed effort to yield higher-order thinking and learning skills.

Therefore, when Nunan (1988) attempted to theorise the concept of learner-centred curriculum (and teaching) back then, his starting point perhaps was the negotiated curriculum but by creating and arguing its existence, he may unintentionally or incidentally have paved the way for further excavation on who really owns the classroom practice and how power and authority inherent within should be distributed in the looming 21st century classroom. Norman and Spohrer (1996) argue this is a tension and conflict that will perhaps never be reconciled so long as students are seen as just another stakeholder in this spiel. So what will teacher researchers need to really do to overcome this issue?

The well-trodden argument to use learner-centred or negotiated curricula in language learning and teaching has more recently gained another perspective thanks to scholars such as Duch et al. (2001), Polly and Hannafin (2010), Cullen et al. (2012), Savery (2015) and many more with the proposal to apply inquiry-based learning/teaching in curriculum in any tertiary level study to further reinforce pre, ante and/or exit goals, and is praised aplenty by its simple but innovative and effective compatibility to learner and learning-centred pedagogy.

After more than two decades and a half, and perhaps in close conjunction with the zenith of teacher research, the whole purpose of classroom practice has now suddenly and dramatically shifted to student-centred and led practices (Thornbury, 2006). Still, when it comes to planning and decision and policy making, apart from a few bold, commendable but unfortunately negligible individual efforts and awareness, sadly, there is still a lot more to do.

The reason why and how EP does go much way integrating research and teaching is the fact that it does not require its members to designate any solution but to arrive at a much deeper understanding and analyses of a problem (Dar and Gieve, 2013) with the help of PEPAs. This compatibility surely adds to the co-construction and scaffolding of pedagogy as well as educational research perspective even if some may regard it as a limitation of EP. If a teacher still wants to further continue their EP study, then they can surely continue with AR or Exploratory Action Research (Smith, 2016).

2.2 EP stance, limitations and previous related research

Excerpted from Language Teachers Making Sense of Exploratory Practice (Hanks, 2015) a definition, use and extent of the term, PEPA is summarised below:

> Using what the EP literature refers to as 'Potentially Exploitable Pedagogic Activities', or PEPAs (Allwright & Hanks, 2009, p. 157), may seem baffling at first. A novice might ask: What kind of pedagogic activities can be potentially exploited in this way? How is it possible to utilize 'normal classroom work' as a way of investigating a puzzle? EP argues that almost any communicative activity can be harnessed to this end… (p. 5)

So, any routine learning and learner centred communicative classroom activity a teacher seizes upon every day such as [but not limited to] pair or group work, discussions, debates, note-taking, poster presentation, essay writing etc. can be regarded as a PEPA and thus here a data collection tool.

Nevertheless, Hanks (2017, p. 270) cautiously submits that, though in theory any everyday [in-class] pedagogic activities could be considered as PEPAs, this still

does not mean there should be no cautious, vigorous and thorough selection of pedagogic activities of such kind with a goal to collect pristine data as well as ensuring robust teaching and learning. She also heeds though not set in stone again implementations of PEPAs as data collection tools might be further challenging beyond the above reason hence they shall need careful consideration of suitable research and pedagogic compatibility. She suggests beginning with *normal* pedagogic actitvities.

Not only is practitioner research – in this case EP as well for sure as a form of it that is more recently attracting and gaining more and more academic and professional ground and momentum – when more broadly encapsulated, a way for teachers to investigate their classrooms and teaching and learning process and collect data to this end but to form potentially mutually beneficial relationships in the class beyond hierarch and rank that is facilitative of learning and teaching and furthering it even more so (Hanks, 2017, p. 51).

Similar previous studies (see for example Dar & Gieve, 2013; Slimani-Rolls, 2003 & 2005; Wu, 2014; Zang, 2014, Miller, 2015; Hanks, 2015) largely looked at EP and its teaching and learning impact. This study, however, that aside, aslo seeks to embolden and take the usual teacher and learner emphasis of EP to another level by trying to look at its possible impact on self and identity development of teachers [as well as maybe learners].

Notwithstanding, all these abovementioned previous research still greatly helped EP to form, flourish, (re)calibrate and get itself a respectable position within ELT, [teacher] research and language teacher professional development circles.

As inspiration and support for this study, Hanks (2017) more recently posits EP greatly and positively helps both new teachers' and experienced ones' [as well as learners'] identity formation and development because of the same aforementioned PD issues and its sustainability and pressure it mounts on teachers and learners, and because it places its core teachers and learners alongside their language teaching and learning concerns.

So, as Hanks (2017, p. 43) submits, as well as it might seem to be the case for many, the whole effort of PD in modern times may still somewhat wryly resonate with the below famous quote:

> When education is based upon experience and educative experience is seen to be a social process, the situation changes radically. The teacher loses the position of external boss or dictator but takes on that of leader of group activities (Dewey, 1963, p. 59)

Though perhaps slightly indirectly connected, it might as well be significant to place below and finish this section after all with two famous analogies from Freire's 1996 book, the Pedagogy of the Oppressed, of teachers-student relationship, which painstakingly strike on the whole as an incongruous summary of all the educational meddling and inactivity fleshed out again so far despite all the reciprocal goodwill. In the first analogy, he paints a really pessimistic picture and reduces teacher-student relationship to a measly nature of a narrative character, and in the second one, wryly likens today's education system to banking system in which students are depositories and teachers depositors.

A careful analysis of the teacher-student relationship at any level inside or outside the school, reveals its fundamentally narrative character. This relationship involves a narrating Subject (the teacher) and patient, listening objects (the students). The contents, whether values or empirical dimensions of reality, tend in the process of being narrated to become lifeless and petrified. Education is suffering from narration sickness (p. 69).

> Education thus becomes an act of depositing, in which the students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits (p. 71).

To many, education should perhaps still be miles and far away from politicisation or polarisation of it. However, there is also maybe an equal proportion that thinks it already inevitably is so should be defended and the players position themselves accordingly in order that education is democratic, sustainable and pristine.

As a final note, though this study did not set itself to explore literature for teacher identity and self originally, halfway through it and particularly towards the end of it, it would do so since all the participating teachers generated conversions so dataset also needed to sync in with the literature as such and model a novel further impact area for EP. This literature in question will be explored in discussion and implications in more details.

Chapter 3

Methodology

3.1 Overview

This is a qualitative research study that generated its main dataset from semi-structured interviews as well as reciprocal field notes and feedback and personal reflection statements and positions its research impetus and rigour as collective case study analyses.

3.2 Research Design

This qualitative reserach on EP and its impact areas explored and assimilated three case studies as its main data with three [teacher] researchers from the same institution thus is considered a collective case study analyses (Creswell, 2012).

The three participating teachers were also working at the same institution whilst conducting their own EP studies as part of a pilot study that was then taking place at the institution in question. The mentor, as their supervisor and a member of the PDU, worked with them over an academic year helping them with their research study similar to a model used during the local EP workshop they had previously attended.

The main dataset came from the three-partite semi-structured interviews run before the study began, while it was developing and after it was complete. They will be referred to as pre-study, ante-study and post-study interviews. As well as the interviews, research triangulation was further strived to be met by using reciprocal reflective field notes taken throughout the whole study by both the teachers and mentor as well as post-lesson/observation reflection statements of both parties.

The very rationale behind designing a qualitative collective case study analyses and interpretation of the dataset from the cases was to pinpoint and explore salience and accountability in first-hand experiences of three EP-practicing teachers with differing backgrounds, bios and tenure. The main reason for choosing three different teachers was to be able to more easily compare and contrast impact areas for EP and to juxtapose and justify these in terms of wider generalisable teaching and learning issues and thematic similarities and/or differences. These then were treated as a series of research variables that informed the implications.

As mentioned before, this research placed [collective] case study analyses its core and used it as its principal data collection strategy and design.

Mills et al. (2010) posit case studies have been around for a long time since the early 20s but add they came to further prominence more recently in an effort to bridge what the research investigates in the lab with the broader phenomena that also exist and are in close conjunction with it. They suggest it is a very powerful teaching and research strategy and tool. It is of course also an important focus area for the science of phenomenology.

Retrieved from Carnegie Mellon University Eberly Centre's main website in question (2017), "case studies are stories. They present realistic, complex, and contextually rich situations and often involve a dilemma, conflict, or problem that one or more of the characters in the case must negotiate." Though looked here at more from the perspective of instructional strategy, it might be argued to bear certain similarities with the principle and concept of research strategy and is defined as:

"A good case study, according to Professor Paul Lawrence is:"

> the vehicle by which a chunk of reality is brought into the classroom to be worked over by the class and the instructor. A good case keeps the class discussion grounded upon some of the stubborn facts that must be faced in real life situations. (quoted in Christensen, 1981)

It is further posited there though they have been used more often in the teaching of medicine, business and law, they can serve as an effective teaching [as

well as research] tool in any discipline. As an instructional and data collection strategy, case studies present a number of benefits. “Case studies bridge the gap between theory and practice and between the academy and the workplace (Barkley, Cross, and Major 2005, p.182).” They also provide students with invaluable practice opportunities identifying “the parameters of a problem, recognizing and articulating positions, evaluating courses of action, and arguing different points of view.” They may vary substantially in length, focus and detail, and may be used in a many different number of ways, depending on the case itself and on the instructor’s aims, preferences and needs.

Creswell (2012) insists, as the abovementioned other sources and authors, case studies are invaluable sources rich in data embedded with self-reflection and personal beliefs and stance pertaining to a specific educational context but warns too that they may need thorough decoding and interpretation since data to be used for any research drive may more often than not be “between the lines” thus require careful inferencing strategies alongside rigorous (re)construction of links with up-to-date relevant research literature.

Goddard [cited in Mills et al., 2010] argues a collective case study, on the other hand, involves more than one case, which may or may not be physically collocated with other cases. A collective case study may be conducted at one site (e.g., a school, hospital, or university) by examining a number of different research questions and variables.

Creswell (2012, p. 45) [cited in Stake, 2000] suggests a collective case study involves the study of more than one case in order to “investigate a phenomenon, population, or general condition” (p. 437). This approach assumes that investigating a number of cases leads to better comprehension and better theorizing (Brantlinger, Jimenez, Klingner, Pugach, & Richardson, 2005). Miles and Huberman (1994) contended that studying multiple cases gives the researcher reassurance that the events in only one case are not “wholly idiosyncratic” (p. 172). Further, studying multiple cases allowed us to see processes and outcomes across all cases and enabled a deeper understanding through more powerful descriptions and explanations. It is

different from multiple case studies in the sense that dataset does not come from studies carried out at different places/contexts.

Since EP did not require an extra stand-alone procedure of research application and/or intervention (Allwright & Hanks, 2009), the teachers were normally able to complete the entire data collection and pedagogic delivery over two days in two separate sessions in a total of 8 contact hours plus an extra half day poster presentation. However, the whole study lasted for the whole of two academic terms as, after collecting data, the teachers continued to collate, analyse and interpret the dataset then finally to continue to write up their studies and prepare for conference presentations.

EP was really apt for highlighting teachers' personal stories behind their practice in the form of narratives in order to be better able to understand their puzzles in line with who they are and how and what they really think and feel.

3.3 Target Population and Participants

The three participating teacher researchers as mentioned before had many differing variables both in terms of their bios, teaching backgrounds as well as personal and professional needs, preferences and wishes. Though this might be seen as a challenge, it was certainly a sheer asset for this research study.

Working at the same institution/teaching at the same context aside, the most critical similarity was that all three of the research participants came from a background with no baseline teaching qualifications apart from Celta or a Turkish equivalent of a post-graduate certificate in education (PGCE). Another striking similarity was the fact that they were all either then doing or in the process of doing a post-graduate degree in education – MA or PhD in English language teaching (ELT) – thus were all adamant they needed to further improve their educational expertise and background in the field.

Apart from the main mentor in question, the other mentor who also had attended the same aforementioned local workshop and had been co-leading the pilot study but working with a different group of teachers interviewed her colleague and

was interviewed both as part of this research study and the pilot study that was in question to gain further perspectives into the research rigour and impetus particularly in terms of research implications for mentors planning to design and implement a similar scheme in the future.

Though this study was conducted then written up with the full consent of its participants, in order that anonymity is met for general research ethics as well as wellbeing of the researcher and participants – paramount in EP as well – throughout the study, using monikers, they will be referred to as Amy, Gwen and Rita. They held less than 5 years, 5 years and more than 10 years general tenure thus teaching and learning experience as well as [teacher] research experience respectively. The very reason behind selection of these participants with such a pattern was to be able to again further

The details of the research participants to this study and their cases/studies will be discussed further in more details in case analyses.

The main target audience is [but of course not limited to] teachers, teacher trainers and educators, learners and teachers with managerial roles, in short for whoever is interested in professional and personal development, academic and institutional growth in an educational setting.

3.4 Procedure

3.4.1 Sampling. A convenience sampling from a group of EP practitioners in a pilot study at a tertiary level language school was facilitatedwith three teachers and sampling was based on voluntariness and personal availability to generate and collate data for the collective case studies. The three participating teachers were from the same instition but with different teaching backgorunds, bios and personal attributes.

The teachers were approached via email and the volunteering ones were asked to fill in a form as well as an initial discussion regarding the research project and expectations, opportunities and challenges.

3.4.2 Sources of data.

3.4.2.1. Data instruments.

3.4.2.1.1 Semi-structured participant interviews. As mentioned before, interviews were the main data collection tools that inspired and informed the structure and mostly anecdotal narrative of the case studies. They were implemented, cross-referenced and monitored by the mentors and with the support from the mentors' mentors they worked with at the local EP workshop they had attended. They were designed as recorded semi-structured interviews to be able to generate qualitative dataset that inspired and informed the structure and mostly anecdotal narratives of the case studies of the participants. They were implemented in the L1 of the participants' to avert any blockage or limitation the L2 may have wreaked. Data collected was then transcribed and transliterated/adapted into L2. The reason behind using semi-structured interviews was because, they, unlike [fully] structured interviews, provide the participants with an opportunity to much more freely recount their experience in greater depth and detail often far from many constraining limitations (Stake, 2000) as well as giving the researcher flexibility to be able to ask direct follow-up questions and make comments. However, as the questions are less specific and more indirect – many are open-ended 'wh-' questions – it shall also definitely require the researcher to record the bulk of them then go back to further and more deeply analyse and interpret the dataset (Creswell, 2012).

The questions were asked during the semi-structured interviews within a three-partite cycle as pre-study, ante-study and post-study interview questions.

3.4.2.1.2. Other qualitative data instruments used. As well as the interviews, research triangulation was further ensured by the incorporated collation of reciprocal reflective field notes taken throughout the whole study by both the teachers and their mentor as well as post-lesson/observation reflection statements both parties had collected into their portfolios.

To Gall et al. (1996), research triangulation is extremely critical in order that a research study, irrespective of its application field, renders strong reliability, validity

and applicability and that it might be modelled and replicated by other similar research studies in the same and/or related fields.

Central to the EP's main concern and its data collection procedure, the reflection in, on and for (Schön, 1987) before, while and after the participants' practice was further reinforced with these pre and post lesson reflection and action statements. Creswell (2012) argue taking field notes is another highly efficient data collection method and procedure mainly facilitated during qualitative and/or mixed method research applications chaperoning other research tools besides helping them to become reflectively powerful 'living' personal datasets akin to journal-keeping though in a perhaps much more formal and personally restrictive fashion. Nevertheless, all three teachers had noted and agreed after the study that "they took great pleasure in taking field notes" through a phase very much akin to the mode of "stream of consciousness" and mostly really "reflective and inquisitive episodes." There is also a mention of 'critical incidents' from the teachers within the same thread with reference to the same concept also explored by Richards and Farrell (2005) as a highly facilitative menas of pedagogical 'reflection in and on action.'

3.4.3 Data Collection Procedures. As mentioned above, all-qualitative dataset was generated from semi-structured teacher/participant interviews during one-to-one tutorial and mentoring sessions, reciprocal field notes and post lesson/observation feedback and reflection statements at three intervals referred to in this study as pre, ante and post/exit phases at the beginning, during and at the end of the study.

3.4.3.1 Semi-structured teacher/participant interviews. One-to-one recorded participant interviews were done three times at the begining, during and at the end of the study. Questions used for the interviews were varying open-ended questions with the motive to assess particpants' inhibitve or faclitiative engaement and past experience histories regarding PD and EP perceptions before the study, what they were achieving and what further suport they needed fort he development of their studies and finally what they were planning to do further or next in terms of PD and EP.

The questions asked during the semi-structured interviews within a three-partite cycle as pre-study, ante-study and post-study interviews were as follows:

3.4.3.1.1 Pre-study interviews. A recorded interview was conducted by the mentor with each participant in private prior to the commencement of the study. Here the main objective was to assess perception and inform future decisions regarding practice and course study programme. The questions were as follows:

Why did you choose to be in the EP group?

Did you know anything about EP before?

Have you engaged in PD before? How and why, please explain?

How are you planning to prepare ahead of the study?

Do you need any specific help and support from the mentors?

Can you already identify one obstacle and one opportunity for yourself?

3.4.3.1.2 Ante-study interviews. They were done in a similar fashion again as a formative tool of assessment and evaluation to further monitor and identify and if need be reshape the course programme, obstacles and opportunities and individual support they needed as well as support and tutorial for write-up and presentation stages. The questions were as follows:

How do you think your EP study is materialising?

Since the first interview, has anything changed or improved/worsened?

If any, what are some of the challenges and/or validations?

Are you planning to present and/or write up your study for publication?

Do you need further support and help?

3.4.3.1.3 Post/Exit-study interviews. They were done likewise at the very end of the whole study. However, the questions the participants needed answering were fundamentally different as they were summative and mentors this time were more looking into EP study and its overall impact on a number of key areas to inform future actions regarding managerial and PDU-related decisions. Because of this, they took much longer than the previous ones. The participants also filled in a general feedback form and self-assessed their experience as well as the success of their EP study. The questions were as follows:

Can you briefly talk about your EP study?

If any, how do you think it might have impacted the teaching and learning process in your classroom?

If any, what do you think was new and exciting for your learners?

If any, how do you think it might have impacted your personal and/or professional development as a teacher?

What is next for you?

3.4.3.2 Field notes and post-lesson/observation feedback and reflection statements. Both the participating teacher researchers and mentors took field notes throughout the research study for their own records and to share with each other and the PDU. For the mentors, this comprised such instances during group input sessions, one-to-one tutorials and feedback sessions and interviews. For teachers, on top of the aforementioned, this also took place during self-study and pedagogical implementations and their design and planning and more in the form of reflection and action statements. Both parties had agreed during the initial meeting that they would prioritise their personal reflective mental notes to the self as well as facilititave and inhibitive factors.

Further, as mentioned above before too, the participating teachers were asked to self-assess their EP engagement and its success and geve summative feedback on some other administrative details/issues as well as giving their mentors feedback regarding their supervision and coaching and the whole EP experience set off to be

had, also monitored and streamlined by the management and PDU for future implementations as the whole study was run as a pilot scheme. Participating teachers also got feedback from their students alongside peer observation reflection statements to go into their portfolios.

3.4.4 Data analysis procedures. The all-qualitative dataset was analysed and cross-checked by the two mentors and also monitored by the mentors' mentors from the pilot EP study they had formerly attended. Whilst analysing data from differnet sources, four impact areas of EP on a. teachers and teaching b. learning and learners c. self and d. identity as well as teachers' EP engagement and some inhibitve and facilitative factors were considered; thematic salience and differences/similarities were explored and compared/contrasted in order to better recommend implications.

3.4.5 Context. The context in which this study was conducted – as well as the pilot study that took place simultaneously and paved the way for this research study – was the foreign language school of a foundation university in Turkey where over 70 instructors were teaching English on both a part-time and full-time basis. There were over 1000 students of whom were mostly CEFR A1 and A2 learners and who were preparing to pass the mostly mandatory proficiency exam in order to be able to continue their education in their faculties. Students were mostly from Turkey but there will be a considerable number of foreign students in almost every class so the language medium and of instruction was predominantly English.

PD was mandatory and every teacher irrespective of their line of work and duty had to undertake it under the support and guidance and supervision of PDU. There shall be further and more specific information regarding the context of the study whilst exploring the case of each participant.

3.4.5.1 Local EP workshop the mentors attended prior to this study and its impact. The mentors in question were given an opportunity to attend a series of local EP workshops in their home towns/cities first with a view to implement/pilot it at their home institutions working as a mentor later on.

This study originally began life during a series of local EP workshops I was invited to attend alongside about fifteen other teachers sponsored by British Council Newton Katip Celebi Fund and organised and delivered by Judith Hanks (University of Leeds) and Kenan Dikilitas (Bahcesehir University) which spanned about 6 months and were held in two parts after which all of the participants went back to further promote and conduct EP studies in their home institutions.

The workshops, which were surprisingly positively informal, friendly and reciprocally productive and enlightening, included both input and output sessions in the form of seminars, individual and/or pair/group self-study, presentations, discussions and individual tutorial meetings for further mentoring and coaching purposes. Participants were widely senior teachers from local institutions working mainly in teacher training, testing and material and curriculum design and development. I was one of the three teacher researchers representing my (former) university's prep programme and its PDU.

As part of the workshop agenda, initially we were each asked to come up with a puzzle of our own that for us had been debilitating or expansive academically, professsionally or administratively. I decided to work on student representation and inclusion at tertiary level as it had long been a huge interest for me.

At first, maybe quite normally, I was not too certain about what was really puzzling me on the topic though I was into the topic itself. After about the first 3 or 4 of the input sessions, and more precisely, after the stage where we were asked to refine our puzzles through narrative writing and group/pair debriefings, I was eventually satisfied and wanted to work precisely on the puzzle question, "Why are learners often not included in the university decision/policy making (enough)?"

After I returned to my home institution, I continued my own EP study with the classes I had been working with. This apart, I also decided with a colleague of mine, as also discussed during the local workshop as one of the overarching aims, to pilot an EP group studies as part of the annual PD activities run by the PDU as two mentors. After halfway through the input sessions and awhile my study progressed slightly but mainly after the long tutorial session with both instructors at the very

end, I also decided to set off the pilot study programme at my home institution with a research design in mind for my own MA studies that was just about to begin thus planned and created overlapping opportunities accordingly.

As mentioned before, the details of the research participants to this study and their cases/studies will be discussed further in more details in the next chapter in case analyses.

3.4.6 Trustworthiness

Since this study is an all-qualitative one only, trustworthiness was aimed and ensured by the aforementioned research triangulation effort as well as member checking by the other mentor and the mentors' mentors from the local EP workshop they had attended prior to this study. The mentors' mentors were very surprised but also humbled to take on such a role with pleasure. The contact between the two parties mainly lasted through online medium for almost a year.

All the dataset, documentation and their probable discussion and implications were exchanged and scrutinised via emails and Skype debrifiengs thus peer-reviewed with the other parties involved on a regular basis.

Also, tough they did not directly have such a demand, the participants were asked their full consent for this study to come into being and were anonymised to ensure universal ethical and research standards.

3.5 Limitations

The biggest limitation to this study could be viewed as its lack of use of any quantitative data collection tools. Notwithstanding, bearing this in mind the qualitative data was tried to be taken from different sources to be able to bypass this limitation and ensure triangulation as well as highlighting the salience and criticality alongside thematic comparison and contrast of the dataset collected from three participants in the form of collective case studies.

Another major limitation was perhaps the fact that the EP studies from which the dataset was retrieved were done simultaneously as this research and that they were mandated so teachers had an obligation to take part in it though they were

informed at the beginning and gave their full consent and support for the simultaneous conduct of this research – but under some great pressure.

The participants and mentors did their best and still willingly took part in the conduct of this research study, there was nevertheless largely a number of inhibitive factors and limitations that were at times not very easy to tackle in terms of quality of life for its constituents and healthy design and application of it.

The deliberate decision to conduct the interviews in the participants' mother tongue, with the mutual suggestion and consent of the supervisor to this study as well, had mostly seemed at the beginning as a potential pitfall, however, as the research progressed, and at the final stage when it was being analysed and streamlined, it was further cherished as a merely fantastic action for teachers noted it really helped them become and feel like themselves and that they could "further probe into their mental scripts."

Future studies in the same direction had better take heed of the above recommendations thus previous similar research experiences (Gall et al., 1996) in order that they shall generate robust research design and application as well as more comfortable research environment for their participants and conductors.

3.6 Delimitations

The delimitations utilised by the researcher in this study were determined by a desire to better understand and analyse EP and its proposed impact areas. To conduct the study, the researcher sought participants – in this case also his colleagues – who were working at a foundation university. The use of private school teachers and their students in this study also allowed the researcher to work with the constituents much more easily. In a public school, it is hard to find a school that has such flexible and facilitative academic and administrative specifications.

Chapter 4

Findings

This chapter analyses the results of the case studies in terms of particpants' context of experience, details of EP experience, EP engagement and their reflection on their EP engagement with regards to impact of EP on learning and learner and teaching and teacher bringing about three collective case studies and their qualitative analyses.

4.1 Case Analyses

4.1.1 Case study of Amy.

4.1.1.1 Context of experience. Amy has been teaching English for less than 5 years mainly in English Foundation Programmes at tertiary level. This is her second teaching post and apart from teaching she has briefly worked in import/export as well. She is the teacher with the least amount of teaching experience among the three with almost zero research experience and just finished her first teacher research in Exploratory Practice. Unlike the other two, she had less pressure at work - her first year at this new post - with no admin or extra academic/work. However, she had been very enthusiastic throughout her study. She was probably one that needed the most support and guidance all along though.

4.1.1.2 Details of EP Experience. As she held research experience almost amounting to nought in general, and had not taken up any teacher research before, she found it really hard to take her study off the ground initially.

She particularly found it quite challenging to survive through the first phase, initial introductory input sessions where a lot of the theoretical background and literature review was explored. Perhaps she also took on the challenge far too much often buckling up under the pressure as a newcomer even though she was constantly reassured it should not have any bearing whatsoever on her motivation to go ahead.

To be fair, the level of pressure for her, as she would put it, was as well great for her study had to be done as part of the mandatory in-house PD. She was a fast learner and great team player who took on every aspect and level keenly and with lots of attentiveness and hard work.

During the first tutorial and short survey for documentation of this study, she explained she wanted to choose EP because of all the three teacher research group this was the smallest (as being piloted) and most sincere. She said she also had specifically chosen it because she thought she would greatly benefit from EP's data collection procedure with the help of use of PEPAs. She flagged data collection and implementation of PEPAs as the potentially hardest part of this whole study and also indicated no initial interest in writing up or presentation of this study later on. She said on it "I still do not see how I can use PEPAs to collect data and do not think I can get to the end of this or present it…"

After the first tutorial, she finally decided to work on the problem of self-study and students' extra-curricular engagement. Her puzzle question was why do my students not study outside the school?

4.1.1.3 EP Engagement. First, her puzzle had a deep-rooted prejudice that her learners almost never do homework or engage in any self-study or self-started extracurricular activities that somewhat involved studying English outside the school. Also, it took her longer than most others to realise she held it as an assumption (and maybe wrongly as well) and that it did not really rely on any evidence or data.

It was during the narrative writing activity we did altogether where they turned their puzzles in to one big narrative providing the background/backstory to their studies and their very rationale for chasing it. It perhaps dawned on her all during the gallery phase of the activity where the group put their narratives up on the wall so that their friends could read them as well and that they could each give one another their personal reactions and further quiz why and how they felt so. It was a very big turning point not only for her but for others as well that there was an unsubstantiated prejudice behind every one of their puzzling questions. When she finally came to grips with this, I supposed as her mentor, she might be disillusioned

or afraid and give up. However, she surprisingly bounced back very quickly and was even further motivated to explore her puzzle. This was probably the biggest wake-up call for them all and for her much more greatly. The below lines taken from her interview perhaps best captures in her own words the levels of her astonishment for she thought interestingly her students would all be successful in their exams since they were really motivated hardworking and attentive in class:

> My students were really enthusiastic bringing in all their material, working, studying and participating. Surprising it was because I had taught previously a similar programme at a state university and the level of my students' motivation was really really the opposite so I thought all should be fine as there was all the necessary ingredients: learners, motivating environment and professional support. However, come first exam, I realised it was not all going very well, which in theory inspired my puzzle.

After managing to come up with a puzzle, her second biggest challenge was synchronisation and implementation of PEPAs she was to use as part of her research study in order to explore her puzzle and collect data. Though it took her again really long to get going as she had to change her group so had to restart her study, once she did, she then had a pretty straightforward fluid chain of lessons taking advantage of the higher levels of proficiency and motivation her group had:

> It went off to a good start but later on I had issues creating PEPAs that would further develop the study. Then the orientation period came to an end as it was supposed to and with the start of the 1st mod. I had to work with a different group so was worried if I could be working on the same topic. Interestingly, the same thing happened again because come first exams, my now higher level learners as well crashed to the ground and were all very disappointed. I thought after liaising with the PDU I should well continue with the same puzzle!

Below might exemplify her initial but arguably premature account on implementation of her chosen PEPAs:

The very next lesson I put them in groups of 4s and asked them to draw up a mind map brainstorming the possible reasons behind their failure with each group addressing a different "provocative question/topic" such as; do you think things could have been different if you studied harder or put in more hours outside the school? Or what was/were the primary reason(s) that led to your failure or how are you planning to turn it round next time and so on so forth…

What the students said as an initial reaction to her puzzle question was quite interesting and somehow had an incidental effect on her planning of the rest of the procedure and remaining PEPAs:

• "I never do in-class activities/tasks because we don't get any extra points from those!"

• "I don't take notes because I usually never have a pen/pencil!"

• "I never take notes because I prefer taking pictures of them instead!"

She was also really critical of her learners and their reaction in general and was not very reflective or constructive in the beginning often looking for faults and blaming them; "so on and so forth… They gave me lots of excuses/reasons! It was really frustrating!"

Halfway through her study and after the second tutorial, she noted she felt she was having a change in heart and things were finally getting clearer for her. However, when I observed her class during the below detailed part of her lesson/study, she indeed looked much less in control of things and confident compared to the first observation I had had during the initial phase of her study. After that we had had a debriefing session where she had said the following as her next plan or phase of intervention with sustained clarity:

The very next lesson, we are to discuss conjunctions as part of our grammar syllabus, particularly, because, since, as etc. so I'll give them back their own sentences they've made the previous lesson as controlled practice. Then during production (output) part of the class, they will use these sentences to make

posters in groups of 6s. Finally, to my surprise, I will begin to analyse all the data students have produced and be ready to write up my study… (laughs)

Before we had our third and final tutorial, she had already finished data collection and was ready to write up her research and perhaps present it at the school's annual international ELT conference in the summer. Since they did not have to write up or present, it was also challenging to persuade her to go ahead with this (important) part of the research study. Her argument was that neither was her study solid enough to be shared with the wider ELT community nor did she have enough confidence and experience to try and do so. However, it was her students and me who somewhat managed to dissuade her to write up her study and present it at the school's annual conference. She did and it was a great experience for her and her students - along with some of her own students, she was also in the conference organising committee - and to her amazement, her work was met with very good reception, which was convincing enough for her to think to try it again next year.

4.1.1.4 Her Reflection on EP Engagement.

4.1.1.4.1 Impact on learning and learner.

I think the biggest difference was though students normally do in class activities as such I mean pair and group work or discussion and brainstorming, they got to work with their own ideas they produced for their own problems this time, which of course in return enabled the lesson to be more interesting, valid and meaningful.

Amy summarised the immediate effect EP had on her learners and their learning with the remarks cited above. She reported giving her students a chance to produce something genuine and relevant as part of the lesson was an uplifting and moving factor in their studies overall no matter how challenging it might be at first.

She characterised and attributed to EP the sheer merit of helping students further with their motivation and attainment catering to their higher order thinking skills, which are and should be an integral part of any classroom activity that readily sought

to reconcile a learner's immediate actual needs with perceived but crucial secondary ones: “they had lots of fun and it in my opinion also helped them with their critical thinking and membership\readership skills.”

She rationalised her decision to inform her learners of the study prior to the start of it as follows: “…I think it was better this way for the smooth running of it. Otherwise, I feared I could have been putting the words into their mouths or they simply could just have come up with answers to either please or brush me off.” On that note, she also added this way of approach to the study had certain benefits on their learning experience in general and in-class pedagogy altogether. She specifically noted: “…this way, unknowingly, they really focused on a problem of their own making or suffering and made real efforts. Of course, they did not only cite the problems about their lack of study skills or efforts but mentioned others such as time constraints or their workload or the very problem of having to study to pass as opposed to studying to learn! So it was much more effective in terms of objectivity and productivity and it gave me a chance this way to run things more naturally without any hassle or interference.”

When asked about the learners’ said awareness of the study and whether that might have created a limitation or any soft spot, she maintained her position saying, “I don’t think so. On the contrary, it was I think well due as EP is supposed to be humanistic, unsegregated, reciprocal and seamless as a research study so their participation this way was much more natural and the study much more unbiased and objective.”

When later during a post-observation debriefing and reflection meeting we were talking about the concept of reflectiveness and in general whether EP might have helped her learners in any way with that, interestingly, she made the following remarks:

> In order for my learners to be able to stay disaffected, I had not told them about this study at the beginning when we first kicked off. However, when I was presenting this study at the conference, some of my ss were there as volunteers too and as they found out they wanted to come and see my presentation and got

really really excited. Some of them were later also interviewed to share their feelings about the conference and they felt really surprised but also proud and at the end of my presentation, they came and said to me that they felt incredibly humbled to be part of this study.

Finally, she said of the very relationship between EP, PD and her learners' concept of self and identity and their development the following that might as well be read as follows:

> Drawing up on this experience as one example, I think there definitely was I mean is for the learners as they have a real chance to become themselves and use their true potential becoming a genuine and equal part of the learning and teaching process and really make a difference. But as for me, I'm not too sure… I don't know yet!

4.1.1.4.2 Impact on teaching and teacher. In general, Amy did not seem too certain or confident about the very impact EP, if any, might have had on herself or her teaching. This could very easily be attributed to her limited experience in teacher research and teaching in general compared to the other two. However, she somewhat reflected her positivity and future aspirations. As for her learners, the conference experience altogether and presenting her study there was a real milestone for her and her career, she noted. She made on that the following remarks during last of her tutorials:

> Before this, I had never carried out a similar work so it was my first and was a very important experience for me as a teacher. Later I had a chance to present it at an international ELT conference and I believe this was very useful experience for me. Besides, I never knew students were not at all aware of the fact that they had serious motivational issues so this was a sort of…. a real wake-up call for me as a practitioner. Who knows I will perhaps further this study later as an action research to further get into the details and perhaps come up with some solutions.

She did admit the fact that it was extra motivation and fun for her too as was it reciprocal: “My motivation too rose as did my learners. It was very positive...” Unlike Rita, very much like Gwen, she argued the whole impact of EP on her and her teaching was imminent, direct so clearly observable.

On the topic of reflectiveness and how EP, if any, might have contributed to, she humbly said the following that could well be dismissed too as naïve and her lack of ground knowledge on this stratum: “I think thanks to EP I have become a much more aware teacher whose main goal is clearly to address genuine learner problems. Yet, I’m not too sure about this at that stage and will possibly need and take ages…!”

Also, unlike her learners’, she was not either too sure about the impact EP could have on a teacher’s self and identity. As noted above in impact on learner and learning section, she said “she was not too sure about hers.”

4.1.2 Case study of Gwen.

4.1.2.1 Context of Experience. Gwen has been teaching English for about 7 years and has mostly taught at English Foundation Programmes at tertiary level. She has a range of experience as she has also worked at private language schools and briefly abroad in Germany as an Erasmus exchange student. She holds a BA in Americanistic/Anglistic studies and no baseline teaching qualification but is about to complete her MA in ELT.

Like Amy, the year she completed her research study in question was her first at the post at the English foundation programme at the prep school of the university. She was also studying for her MA simultaneously and at the department she was teaching more than 20 hours a week on top of her unit work in CMDU. The group she completed her research study with was lower intermediate level during the first and second module of the academic year in question.

4.1.2.2 Details of EP Experience. Though she did not have much prior knowledge or experience in teacher research and research in general and does not hold a formal teaching qualification, she was one of the keenest participants of the EP group and had no issues getting started and/or progressing with her study thanks

to the teacher research (mainly action research) work she had been assigned to do as part of her MA course portfolio simultaneously throughout her taught courses.

During our initial greet and meet session, when we were going over the questions of the short survey they were asked to complete, she noted she really wanted to try teacher research but had not heard about EP before, however, explained that the main reason for her to be working in EP group was that she was really touched by the introductory presentation given by the EP heads at the last day of the teacher orientation week prior to the start of academic year. She said 'of all the presentations given that day regarding teacher research – Action Research, Lesson Study Exploratory Practice – I found the EP session really simple but strong frank and straightforward at the same time'. She also argued it was the most humanistic, participant-friendly, and academically and pedagogically speaking, meaningful. She added she instantly "fell in love with it – at first sight – and really felt like 'giving it a go."

4.1.2.3 EP Engagement. Immediately at the end of her first tutorial, Gwen decided to work on students' speaking fear and anxiety and how it might be manifesting itself in learner output and production. Her puzzle question was "why do my students not participate in in-class speaking activities?" Below is an excerpt from the said exchange and what she said of her own puzzle and the reason for her to want to choose it:

> …I figure a lot of our students are shy and this often creates a cut-off point in terms of teaching and learning process. At my previous school, I had some students who never spoke up in the class or participated and who also often got very good marks surprisingly! And this was no exception at my current institution so I decided to work on the topic… why are some students shy and will this not really change no matter how motivating or supportive their peers or teachers can be! To be more precise, what are the causes that lead some learners to shy away from learning and teaching activities?

She also pointed out she wanted to work on a topic that somehow encased all her teaching career, not just her current place and position, and for it to have a deeper

connection and meaning for herself and for her career in general. She posited "whilst picking my puzzle, I did not want to focus on my recent appointment only but tried instead to look for and find an overarching or overlapping topic that had encompassed my all teaching career..."

Following the first couple of the initial input sessions and after reading about and gaining some knowledge and experience in teacher research, her biggest concern was, as she raised it in her first tutorial, the probable hardship of working on her topic, which, to her, was really elusive and opinionated, particularly regarding research instruments to be integrated and used for data collection. Also, very much like most of her colleagues, embedding these in to in-class pedagogic activities, she thought, may prove challenging to establish at the beginning, and possibly synchronize and assimilate later on.

To this end, interestingly, during one of the initial input sessions, whilst the pair/group activity to explore if the participants ever held any assumptions regarding their puzzles and what they might be and how this might affect their understanding and analysis of it. Her group partners argued and reported Gwen held the belief (or arguably the prejudice) that her learners' inactivity mostly had to do with their own reluctance and reticence. However, a colleague from another group perhaps aptly challenged and dismissed this very notion during the open discussion as a fallacy and argued it might have well to do with something induced or inflicted by the teacher himself by, for example, "being perhaps too assertive or dominant."

Gwen conceded in the very next meeting that she never "had a look at things from such a perspective" and decided to further work on her puzzle narrative and the phenomenon that actually led her to want to explore it as her puzzle in the first place even though she was adamant she definitely wanted to continue with her topic. She described her then state in her study as she "generally thought of this problem/puzzle to be learner-oriented and of teachers' involvement and effect to be much less and much more innocent."

That in mind and following a brief chat with her learners on the topic and upcoming collaboration, she said she had finally laid out for herself the whole picture

and knew now how she wanted to proceed with her study in terms of in-class pedagogic activities she will be using. Below lines perhaps best describe in her own words her eventual clarity:

> I did want and asked them to explore the topic more freely and deeply trying to weave a different aspect of it in to each body paragraph and tie them all to their thesis statements carefully. I was glad I did not have to do anything extra like I did before whilst carrying out Action Research and I think this was my motivation and students liked it mostly because they felt their ideas or beings/existence was foreground and appreciated and valued.' In short, during pre-writing stage, they worked more collaboratively while, during while and post writing stages, they worked more individually.

When she was describing in her own reflection statement in detail the actual PEPAs used in class for data collection and their actual procedure, she referred to the whole process as below:

> For better documentation of this study, I thought it'd be a good idea to carry it out during my writing classes and had planned it to overlap with the opinion essay week in order for ss to collaborate more effectively. Of course, it followed a typical trajectory of a brief warm-up on the topic and essay type then brainstorming, clustering and outlining in groups/pairs then writing up a fully-fledged 5-paragraph essay to later share with each other…

During our last tutorial right after she had finished all her PEPAs so data collection, she was totally uplifted and confessed and heralded she now seriously thought of writing up her study and even trying to present it somewhere. She said she had never thought about this before, at any stage, particularly before the PEPAs. She summarised the whole EP experience and involvement of herself and her learners with the following statement again taken from her own reflection statement:

> As for the teaching side of it… I maintain I mean I always knew psychological factors are extremely critical when it comes to teaching (and learning) and this was somewhat always aptly covered in all the formal

> educations I took part in. Notwithstanding, seeing this materialise was of course was a whole new ball game, a totally uplifting experience and I know for a fact actions always speak louder than words! I mean for example I specifically asked them to brainstorm and outline their writing tasks based on my research puzzle and had I told them to write about another topic, any other topic as I normally would, they probably would not have been as engaged and prolific and writing about themselves I believe gave that little edge our writing classes had always lacked or somehow missed, motivationally or productively speaking. I'm so happy. I want others to try this and/or find out about this study…

4.1.2.4 Her Reflection on EP Engagement.

4.1.2.4.1 Impact on learning and learner. To begin with, Gwen perhaps problematised the impact of EP on learning and learner (and teaching and teacher) in general with the following statement that somewhat also served to sum up her individual stance on the whole aspect: "…here, I'd categorically state learning and teaching differs and particularly learners' learning experiences outside the school and I call these psychological factors or roles that are hard to monitor…" She said of the very rationale for her to be adopting such a rigid take was because she firmly believed in the fact that, unlike many contemporary established others yet reminiscent of Nunan (1981), teaching and learning, when it comes to curriculum and its implementation, are more often than not two different entities that are not hundred per cent coherent or cohesive with conflicting agendas of their exponents.

To this end, she reported something very important regarding learner involvement and readership in general (or lack of it thereof) that she said had always been of great importance to her as a teacher since it meant teaching learners as professionals or individuals in the [wider] hidden or indirect curricula, which, arguably, many still might find questionable:

> From start, ethically speaking, I wanted them to know explicitly that they were being part of a research study and its rationale and felt that it'd be fair

only this way and I think this not only really increased their levels of motivation but served the study well making it more attainable!

Nonetheless, she talked of several benefits of EP engagement for the learners she herself was able to observe. A very important and preliminary one she said she realised was that it initiated a mutually agreed communication channel that acted as a continuous multiple-port switchboard; "I feel it all boils down to the same point again that when an individual is cared, accepted, valued, listened and attended to, they automatically tend to connect with the other party more effectively and genuinely and by using this channel everything becomes truly possible and meaningful both for the learner and teacher."

Another probably really salient benefit she pinpointed was that her learners were themselves, as she felt, not just going through the motions as they normally and usually would. She explained in comparison to other forms of teacher research or PD she had tried to date that they were extremely eager to participate and produce and do their best taking ownership of their own learning possibly thanks to the much more even playing field EP provided for them all:

> Compared to EP, I find most other forms of teacher research robotic in that in the past I either often had to ask for the participants' consent/permission or limit my learners only to the role of survey respondents. During EP, my students were much more engaged and in the thick of it as well as deriving much more pleasure on a much more equal ground and I did not have to go out of my way to collect data. I believe questionnaires are often inaccurate, biased and/or superficial as participants, especially when the research conductor knows them, either skew or completely change their accounts either to please or respect them. However, in their EP studies, they made their own sentences free from any ranking or categorical groupings and apart from being personal because it was mostly qualitative, I think they were much more honest and willing. There was interestingly no resistance at all even though they perhaps at the beginning might have thought it would simply be

just another research if of course they had ever done one before! They were themselves!

Equally importantly, she also said she had generally observed throughout her career of her learners (and herself automatically) to lack to acquire certain skills or accomplishments in class or outside [beyond in preparation to and success in standardised tests]:

> …furthermore, I think this [reciprocity] helps peer pressure to ease, creativity and awareness to rise and conflicts to die down thanks to real student-teacher-student interaction, which may generally be not genuine in the class with both parties often going through the motions only and just spending (or wasting) or surviving the time allocated for their supposedly overarching but often unfortunately only interim aims.

She also mentioned learner and learning affects as generally unfortunately being in the way of teaching and learning process as well as development of both a positive self and identity of a learner and how EP at that precise strand well established a plenary firewall against this; "...once that [adaptive] affective wall or filter is lifted anything becomes possible and attainable again for both and this surely has a truly positive impact on the development of both general well-being and professional or academic self and identity of both parties as valuable single individuals and even perhaps sometimes a collective unity in harmony."

Further, she highlighted the fact that EP, as she observed, anchored a surprisingly positive effect on unearthing and development of [true] self and identity of learners. On this very stratum, she noted she wrote in her own field notes reflectively that "we all often harbour conflicting and/or aspiring ideas or ideals as to how we should be doing things, and I do not think one can or should separate these from their real beings or forms of self in anything they're doing, and of course this should wryly include learning and teaching process too."

She noted the caring and tender side of EP that championed "quality of life" for both provides learners [as well as a teacher] with a chance to explore and use the

true extent of their potentials to the fullest paving way to the development and many a manifestation of self, identity and above all being and existence continuously:

> My students said they felt really humbled as well and their ideas, very beings and existence valued and appreciated and that they wanted to do more for me and more importantly for themselves. I'll probably repeat myself but think it [EP] is a much more humanistic form both for the teacher and learners as individuals are valued and they know their ideas are also being valued and taken into account, and maybe more importantly, they develop during these episodes of work a new concept of self as a continuous learner and/or developer as it pushes them into thinking more deeply and creatively and critically. I also feel this is extra critical for the age group we're looking at as they often strive to be accepted and taken into account so psychologically speaking this way of collaboration and study should have a lot of benefits on these types of learners who crave and deserve to be understood and hate being forced to do something. I think this might even work out for the least motivated or slowest learner.

4.1.2.4.2 Impact on teaching and teacher. Gwen thinks EP, on the whole, has a really positive effect on one's teaching thanks to its integration of pedagogy and research implementation as "one big continuum." She always said of it in every encounter that she found it really 'teacher and teaching friendly'. She wrote in one of her reflection statements after the implementation of a phase of her study I observed as well the following that perhaps best exemplify her feelings regarding how EP might be providing an implementer with a prime chance to stay true to what they aspire to be really doing in class: "I cannot help but think of some clichés such as 'learner or learning-centred teaching' and/or 'championing student experience and/or reflection' and believe EP is surely a prime chance for any teacher with any years of tenure and experience to put this into practice and perspective…"

In line with the seven main principles of EP, she posited she was also humbled beyond belief by the beneficiary nature of EP that absolutely solidified the very channel one needed decidedly to get to their audience; "…its humanistic nature

is also just a reminder that our students also a human beings not machines or robots and that they are not empty vessels yet have an opinion or feelings and these should not be overlooked. Win win I think as students feel probably more motivated and engaged and perhaps even obliged to participate as their voices and ideas are heard and materialise. That's what we teachers are often desperate for." She said this was primarily important because, above all, after so many years, thanks to EP, she realised again that "we are all human beings with real feelings, sensitivities and frailties and this poses no danger for the teaching and learning medium."

Gwen also praised EP's insight into providing one with a pedagogical ability to "think on feet and reflect on and in action," which she thought was a lack thereof in many other forms of PD and teacher research she had tried to date; "…for example, [I realised] there had been a decrease in participation or motivation during group works, therefore, this made me rethink and re-evaluate my pedagogical decisions or strategies in a much more conscious and determined way."

However, as she was still unconvinced and unsure about the long-term effects and impact of EP, interestingly unlike Rita, to her, only the immediate impact should be observable so attainable. During the penultimate and ultimate tutorials, she had perhaps raised this issue in the following short exchange:

Mentor: "How do you think, if any, EP is benefitting your teaching practice?"

G: "I'm indeed very happy to see that EP is already improving my teaching practice even during its very implementation as I'm more motivated and better prepared to carry out my research using PEPAs I decided on whilst teaching my curriculum at the same time. What else could one wish? Two birds one stone!... But I'm scared it might just be a one shot deal, I mean, might soon die out!"

Below then perhaps best sums up in her own words that sheer and immediate impact of EP on her profession and herself as a professional she was talking about overall and perhaps in close conjunction with her aforementioned rethinking of her puzzle and its phenomenon at the earlier stages:

> I think I'd never really given thought before to the idea that teachers might be so affective and restricting in the way learners learn and produce. That was probably a little too naïve… However, I now know that though it might have a really big proportion, there are also student-oriented or induced factors. Still, acknowledging this against my learners was probably one of the biggest wake-up calls in my whole teaching career ever. If it had not been for EP, I would probably have never come to this conclusion. Amazing really!

She noted as EP bridged the different selves of her, she felt for the first time "reconciled" to switch between the roles as she normally would anyway but with much less ease, certainty and confidence. She likened it to acting where "one [I] needed to play many different roles in a series of episodes or sometimes in just one episode only. I was a teacher, learner, buddy, peer, opponent, older sibling, companion and friend maybe. Interchangeably, alternately and skillfully. It was tiring but very rewarding…" She said she also felt her personal and professional identity just as any professional perhaps overlapped and united.

Overall, she argued EP also does go a long way and perhaps make it [the mutual development] truly possible in comparison to many other forms of PD and/or teacher research she had tried to date; "I guess this is the real way forward. For both… Honestly, I'd never felt this way before in any of my past efforts. I mean, in terms of PD or in-service teacher training…"

4.1.3 Case study of Rita.

4.1.3.1 Context of experience. Rita has taught English mostly at the English foundation programmes at tertiary level in Turkey and Germany for more than 10 years and is quite an experienced teacher. She holds a BA/MA in ELL and is currently studying for a PhD in ELT. Though she does not come from a teaching background, she seems to have been overcoming it with her strong interest and flair in education and is particularly interested in Bilingualism and SLA/FLA.

More recently, she has been conducting and publishing different types of practitioner research such as Action Research (Rita E. 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015) and

Exploratory Practice (unpublished) for some time as part of her PhD course work and inset training and has presented at international conferences.

4.1.3.2 Details of EP experience. In the 2015-2016 academic calendar as part of the mandatory in-house professional development scheme at the school of foreign languages of the university she was working at, Rita was a member of the Exploratory Practice group I was mentoring and co-leading. Though part-time, because she was studying for a PhD and teaching full-time simultaneously and taking up unit work at the school, she found it quite hard to juggle them all. However, she received extra individual tutoring and always stayed in touch and progressed her study still quite perfectly, often reading and researching and trying to output further than advised or expected.

Over the first trimester that mostly encompassed group input sessions and some individual and pair/group self-study as well as a number of one-to-one tutorials, she changed her topic (puzzle) a few times. She was a mentee in my group so, group input sessions aside, I had a chance to work with her closely observing her lessons alongside meeting with her quite a few times every month during one-to-one tutorials to discuss her progress and problems as well as future action points.

She noted during our initial meet and greet session that she wanted to be in this group so that she would further and more deeply get involved in practitioner research as it was a small [intimate] pilot scheme and that she was impressed by the heads' introductory presentation. She noted "it was simplistic yet moving even for a teacher like me who's quite experienced in this; good enough to make me want to register without flirting with others…" She had done Action Research a lot of times so was very experienced in teacher research in general boasting great grasp on procedural knowledge and post-study insight and reflection. However, as she would put it, she had not tried Exploratory Practice before [formally] so had serious reservations no matter how enthusiastic she was. Notice:

> My first introduction to EP was about 4/5 years ago whilst working under the supervision of the PDU at my previous work place as part of an in-house PD activity. However, I was not too sure about whether it was Action Research

> or another similar form of it. My initial thought of it was very positive and I said to myself I should try this but was not too clear about the methodology. I thought the research I was carrying out was Action Research then realised later on that it was not; I knew I needed to learn more about it and was ready to do so on a long term...

Since she's an educator with considerable experience and background in research in general and particularly in practitioner research, it was both beneficial yet difficult to work with her, particularly as she held strong beliefs with substantial depth as well as mild resistance [and slightly negative teacher research experience history] in certain aspects of [teacher] research and education and/or ELT on top of her extensive tenure and seniority. The following exchange from our first one-to-one tutorial might be a good exemplification of the extent of a possibly looming challenge for both parties:

> …therefore, though voluntary, back then I felt I was thrown at the deep end of it. It was intriguing because, academically speaking, I have always been very keen on such work and activity and that it would offer me some professional solace taking away the tedium of teaching. I was not even aware whether I would do these as an in-class research activity or read and work on my own outside the class with the help of my students. That's how I first began and to date I have carried out 5 or 6 of them and as I went along I think my involvement and insight got deeper and deeper each and every new time. I'm mostly self-taught and this is often unfortunately overlooked…

4.1.3.3 EP Engagement. After our initial one-to-one tutorial before the commencement of her study, she finally settled down on her puzzle and wanted to work on student motivation or lack of it thereof in receptive skills classes, particularly regarding reading skills. To put it into words exactly, her puzzle question was: "why are (some of) my students not motivated enough during receptive skills classes?"

To begin with, she said her initial motive to work on this topic was the fact that she personally believed strongly in the merits of academic writing and reading in

a truly blended pedagogy and that they were both a significant factor why and how a learner could further their studies and become progressively and systematically more capable in a foreign language. She exerted "without proficiency in writing and reading skills, academically speaking, I don't think I would never be where I am now, irrespective of roles or rank, I don't think anyone at academia could and/or should!"

She argued, prior to this latest one, as can be clearly seen below, her EP experience had always somewhat been unofficial and mostly at the receiving end only but ironically much more positive – though at her behest. However, as pointed out above before, though she did not formally and academically come from a teaching background and arguably lacked to an extent essential methodology input, thanks to her experience, she seemed remarkably confident unselfish and in control of things and know what she wanted and where she longed to head. Recounting past experiences to acknowledge this perhaps tacitly and threading it with the current situation, she noted "I have always tried to pick topics within my areas of interest and struggle and my first EP topic was about writing because it was not only an issue for me in class but problematic for all the teachers that were teaching it at the time…" She said she felt it would hopefully serve a wider aim too this way and be in the school's best interests, she noted "so I thought it could perhaps benefit the institution on the whole." She was perhaps also very flexible fully aware and open to emerging needs or issues: "I was trying really hard to render my writing classes much more appealing, however, there were still a lot of technical problems so thought I could perhaps do something about collaborative writing in order to inquire how my students would perform doing it in groups and get more yield…"

On the other hand, she also noted a positive side "…I also still feel EP is much easier, I mean, doable in the sense that everything is at the ready for the practitioner and that it does not require extra effort or digression from your everyday work…and I love this." She added with regards to specific pedagogic intervention she planned that she associated this whole positive atmosphere with EP being more humane and teacher/learner-friendly and the fact that "…it did not really care about jumping on to far-fetched or half-baked quick fix solutions lack of and oblivious to

insight deeper understanding and analysis and more importantly the learners' actual present day needs and problems…"

So, she felt she knew for a fact that levels of student motivation in reading classes was a big factor in their achievement of proficiency in writing, English in general and overall progress; "…without the shadow of a doubt, it is a key factor in furthering and refining writing skills as they are almost always closely inseparably linked." She felt her students had the same problem, that is to say, they were not really motivated to carry out in-class reading tasks or exercises inherent in their lack of readiness and proficiency levels possibly due to their inaccurate level placements and past learning experiences. They were often far from being self-aware of their own situation which automatically resulted quite normally in low scores in writing classes as well.

Halfway through her study, thanks to the aforementioned awareness-raising narrative and cluster discussion activities during whole group input sessions prior to the commencement of implementation of PEPA cycles, Rita conceded in a tutorial exchange that she suspected she might be misreading and prejudicing against her case even as an experienced teacher (researcher) since her students were already giving her different scenarios which were substantially different to those of her projected ones. She noted "my biggest fear is that I still might be misjudging the whole case, I mean, my puzzle since even the initial premature responses [data] I collected from my students point to a really different direction compared to what I would suspect it to be. I think my students are motivated enough but don't know how to do it. I think I need to sort a few things out and perhaps make my activities slightly more engaging communicative and student-experience-oriented giving them a chance to really show what they need and can do…" After that, she modified her PEPAs a little rendering them more learner-led and output-oriented as advised and during the next tutorial she seemed really relieved and heralded she "…. felt happy now yet humbled and gutted to be in such a situation despite all my years of teaching and researching. I love this kind of exchange as it helps one to constantly recalibrate themselves and reflect on feet…"

To summarise her whole cycle of PEPAs, after the modifications, she had first got her students to read a text that introduced the relationship between academic reading and writing then discuss in pairs/groups whether they agreed with it or not and their further reflections. She later asked her students to write a cause and effect essay, as part of the syllabus, on the reasons and/or results of doing or not doing enough academic reading and writing practice and in response to the reading text. Finally, she got them to self-evaluate themselves then peer check and give feedback to each other's texts. She noted the end products she had were still really interesting and insightful illustrating the students' own analysis of the level of commitment understanding and awareness of the puzzle. She added the modification of self-assessment and peer check and evaluation worked really well and that they were both a good decision.

She finally reported she concluded though her learners have lacked the necessary background readiness and systematic development and refinement of skills to carry out combined academic reading and writing activities to date, they were first and foremost probably deprived of their own learner voice as well as almost the slightest opportunity to capitalise on metacognitive support which would still help them analyse assess and understand their own needs and shortcomings and perhaps then inform the solutions needed to tackle the problem particularly in terms of self-study and in-class self-efficacy autonomy and agency.

She was still far from being content. Though she admitted during her final tutorial that her students worked wonders and really did contribute to the development and completion of her study and gained something really valuable for their own learning, she conceded she was still neither too impressed by her choice of topic nor its duly final inconclusive outcomes. She retorted "…last year was really hard for me as it was my first year in my PhD so was very busy. My topic was on reading motivation and I found it really challenging. Maybe I was unable to give it careful thought and consideration and failed to see the real extent. I was also not very happy with it particularly because what I had back from students was not very profound. I think it somewhat failed to go beyond what I already predicted or had in

mind already so was not unfortunately as engaging for me in general and to be very honest particularly for a long while or till the very end…"

4.1.3.4 Her reflection on EP engagement.

4.1.3.4.1 Impact on learning and learner. As well as the case study interview, Rita had surprisingly noted in one of her post-lesson reflection and debriefing meeting that she did not think there was a direct relationship between PD – here EP – and the enhancement of student learning and learner experience. She claimed this was of course somewhat observable but incidental. She also added for her this should only be observed on a longer run:

> …in order to assess its impact on learning, I think one should run a (more) longitudinal study, at least another one or two systematically in the next six months or the year. Also, it is hard because whether their reaction/cooperation is real or a show always remains a mystery. It is particularly difficult to ascertain it with EP because it does not rely on statistical quantitative data so may not be replicated or generalisabl

When she was asked if and how EP might have had an impact on her learners and their learning experience, she noted she had to compare it to other forms of PD activities she had tried so far, or particularly other forms of teacher research such as AR. She argued it was always probably much more meaningful for her students and their learning as it simply and seamlessly was integrated into their routine class work and widely supported the overarching lesson objectives with no extra hassle (Hanks, 2010).

She further elaborated on the same matter claiming most forms of PD and even teacher research seeks in isolation from universal rigour of pedagogy a free-standing solution to an anticipated problem whose validity or reliability is in fact questionable since a very important constituent of the puzzle, learners, are somewhat left out or their mere contribution and involvement is reduced to being only a research participant, a tick-box quantitative drive, which she thinks is both misleading, and, worse, demotivating. The following excerpt in her own words probably lays this bare:

> I think when compared to AR for example EP is much more prolific as it is not really based on an in-class problem so you as a practitioner do not come across to your ss as there is a problem and you're doing this not to really understand it but to solve it or perhaps to offer a solution, a quick, superficial or perhaps misinformed fix that has not really been delved into…

Interestingly, she also conceded, when in the past doing other forms of teacher research, she could not help but feel unconfident and uneasy whether this was the right thing to do for students as part of their valuable class time and even questioned her own rigour as to whether she was betraying them [and/or herself] simply by asking them to do something that might be very dubious in terms of course objectives specified in the syllabus and her execution needed therein:

> Particularly, in my first year, it was more like a game for us all. I would notify them of it ahead of time warning this might make or ruin their time and that it is a risk trying to run something detached from the routine class pedagogy. They were usually positive towards it particularly because they wanted to be part of something like that, again particularly I'm talking about the first ones I'd conducted. There was a certain sense of solidarity particularly if one was doing it with only one of their 5 classes. Admittedly, this is perhaps against the very creed of research since it might come across as favouritism but it was working wonders.

What she said she liked most about EP whilst carrying it out was the fact that, when planning it alongside planning that specific lesson, at least, she did not have to make an extra effort to try and close that very pedagogical gap most other forms overtly create and which destroys real student-teacher interaction and communication. Academically speaking, though she hinted maybe she was not really aware of it, she maintained integrating research into every day in-class pedagogy and using the same content to explore a puzzle as class material was a big plus. She suggested:

> …psychologically speaking, this said detachment of students from the pedagogy usually puts them down and turn them off at the very first moment

since most forms other than EP is not really integrated into your normal and natural pedagogy and they are not really open to genuine student interaction or involvement thus does not really support them or the learning environment.

She also claimed by cooperating with the learners, we, teachers, perhaps tacitly help them develop some other really vital outcomes that are often neglected or overlooked in the bigger picture of learning; such as autonomy, self-efficacy, critical thinking and team work. She noted, "…maybe my students were somehow aware of the educational benefits of these activities (PEPAs) and were becoming more engaged and conscientious. For example, my first one about writing, giving feedback, the students said they were very surprised and humbled that I was asking them what kind of feedback to provide. They thought it was very kind and thoughtful of me." She said she felt PD activities like EP does not only help further a teacher's profession but is an extra teaching tool for them since students by engaging in an EP study increases their commitment, readership, motivation and sense of belonging to their studies, peers, teachers as well as institution.

On the other hand, she highlighted a factor about EP she found significantly important that she always felt it provided a much more equal work ground both for the implementer and learners as they collaborate beyond surface level on the analysis and understanding of a [pedagogical] puzzle. She said even well before she had tried it, the notion, the possible analysis of a learner puzzle in the class was really exciting her. She added this had a very positive impact on her rapport with her students in general and the way they had begun to take everything more seriously. She noted, "… I think I was making a statement that I was still learning and that I was bringing myself down to their level, stripping myself of my own ego and working on a much more even playing field."

4.1.3.4.2 Impact on teaching and teacher. When talking about the impact EP and other forms of PD activities had on her teaching and herself, Rita categorically spoke of two certain aspects of it: impact on herself as a practitioner/researcher and her identity and self as a human being. Notwithstanding, again just like its sheer

impact on learner and learning, she posited both manifested themselves mainly incidentally, so, to her, the effect was somewhat there and positive but indirect and/or elusive too. She reported:

> As for teaching, it definitely positively affected my motivation to teach. However, back to the same topic, writing motivation, no one can be hundred per cent sure whether my collaborative writing activities and my teaching of them helped my learners achieve in their exams or perhaps the questions themselves were not challenging enough. Still, I know for a fact it did increase their motivation [as did mine] so if we could go back and talk to them about their experience, because I was aware of it and so were they, maybe they'd say it did! No one can be certain for sure but I cannot say it surely never did so!

For one thing, quite interestingly, during our very first formal gathering, she asserted she did not even regard herself as an experienced teacher though she had been teaching for more than 10 years. This alone could easily lead one to conclude, despite her career, she had self-confidence or self-esteem problems. This, when delved further into, was surprisingly not true. However, the mere standing point for her for it was perhaps the fact that she possessed, whether consciously or not, great levels of humility and prudence and wanted to be accepted by the group as well as the fact that she always saw herself as a continuous learner and the learning and teaching process a continuous enterprise. Below are her own lines on this taken from the interview:

> First of, I still do not see myself as an experienced teacher and if I went to a job interview, I would not classify myself as such, free from any need to develop professionally or personally – would still feel as a newbie! The reason being is I do not believe there is ever such thing as "qualified status" for a teacher nor can I say I am an excellent teacher because I did so and such…

As the work furthered, I realised she continued to voice the same notion of hers quite a few times even among her peers, which had initially led me to think she

either wanted to keep a low profile and/or blend in more easily and to not dominate as she came across as knowledgeable, too knowledgeable so pedantic with her unwavering hard work, aptitude and insight but also poignant honesty and self-isolation. Later there was also a chance to see her in action and it was quite surprising to find, in class, she was anything but so might have been feeling so because of another direct or indirect personal or professional factor that was well worth digging for since she reported on this the following element too, which perhaps better served to help me understand her stance much more clearly:

> It was a key realisation that learning to teach is a long and gruelling way and that I have many imperfections and need to have a clear plan and strategy to tackle them. Had it not been for these activities, I might have not started a PhD in this field and could simply have gone back to language and literature, my major, the field of study I believe I'm equally or even perhaps more proficient at and/or had been educated in.

Rita's account and reflection on EP and if and how it might have impacted her professional and personal development was remarkably different from others'. She did possess all the necessary ingredients, however, she refused to raise. Her cycle confusingly was as though a reverse one; a deconstructive one. Notice:

> …perhaps all these PD activities in retrospect were a kind of reflective proof for me that one simply cannot become a good practitioner just by tenure year after year or qualifications they've come to hold. Interestingly, thanks to EP and all these activities, I just now feel confident in the field of teaching and do want to carry on surely even if I'm not too sure which way to proceed to…

She also underlined the fact that she saw studies like EP mainly only qualitative and that this lack of quantitative side of research impetus was perhaps a critical soft spot, a limitation that somewhat led her to want to further explore longitudinal and mixed method research studies – her decision to further her career in ELT. She said, "…to address the latter part of your question, interestingly, I now feel EP is not enough for me. A little one sided… I mean perhaps I would then

sooner do it with teachers, particularly teacher students than students – pre-service teachers or less experienced teachers with just an initial teacher qualification such as CELTA."

Further, she praised [but perhaps critiqued at the same time] teacher research because again she said it was at times she felt *'a scrap form the surface'* despite all the benefits readily available; "…also, putting on this researcher hat probably gives one a boost of self-confidence they need from time to time to tackle their own shortcomings or professional and/or personal frustrations whilst also immensely helping them improve their writing and speaking skills as they write up their studies or present it where possible." Her other notable bittersweet criticism/praise was on the career furthering options such activities have to offer. She added "another possible benefit of it is that it surely is a tool for a teacher to further promote themselves in their jobs. As a colleague of mine once put it it's a way to pump oneself up in these circles creating, perhaps sometimes falsely, a sense of seniority or excellence giving out the feeling: oh, he or she is not just merely a teacher, he or she is also a researcher; someone who wants to go deeper and further in their profession. It surely means substantial prestige for one."

She suggested the manifestation of her many a face in the class depended heavily on whom she was working with. She argued her identity [and self] as a teacher was in close proximity and relationship with how her students or colleagues saw and portrayed her too. So, she maintained concept of identity, its creation, change and development must be indirect or two-way. However, on the concept of self, she drew a line saying it is much more tangible so perhaps better documentable as it is more to do with one's very own self and its improvement in many ways but not others'. She noted:

> Also, is it not difficult to define, describe and/or theorise identity as opposed to self as there is no proof or documentation of it. It's just what I and/or others feel and see and do – maybe a vision which is also too abstract and perhaps inaccurate, who knows. But as for self, it's much less abstract so perhaps far easier to assess, rationalise, measure or quantify as even one can always self-

assess the very different aspects of it in themselves through tools! So Much more tangible! Empirical and quantitative!

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

Discussion and conclusions of the findings of this study shall be done based on the aforementioned below research questions alongside a number of thematic categorisations:

Table 1.

Research Questions

• In what ways did engaging in EP in the classroom influence teachers?
  ○ Impact on teaching and learning
  ▪ EP facilitates collaboration and interaction conducive of learning
  ○ Impact on self
  ▪ EP contributes to realisation and growth of one's self
  ○ Impact on identity
  ▪ EP helps surfacing and growth of one's identity
• What factors influenced their process of learning to do EP?
  ○ Institutional factors
  ▪ Institutions hinder or enhance PD
  ○ Professional and/or personal needs and aspirations
  ▪ Everyone is different
  ○ Mentor effect
  ▪ Mentors/Trainers make or ruin PD experience
  ○ Collegiality and cooperation among colleagues
  ▪ Teaching as a profession is also collective and collaborative

5.1 EP's influence on teachers

Analysis of the data revealed three major themes that were related to the influence of the EP engagement. These are as follows

5.1.1 Impact on teaching and learning. As all three of the participants pointed out time and again during a number of interviews that EP had immensely helped them construct a different practitioner for whom change, patience, adaptability and diversity were new and recurrent theme and acquisitions in their classrooms.

Teachers engage in PD activities, whether voluntarily or not, mainly to improve their teaching and learning practices and understandings. They may surely enhance their own teaching and learning spectrum by engaging in research, and teacher research might particularly be a good starting point (Smith, 2015a) as it enables them to investigate their own contexts, situations and problems (Hanks, 2015b). EP is aptly adoptable for such purposes for it primarily and overtly endeavours to yield an impact and change on teaching and learning process by integrating research and pedagogy (Allwright and Hanks, 2009) as well as encouraging practitioners to experiment and assimilate even further with this new perspective and insight into pedagogy-oriented research in their own classrooms; and this practice-into-theory (Farrell, 2014 & 2015) approach to teaching and learning process might imply and lead to even further mutual developments for both.

Amy had commendably not hesitated to exhaust her own schedule at school, already full to the gill, to make the most of this PD opportunity and experience visibly holding much less [teacher] resistance to work, change and PD in general for, as she too admitted, she was relatively both new at the post and in [teacher] research and PD initiatives. She boldly asserted "had it not been for EP and its positive and teacher-friendly nature in general as well as the mentors and my [her] partners in this group, like many of my [her] fellow friends and colleagues round, I [she] would have already as well begun to harbour negative feelings towards PD hence my [her]

almost first ever proper application, EP accordingly…" Smith (2015b) suggests many teachers often attach prejudices and negativity to PD paired with fear and stress and this is of course not different for teacher research from that perspective either. However, he adds this could be well dealt with if educators and policy makers make the right moves at the right time with mutual respect and trust.

When asked if and why and how she felt EP initially impacted the teaching and learning process, she briefly but heatedly submitted "…first, the opposite would surely be strange even for a teacher like me because a study practice as EP defining and locating itself in pedagogy-related research and PD stays true to its core creed from Day 1 by not letting research override teaching practice…" This was surely a very big statement from a teacher as a participant of a research study with the least amount of teaching and particularly almost no prior PD and research experience and once again perhaps more importantly proved that, as Cochrane-Smith and Lytle (2009) also point out, a teacher's intellectual depth and improvability does not solely lie in their mileage in teaching. She added she "…was surely and happily sharpening her teaching skills' whilst conducting this research study and doing it without 'having to go out of my [her] usual way" for data collection process and their analyses which, as she said she read about it and held no other prior [PD] experience to which she could compare it to, often might run the risk of rendering themselves "obsolete and detached."

When commenting on EP's primary impact on her learners and their learning, she underlined the fact that EP created an impeccable educational environment she had long lacked since her learners, as she chose to directly and honestly tell them of it and that they themselves noted, was learning and registering valuable educational experiences "beyond the everyday struggle and monotony of a language learning classroom in a school…" She reported her learners were suddenly spurred and extra motivated to even come to class, stay engaged and actively participate and she thought this to be a primary benefit of EP as it created a positive, dynamic, interactive and collaborative learning environment. She explained her learners' critical thinking skills as well as autonomy, agency and self-efficacy rose owing to the fact that each and every one of them felt an equal part of a bigger and more

important picture of language learning praxis (Day & Sachs, 2005) where "acting upon intrinsic and internal motivation" suddenly emerged and preceded all else possibly also due to the fact that the whole effort they were making would be further acknowledged eventually when they were to present their work and share them with a wider ELT community. She noted on this separately her learners were really appalled at first yet humbled later that they for the first time to date would be doing something really meaningful and relevant on the part of their FLL journey.

Notwithstanding, Amy noted though it was "monumentally challenging so also fun," she never really figured why at first they were specifically instructed to synchronise their EP studies and teaching syllabus preferably. She posited she found this aspect of EP possibly the biggest challenge ahead at first before the actual commencement of the study but said later it felt even worse as the study progressed and that she had to modify or refine her PEPAs so that not only would they help enhance the success of the study but they would contribute to good practice in class both separately and in conjunction with the flow and fluidity of every pedagogic activity (Allwright, 2003) and their second underlying aim. This must surely have clearly been one of the harshest reality checks and validations as to why and how she needed to refine herself and her teaching in order to both continue with her own agenda and her learners' non-identical expectations. She added her leaners and she eventually registered why this so-called seamless integration of pedagogic activities and the ongoing research. Notice:

> I know now why, after assessing learners' work and experiences, it was well worth all the time and energy invested in making all the in-class data-generating pedagogic activities as integrative as possible because without it my students' sense of accomplishment and self-actualisation, realisation would not be the same….

As both Zhang (2004) and Wu (2006) also claim for their own settings and learner and teacher types, for the teachers explored here, as they themselves testified, EP had borne immense and observable short-term improvements for their learners' immediate actual needs as its emphasis on integration of research and pedagogy and

its intensification made it plausible for them to capitalise on both the refinement of preliminary in-class pedagogy informed by their own true contextual puzzles as well as much needed research-based investigative rigour that led and further expanded the whole study even given they were working in a typicality of Eastern setting where collaboration through individualism have always been monitored to be much less abundant.

As Hanks (2017) suggests, teaching and learning acts are not just limited to individual or collective inquiries into pedagogy-related classroom problems or activities. She claims they perhaps more broadly encapsulate a much needed close relationship between teachers and learners acting as 'co-researchers' with mutual respect to establish genuine learning and teaching instances and experiences.

Gwen claimed the biggest improvement in her teaching to be, as she uttered perfunctorily, more self-aware and critically reflective about her own teaching (Larrivee, 2008) and her needs and good practice. She reported becoming much more meticulous as a planner but also much more laid-back in terms of adaptability and improvisation, much more quickly thinking and acting on her feet. She pointed out she felt "I [she] really was in the thick of things with the learners" – something she noted remarkably she had lacked for quite a long time. She added she also felt she became more open and approachable as a teacher, perhaps something she too lacked critically and reflectively before, and the fact that all these – thanks to EP – was making her feel she should do more and further about her learners' and her own professional or academic needs. Note:

> EP forever affected and perhaps changed my whole concept of PD, teacher research and inset training – as opposed to the generic and largely not useful input placed during most formal pre and/or in-service teacher education in academic circles – I think I was always a life-long learner but was not fully aware of it. But I am now…

She noted on the very and initial impact of EP on teaching and learning practices in or outside the language classroom that she observed in herself as a furtherance in her teaching a different dimension as "I [she] was already a different

practitioner, person from the first moment with all my new aspirations and point of view." She argued triangulated merger of research and pedagogy was really facilitative for her classes to become more engaging and her learners to be more engaged (Allwright & Hanks, 2009) and the fact that she felt "I [she] was not the only one who was donning another professional and academic hat."

She suggested this "multi-dimensional hat" they had worn was one of the biggest improvements for her learners and a validation point for her regarding her choice to be in the EP group and an extra motivation to continue to do it in the future. Note:

> …this new role meant for us all a whole new ball game even if we all readily and massively felt the pressure and responsibility as well as carrots and cakes that all laid ahead of us, however quite vaguely it had been most of the times… I'm sure every member of the group will testify they would like to do it again…

On the flip side, it must certainly have been clear this far that though she was the one with longest tenure and seniority and largest years of teaching and (teacher) research experience, Rita was also the one with most sceptism and prejudice against the study as mentioned earlier on. When asked directly during the exit interview about what she felt and what was new and exciting for her regarding her professional and personal development and if and how and why she improved her own practice, she still seemed slightly unconvinced yet to be going through a different phase of questioning this time. As Richards and Farrell (2005) also describe, she was perhaps recalibrating and reidentifying her teaching, her whole in-class modus operandi, and perhaps with difficulty different from the other two in comparison given her own unique teacher specifications. They note probably all teachers go through this phase of questioning regarding their PD and its furtherance and sustainability though maybe with different timelines and at different times as they shockingly realise their true capacity and potential but also their needs and shortcomings too. Maria Cardella-Elawar et al., 2007 claim this moment is perhaps one of the most critical for a teacher in their careers to cope with as it shall inform and affect career goals and

PD plans. It probably means for them to stay and fight or flight and leave. She [Rita] reported after all those years of conducting EP unawares and unofficially, she this time managed to capture a different but important dimension of her own teaching even though her officiated attempt this once had unfortunately not been as good as the ones experienced before. Note:

> …I was gobsmacked to have found that what I had been doing all this time was EP and not really AR. Maybe this validates my long-running point that that I was always doing it unofficially and without enough professional and/or academic support, I was yet somewhat managing it OK with my own capacity and understanding though maybe insufficiently or wrong. However, this year all-official else was there but the amateur joy and perfection and self-accomplishments! We, as teachers, must trust our instincts too…

As she further continued, Rita probably interestingly captured in the below quote of hers on the famous teacher learning and education and educational psychology paradigm/dichotomy of Bruning's (1994) of teachers knowledge bases and certain characteristics ascertained to those (p. 47). In the light Teachers probably become only more effective practitioners, as Rita also unconsciously mentioned, as they become more readily reflective with practice-into-theory PD tools as EP and this reflection is better and deeper rooted in the expansion of their procedural knowledge as apposed to declarative. Note:

> ...the problem here is not solely to do with EP since I'm still very much supportive of its integrity in terms of research and pedagogy. Maybe the more we learn about something formally and it becomes structured the more we do indeed lose about it and its know-how because amateur experimenting probably declines to a large extent! I think I'm a learner teacher that should do her trade free or further away from the shackles of formality…

On the contrary, she purported though she had long been somewhat unsure whether EP – engaging in teacher research – held a direct impact on the enhancement of teaching and learning in her classrooms, she said she had still observed it sealed perhaps many subordinate benefits that implicitly helped the language classroom

expand and grow with a reformation and restructuring of the roles within the classroom. Notice:

> …my learners as a result were much more appreciative thus committal not only because I was trying to excel my own practice each and every time I walked in to the classroom with a second aim but because, as they noted, I was giving them a chance to become a real part of the language learning classroom, and perhaps more importantly, to shift and upgrade from being passive recipients of language to active producers' of it...

When later asked to further expand on the above exchange, she also expediently noted she had long felt about her learners that, in addition to the aforementioned more easily observable outcomes and development, they became more capable to exist in a much more self-directed, autonomous and democratic learning environment where they "had to call the shots at most and suffer at times due to their own personal decision-making or poor judgment, therefore, taking real ownership of their own learning and selves…" She further elaborated on this arguing learners do not only learn by benefitting from academically fit and good practice (Borg, 2003) but even more so from a teacher and the environment they establish where there is true interaction, collaboration, problem-solving, critical thinking (Wyatt & Dikilitas, 2015) and thorough understanding, analysis, planning and execution of a goal, a task, or a project that are all prerequisite to higher-order thinking and achievement skills. Praising the overarching aim to cooperate, present and disseminate the end product – referring to the annual ELT conference presentations – both in a stylish yet academically competent way for learners it was both high-stakes and rewarding and interjected "…we definitely need more of these incentives and tests and they should be more systematic and learners becoming further in the foreground with more senior roles…" She indicated she thought these all to cater for a much richer, more genuine, meaningful and memorable high-standards teaching and learning.

5.1.2 Impact on self. Though this study had not originally set itself off to explore EP's impact on the concept of self, towards and at the end of it, it certainly and interestingly had to as data from the participants tacitly began to point towards that direction strongly. At first, it might seem confusing and unclear, however, two of the three participants indirectly referred aplenty to an incidental growth of self with its many a manifestation in the language and teaching classroom they observed happening thanks to the PD activity they were undertaking and had long felt its absence thereof.

Self is "a reference by an individual to the same individual person. This reference is necessarily subjective and it follows that self is a reference by a subject to the same subject" (2017, Self, Wikipeadia). In a broader sense, as Epstein (1973) cites Allport's (1955) redefinition of it, apart from all the bound subcategories it might carry, self is the "proprium", which encapsulates "all the regions of our life that we regard as peculiarly ours" [p. 40]. This being then is perhaps in constant interaction and relationship with other internal and external factors. As epistemology and ontology have long both strived to define and harness this problematic concept, they also perhaps have long contributed non-deliberately to the further mystification of it on the contrary.

In education and more strictly speaking, teacher education and learning, concept of self, though similarly but through a much more limited glance, is referred to for example by Burns (1982) as one's [a practitioner's] many a manifestation and furtherance of professional/personal being and doing, and in addition by Guskey (1988) as its realisation and continuity [by oneself] through various tools and abilities that help connect teachers with their learners and the learning process itself as well. Nonetheless, they both argue this is a slippery yet significant concept and always causes internal or external conflicts or validations for teachers. However, they also stress this should be regarded as top priority whilst referring to constructing any framework that is in search and effort of teacher and/or learner education and development.

Smith (1996) discusses in an earlier work of his on teacher cognition, teacher-self and its formation that perhaps teachers often (re)construct and develop their teacher-selves unfettered from any categorisation so each teacher presents a unique case of their own. Still, Day and Sachs (2005) [cited in Cochrane-Smith & Lytle, 1999], in addition to the three categories of knowledge – knowledge in, on and for practice – in terms of teachers' learning and development put forth then (by Cochrane-Smith & Lytle), suggest another – knowledge of self: "Generated by teachers engaging regularly in reflection in, on and about their values, purposes, emotions and relationships" (p. 9).

Remember that Gwen had reported a sheer emergence of an "ethereal being" as a concept she said she observed anew; "…thanks to EP, particularly in terms of its pedagogy-fuelled research approach, I [she] was becoming more and more aware of myself [herself] and everything I [she] am [is] able to and could do that was lying ahead of me [her] bare even if it is hard to capture or express it… I know it's there and believe this was no different for my [her] students! Our many different learning and teaching and professional and personal and academic sides do exist and do and can come out when appropriately tapped or nourished and I certainly do like this new and radical self of mine and my learners as it feels I'm getting closer to the teacher I've always wanted to be…" She added she was adamant she would never accomplish and finalise the study had it not been for her students too, however, she noted she believed it ultimately was anchored to the fact that "this new resilient side of me [her] would not give up no matter how tough the going got!" She possibly and interestingly meant here inquiry and pedagogy-oriented PD activities as EP might have paved the way for the (re)emergence and sustainability alongside calibration and/or gradual fine-tuning of her professional and personal self – hence very being and existence – as a merger whilst teacher researching. If not, she perhaps then meant a number of pedagogical manifestations and epiphanies that thrust language teaching and learning and constituent experience immensely occurred in the language classroom out of sheer luck or causality.

Though no participants generated data regarding their self concepts with reference to L2 teacher education and learning, Kubanyiova (2009) chooses to

categorically distinguish second language teacher education and learning so motivation, psychology and concept of self and its formation from that of the first language in that the former introduces an extra refinement and professional development challenge for the exponents since they first and foremost may have to overcome a language barrier as well as a skills wall which is questionably yet inseparably attached to the profession and which also might hinder [or reinforce] the cognition, knowledge and experience transmission of an educator's and their own identification of themselves in terms of self concepts in language learning and teaching process and continuum. On that note, this might then affect a teacher's entire self and identity re(construction) and development given when they are teaching or themselves learning, and/or go out into the real world, this somewhat will always have to be put to test and this altogether might solely turn into another great source of discomfort or advantage.

Educational psychologists studying teacher behaviour such as Zimmerman (2000) and Bong and Skaalvik (2003), on the other hand, in line with Bandura's social cognitive theory and in response to their predecessors, Burns (1982) and Marsh and Shavelson's (1985) early categorisation, argue self-concept, though deceptively similar, is different from self-efficacy in that it solely marks the struggle and negotiation between the actual self and ideal self that have dimensions and implications such as self-image and self-knowledge that is reconciled and interlinked with how others also perceive one as much as they themselves. As the word suggests, the former refers to the real or present day evolving self-concept of one while the latter the idealised yet perhaps inaccurate but yearned thus not so bad manifestation of one's being and/or self-concept that might thus directly affect performativity, employability and self-efficacy.

Rita asserted in the ultimate exit interview that though elusively, indirectly and incidentally and not for the first time [yet with much better clarity this once perhaps] she incidentally observed in herself, as Cochrane-Smith and Lytle (1999) also argue, many different manifestations of the said concept of due to the fact that "…EP possibly helped create, unearth or hone the already existent many visions of my [her] teaching and learning self". Regarding teacher learning and development,

she listed these as many concepts [words] as beginning with the affixation of self such as "self-efficacy, self-worth, self-help, self-esteem, self-confidence, self-starting, self-directed." She said she had observed throughout the study much of this unleash and develop in her students hinting EP helped their concept of self that is learner self evolve too. She noted though again elusive if not non-existent she believed developments and different manifestations in self is probably possible to capture and measure using interviews and surveys with learners or teachers, case study analysis and self-assessment. There are for instance a number of more recent studies that thrive to capture this using similar methodology (see for instance Wyatt & Dikilitas, 2015; Dikilitas & Griffiths, 2017). What is more, and perhaps equally important, she noted she had to date observed two types of teachers with regards to their concept of professionalism thus CPD as well as their professional and personal existence in the workplace: one that is aware of it and open to change and one that is unfortunately not. She retorted "be it resistance, fear or ignorance, in my experience, the latter's character is not very easy to work with."

Mercer (2011) submits she thinks the concept of self for teachers still needs a fuller and more holistic approach when taken from the perspective of teachers' educational and professional development needs and aptitudes. She talks (2017) about two different aspects of teacher mind-sets in regards to the concept of self and teacher education that are open or closed to thus facilitative or inhibitive of learning and development: fixed mindset and growth mindset. She describes the latter of a teacher's as embracing change and gaining new learning and/or experience with a can-do and collaborative attitude while the former as futile and/or short-sighted and resistant to or rejecting or being afraid of change and/or advancement and collaboration with a know-it-all and hampering attitude. She notes though these two mindsets are never irreversible, as they are directly linked with the notion and concept of self and maybe often held unconsciously, are hard to get to and/or influence and that everybody has a different unique concept of self – self-concept.

But what was the deeper relationship between all the above and teaching and learning and self? The employability or performativity of a newly qualified inexperienced or experienced teacher or educator – as in many other professions –

perhaps does not lay in their qualifications or tenure but their potential or impetus and love for the profession and its genuine expansion and furtherance and this is harder to ignore (Mercer, 2014). Malderez et al. (2014) argue teachers, mentors and/or teacher trainers perhaps actually all educators should bear in mind as seen in most other professions that becoming and developing as a teacher is a long and gruelling way and carries with it all its imperfections yet needs growing and this growth needs be cherished, facilitated and supported collectively.

Maclure (1993), Dörnyei and Ushioda (2009) and Kubanyiova (2014) all stress the importance and power of [teacher] membership, readership and positive self establishment and continuity in professional development activities and teacher education that both greatly reinforce motivation and reward boosting self-worth and professional identification while reducing incompatibility and resistance as teachers begin to feel "accepted." Both Gwen and Rita reported, though they had not originally envisaged to, they enjoyed to have found such a novel state of professional and academic self in themselves. Rita stated on this new self that "it was both striving to feed and be fed from a mutually beneficial and collective channel that was making learning and teaching even further possible and further-reaching;" and Gwen remarkably underlined the fact about that "its effects was beyond the group then in terms of impact areas for them, their learners, colleagues and institution and that this should probably earn EP a different level of merit."

Though Amy never mentioned anything regarding the knowledge and (re)reconstruction of self or as such implicitly or explicitly maybe since she was never directly asked so, it would still be largely unfair to claim this as well might have to do with her limited experience in research and teaching since she was forging her own self as well, though at really initial stages, and this was maybe as or even more critical so deserves a thorough investigation separate to this study.

Separate but incidentally linked to this, she also noted in one of the interviews that she witnessed great rise in production and sharing as she befriended almost all of her colleagues from EP group on social media and that together they also had started a Whatsapp group to this end. She submitted she had observed

substantial increase in motivation and participation as well as in interaction and team-work successfully offsetting conflicts such as output generation and role allocation. She said she experienced a similar trend and outcome with her learners during the EP study they had carried out enhancing collaboration, agency, autonomy, ownership and membership. She said her students commented that they saw her "just as one of them" regardless. In parallel to this, the concept of self-disclosure with regards to teachers' professional and personal selves and their different and genuine manifestations and continuity, an interesting research carried out by Mazer et al. (2007), particularly with reference to teachers' presence on social media and their use of it and the impact of it on learners' understanding of their [teachers'] self and identity captures many a strata. According to this research, learner resistance and reticence were both seen to drop considerably while participation, production and collaboration substantially rose in or outside the classroom of those teachers who were actively using social media for pedagogic purposes and allowed their learners to become a true part of their lives outside the classroom, particularly on micro-blogging websites such as Facebook.

5.1.3 Impact on identity. Roth (2003, p. 8) argues identity marks "a being in continuous becoming." Thus – just like the concept of self discussed above – it must be in constant relationship [and perhaps controversy] with both internal and external factors such as teaching standards, histories, bios and beliefs and workplaces. To Duffy et al. (2009), it is also about metacognitive processes teachers undergo in or outside the classroom since metacognition hallmarks a teacher's cognitive ability and beyond to mediate and regulate internal and external conflicts and affects. Coldron and Smith (1999) remarkably note it might also involve a thorough understanding of and by other and their perspectives too since it might mean whether a teacher sees themselves as one, or is seen as such by others – such as their colleagues, learners, administrators, etc. – as well as forging and promoting a totally and truly socially legitimate new conception of existence. In the light of these, this paper intends to explore the concept of identity and impact any PD activity might wreak on it separate from the concept of self – mentioned likewise above by Coldron and Smith (1999) and implied by Rita during the data collection interviews.

Here it is probably essential to also view a little back catalogue of teaching schools of thought from all supportive humanistic and cultural to cognitivist and constructivist theories of teaching and learning some of which for instance limit the role and definition of a teacher – thus somewhat their identity – to the provision of teaching and learning duties only though so inept to interaction and real communication as opposed to interactionists' points of view while some others expand it such as socio-constructivist theory – as seen in Vygotsky's and Halliday's – arguing teachers are an integral part of the social environment they teach and learn and that that widely is a constructed social and cultural phenomenon (Wells, 1999, p. 6).

Teachers' professional and teaching selves and their construction and reconstruction play a key role in their decision not only to become teachers but "to stay in the profession" as well (Maria Cardella-Elawar et al., 2007). On the other hand, Graham and Phelps (2003) and Zembylas (2003a), referring to importance of reflection and metacognition, posit, after initial training, teachers constantly develop through metacognitive and reflective learning processes and that these are key to self-regulated teacher education. To Boekaerts (1997), Schunk and Zimmerman (1998) and Butler et al. (2004), self-regulated learning [and teaching] should be regarded as one of the most important of a teacher's craft – teacherness – and its continuity. Self-regulation of a teacher's is then perhaps the ability of them to learn then perhaps also teach with the aim to impart knowledge and experiments as well as experience shielded from (over)reliance to unquestioning generic praxis.

Back to criticality of reflective practice [and metacognition] of teachers', many scholars such as Graham and Phelps (2003) and Tom (1985) draw unyielding attention to the very relationship between self-oriented learning and teachers' identity construction in an attempt to fill the gap particularly in in-service teacher education that overshadows the pre-eminence of inquiry-oriented and self-regulatory PD, and as referred to by many aplenty more recently and as this paper places in its core, teacher research – and certainly EP in particular. Allwright (2003) and Allwright and Hanks (2009) argue teacher research and particularly EP equips teachers and potentially their learners with a sense of self-directed pedagogic

necessity to investigate that is key to the enhancement of learning and teaching. Hanks (2015b) aptly asserts EP – and broadly other similar forms of teacher research – renders the teacher 'a continuous learner' thus the learning process itself [of which a teacher is involved as well as learners] "a continuous enterprise" carving out a quintessential part of learner and teacher identity in learning action.

The argument of concept of self and identity, their creation, realisation and/or development and their very relationship with PD and teacher and/or learner education is surely not a virgin territory in ELT circles. However, separating them from each other as two distinct yet inextricable entities in terms of impact areas in language learning/teaching process and continuum perhaps is and might encounter scepticism. Varghese et al. (2000 & 2004), Beijaard et al. (2005), Beauchamp and Thomas (2009) and Sachs (2001) along with many others have all to date pointed to the importance of teachers' construction of a professional identity and its influence on both their learners and themselves and others directly or indirectly linked with them in the wide or close periphery such as policy-makers, school administrators, parents, audit mechanisms etc.; as well as schools and wider decision-makers' support, involvement or hindrance in terms of identification of needs and differences and provision of support.

Apart from Amy – who yet again mentioned or implied nearly nothing that could have been read to that end – both other teachers, though they again were never directly asked to comment on this phenomenon, argued inquiry or problem based learning/teaching and PD activities such as EP in general perhaps create supportive contexts and environments that help facilitate identity (re)construction and development of teachers. Gwen suggested "whilst researching in the class as a practitioner, teacher, I [she] also had to don another hat I [she] had not before…" She said "the development of it [a new identity] is a very important psychological factor both in the development of teachers' and learners' efficacy, autonomy, reflection, agency and critical thinking skills…" She claimed vehemently that 'a teacher definitely needed development of their many identities' to become better teachers and professionals. She was possibly pointing to the construction of a professional identity by teachers with the help of PD organised by institutions and/or pursued by

teachers themselves. She said she believed organisations factored in greatly in the equation here and that, contrary to her limited but palatable past experience, she was so happy to be among teachers whose PD needs is "well taken care of." However, Rita had a completely different take on this though she mostly reported similar developments and manifestations too. She stressed yet again she thought all the improvements in herself professionally and personally to be incidental or indirect, and unlike the argument of concept of self, as she contrasted, almost impossible to generalise or replicate since, to her, concept of identity is more uncomfortable, yet immeasurable thus non-documentable perhaps because it is more external and has to do more or as much with how others also identify and perceive one [as a teacher]. It is true and there is perhaps really no research tool or approach to capture it. Notice:

> …At first, I readily felt I could and probably should do this [EP and teacher research] every year. But after a while, I came to the realisation that getting involved in teacher research was almost nothing more than self-promotion. I was the innovative edgy respectable teacher in my learners' eyes; a critical and knowledgeable buddy in my colleagues'; and conscientious commendable teacher in the management's. However, there was a growing distaste and lack of self-actualisation going on for me behind the scenes away from all prying eye…Gradually, I was constructing a new diabolical self or perhaps identity mostly regulated by others and impossible to put to test…

She further talked on the concept and problem of identity and teacher education relationship battering EP and as such noting "a friend of mine [hers] has a very good exemplification of this whole concept. She thinks this whole teacher research thing is just nothing more than a gig, a spiel for self-promotion and an ace up one's sleeve when sat at the appraisal table…And no one would bravely vocalise this but exploit. How can you figure or quantify this then?"

Teachers (re)construct their identities non-stop, some consciously, some more often than not unconsciously and maybe till or after a point that encompasses lots of cognitive yet humane factors such as love or dislike [or both] for their learners, their work and maybe colleagues (Mercer, 2017). Furthermore, Zembylas (2003b), also

drawing attention to the salience of emotion, insists teachers should not be expected to forge their professional identity free from their feelings perhaps often lying deep underground even in the unconscious or subconscious. Yet, as Rita perhaps subtly and aptly suggested, identity might but should not be limited to this as it is moulded and reshaped differently time and again for every teacher depending on their teaching and teacher schema.

In fact, a teacher's identity even separate from their self is already certainly complicated and probably presents multi dimensions and facets; at least a teacher's identity in the class and outside as they will both constantly perhaps feed each other or stay in conflict. Also, rules of society have historically bode teachers well but have long tasked them at the same time with a holly but complicated and stressful duty (Malderez & Wedell, 2007) to take active part in a learner's development and more seriously in its longitudinal planning, assessment and refinement. This notion might be at work for a number of teachers when they identify themselves as often identified by others as such and maybe it is one of the most underrated, underexplored and underdiscovered but also most rewarding side of teaching one can as well choose to do thanks to this.

Day and Sachs (2005) (cited in Hargreaves, 1994) capture on the identity concept of teaching profession and emotion relationship the following perfectly:

> Good teaching is charged with positive emotion. It is not just a matter of knowing one's subject, being efficient, having the correct competencies, or learning all the right techniques. Good teachers are . . . passionate beings who connect with their students and fill their work and their classes with pleasure, creativity and joy . . . (p. 835).

5.2 Factors influencing teachers' process of learning to do EP

5.2.1 Institutional Factors. As mentioned before, all three of the teachers were from the same institution and carried out their studies as part of a mandatory in-house professional development scheme supported and supervised by the PDU and appraised by the management at the end of the academic calendar in question. Based on the findings of the collective case studies used in this research study, there were mainly two views:

a Institutional intervention rendering the studies non-optional [as opposed to voluntary] seen as restrictive; as can be seen in Rita's case

b Institutional intervention rendering the studies non-optional seen as normal and facilitative; as can be seen in Amy and Gwen's cases

Both Amy and Gwen, with less than 5 years and around 5 years-experience respectively, stated both during the post-study interviews and ante-study tutorials that though they had never been part of such a scheme before so were slightly unsure, they did not see the mandated nature of the studies as restrictive, and Gwen also claimed it must be seen as normal since "…teachers need inset training as part of their PD no matter how educated or experienced they might be…" and she pointed vehemently to the fact that if given the option "no one would do it otherwise unfortunately…" Amy said she saw the whole scheme as "a springboard for herself," and Gwen as 'yet another but vital starting point' and both added they had no prior experience to which they can really compare it but thanked the PDU and management for providing them with such an opportunity for personal and professional growth (Wyatt, 2011).

To Huberman (1995) and Sugrue (2008), there is a certain and important relationship [as well as a struggle and tension] between teacher learning and professionalism and continuous professional development (CPD), and institutional expectations and agendas may often differ from and conflict with those greatly. Day and Sachs (2005) (cited in Hargreaves, 1994) claim a new model of professionalism

for teachers is definitely required to meet the challenges and expectations of teaching future generations:

> To improve schools, one must be prepared to invest in professional development; to improve teachers, their professional development must be set within the context of institutional development (p. 8).

With regards to changing climate of the concept of professionalism and CPD of teachers in 21st century, they argue two major different premises come to view more recently: managerial professionalism and democratic professionalism [cited in Brennan, 1996; Clarke & Newman, 1997; Apple, 1996; Brennan, 1996 respectively] (p. 5), and CPD has become a routine part of a teacher's life today and is no longer a choice at will anymore but rather "an expectation, a must" (p. 8).

One could easily claim, "however, the harsh reality is that CPD in such cases is too often largely a waste of time" (Borg, 2015, p. 5) as, to Sugrue (2005), Burns (2009) and Cochrane-Smith and Lytle (1999) too, it should be down to an individual's choice to first acknowledge their needs then agree and accept the ways in which they would be ready to embrace and seek ways to facilitate change and new learning. As with Rita, with substantial experience in teacher research on top of over 10 years' teaching experience, and who also had carried out similar studies on a voluntary [optional] basis at the same institution before, she stated and maintained in the same interviews that she definitely and largely saw these programmes altogether as restrictive no matter how well-intentioned or planned they might be since they discard "freedom to choose or reject." She said they, as teachers, are already "time-crunched" with lots of expectations and regular everyday teaching duties such as planning, teaching, invigilating exams and grading students work, therefore, alongside all these a mandated PD – "no matter how beneficial it might be" – is *"*a complete turn-off," "an icing on top" of their already depressingly busy and dry lives. She also importantly suggested "we [they] must be freed from any power struggles and politicisation so that we [they] can really commit themselves to and concentrate on their work."

In the light of the abovementioned accounts of the teachers and coherent literature on it, it may well be argued teachers at the beginning of their career or an early positive midst [as Amy and Gwen] in terms of the phase of career they go through (see Day & Sachs, 2005) with different types of motivation tend to become more enthusiastic and diligent often fully complying with the rules of the external authority and being more cooperative. On the other hand, as tenure and experience in their professions rise and they become more and more knowledgeable, teachers, much less worried about acceptance yet maybe due to plateauing, tend to likely create internal or external more conflicts wanting to break away from authority and demanding more teacher autonomy (Smith, 2000), however, perhaps at the same time at the risk and expense of marginalisation and/or conservatism.

5.2.2 Professional and/or personal needs and aspirations. When it came to professional and/or personal needs and aspirations, as could be expected, Rita's engagement in EP again differed from the other two greatly. For one thing, as mentioned before, she is an educator with plenty of experience and history both in (teacher) research and teaching, thus holding different dimensions and propositions as to and seeks different opportunities for professional development (PROdev) and personal development (PERdev). What is more, since she had formerly carried out PD on a voluntary basis at the same institution, she held a solid ground for arguments regarding conflict, membership and stagnation encompassing institutional PD efforts too. Further, her role in this PD drive had been beyond a participant's only again thanks to the sheer qualities she came to possess acting as a de facto or surrogate head or a critical friend to her colleagues.

As she pointed out during the post-study interview that she had tried EP unofficially or informally before, however, at her behest so this time longed to be part of an intimate group with the opportunity and loci of furthering her PD needs and aspirations. She humbly noted during the pre-study, on the contrary, that she did not see herself as "a teacher with lots of experience" and rather saw herself as "a teacher with still little experience to date" or "a continuous learner," a concept also introduced by Allwright and Hanks (2009, p. 2), and that she sought "…an opportunity to really delve into my [her] own weaknesses and strengths even as a so-

called more experienced teacher…perhaps with the help of this fairly new form practitioner research boasting pedagogy in its core…" She asserted, when she says weaknesses and strengths, she was not only referring to generic yet superficial teaching and learning creeds she might have already substantially improved as a teacher with substantial experience – even though she did not primarily chose to major in ELT – but rather reactionary or non-reactionary interventions and more subtle underlying teaching and learning nuances and capacities (Farrell, 2014) as, she noted, "…learner-teacher interaction, learner autonomy and self-efficacy and mentoring or coaching motivational and personal issues that largely were not always necessarily in the trajectory or itinerary of formal teacher education courses I [she] had done that far yet revolve round my [her] language classroom every day..."

Fullan (1992) argues change is "a double-edged sword" that for teachers often infuses mixed feelings and is often evocative as it taps into emotions of the subject. Incidentally, Malderez (2009) claims it should perhaps be seen as normal for teachers often at the beginning of their careers or with limited experience and tenure to be less resistant to institutional or pedagogic challenges or pressure and show passive resistance since their first and foremost goal is to be accepted and that they are often driven or enthuse by a motive to facilitate change or at least have a go at it.

Richards and Farrell (2005) and Richards and Lockhart (1994) posit pointing to the differing PD needs of teachers that too often than not overtly generic and simplistic one-shot workshops (Borg, 2015) and plethora of different types professional development activities do not go beyond scratching only the surface and fail to address a teacher's real needs often altogether disregarding their backgrounds biographies and time and person-specific goals and expectations in any given specific context. They instead propose establishing teacher networks (Smith & Kuchah, 2016) and a culture of learning for instance – as is the case in Australian primary, secondary and even tertiary education teacher education and professional development – that constantly gather and share with same aspirations, needs and problems through a real sense of collegiality and trust at any given institution or across the country or globe even perhaps facilitating online collaboration in the 21st century teaching and learning if need be. To Borg (2010), Allwright (2005), Burns

(2009) and Dudley (2011) that is precisely why teacher research might come handy as it offers a viable ongoing alternative and strives to liberate teachers (Wyatt & Dikilitaş, 2016) from these generic and inconclusive and non-practice-into-theory forms and applications of inset training.

Though mostly positive, Gwen and Amy still held different views to PROdev and PERdev in general again in conjunction with what has already been discussed above in terms of professionalism and professional development. During reflection statements following participant observations as well as tutorials, realised and reaffirmed time and again and made notes for that, even compared to Gwen, Amy, possibly because she had much limited experience in the profession of teaching and (teacher) research and admitted to without questioning her imminent case and need to develop, held far fewer prejudices both against the pilot study that was taking place and PD in general so teacher resistance she came to harbour was much less or almost non-existent. She noted she "was really happy to have chosen to be working at this institution where PD seen as commonplace and ordinary" providing a great opportunity particularly for more novice teachers like her who first and foremost need to improve and refine their good practice and pedagogy-related but individual and non-global weaknesses for instance giving students more efficient written and/or oral feedback or fostering effective presentation skills required at tertiary level.

On the other hand, though still substantially unlike Rita, and much more like Amy, Gwen, reinstating in a sense that a teacher constantly needs to develop themselves "no matter how experienced and qualified they might be," was much more quizzical regarding the framework or theoretical pedestals in use and their validity and reliability bearing on her past experiences and practice in post-graduate studies and research in ELT at other institutions. Notice:

> …I believe the strongest form of PD is real classroom experience and experimentation and thanks to this I have improved my teaching a lot over the years. However, I'm also very well aware of the fact that there is still copious amount of development I need to go thorough and each might be all relevant and impact-yielding in my setting in terms of their doctrinal or

framework-related aspects. Take for instance, helping and guiding learners with fostering extensive learning habits and opportunities – one of my all time favourites and one I still need substantial effort in. I would not like to have to engage to sort out some or many of these as such in a way I do not have a say in it, though…

So, after all, as all three teachers make a compelling case in this study, there can never be a one-size-fits all approach to PD needs and preferences of teachers in an institution and its mere delivery. Yet, what is really at work here or in the way and that it is not always possible to work at ease with all these teachers – just like students – for a collective and mutual benefit with differing experience, tenure, expectations, needs, strengths and weaknesses, aspirations, beliefs and traits just like in any setting where learning is taking place and when the disturbing reality is that they are more often than not on their own after the door is closed behind each and every one of them.

5.2.3. Mentor effect. As mentioned before the two mentors were co-leading and mentoring through a pilot study scheme as part of inset training a small group of mentee teachers for most of whom EP was a virgin territory following a local workshop the mentors had recently attended and for which they were later tasked to do this as a follow up.

Pointing to the importance of mentor-supported growth, Dikilitas and Mumford (2016) and Dikilitas (2013) both state similarly that mentor-teacher relationship in an educational setting is so important that not only does it affect an individual teacher's motivation, success and study experience but the whole group dynamic if collective and their understandings that is more often than not more critical in creating truly collaborative and expansive educational environments.

Referring to the systematic psychological support and direction they received with regards to morale, motivation and resilience-yielding role of mentors in their self-regulated learning (Perry & Phillips, 2006), Gwen wanted to note in two separate post-lesson reflection statements and the tutorials following those that "had it not been for the mentors, my study would never have come this far…I'd have long

given up. Thanks very much for not giving up on us…" Further, she noted on the embracement of their individualities and diversities and meeting of their differing needs that she said was a 'thrusting power' when desperation and helplessness surrounded the work and whole efforts that "I [she] worked at two similar institutions and with other trainers/mentors before but never ever had I got this much support and encouragement from anyone; particularly this detailed and individual and tailored…"

The two mentors' role in the start, development and resolution of this study was undoubtedly tremendous,' Rita stated in the exit interview referring to and underlining the mentors' hard work, dedication and professionalism that she felt was totally different for her in that it catered further dedication and motivation to the group dynamics. Notice:

> …I've had a chance to work with several other mentors before but none was this flexible, rigorous, ready and innovative particularly in terms of finding, collating and catering the most up-to-date research and material we needed despite their lack of experience and busy schedules and the fact that they were always ready to go out of their way to help someone even if they were not in their EP group or their personal appointments…

On the other hand, Rita also noted a problem regarding mentor and mentee relationship she had observed before that she felt it should perhaps be done within a balance, a combination of sufficient humility and approachability and distance so professionalism and non-biasedness. She said some of her past experiences either lacked the former that created a tumultuous group dynamic with a great deal of conflicts or latter that also rendered the whole efforts still inconclusive or incomplete or lack of sufficient rigour (Cullingford, 2016) after a while. She claimed the case now was a good balance. However, she later importantly added the most prevailing lack of support for her in this whole study was probably during the presentation and write-up stages of the work during which mentors were too busy with organisational issues regarding the conference or that they were simply inexperienced in providing support and guidance for a research study this calibre and depth.

Tomlinson (1996) discusses varying types of mentor roles and support and their categorical differences and that from a managerial point of view each might have a different impact on the systematic development and progress of a mentee teacher when taking into account differing work contexts, educational needs and teacher bios and beliefs. To Strong (2009), schools should pay careful attention to such details when designing and implementing induction and mentoring schemes preferably within the school in order that they receive realisable outcomes.

In close conjunction with what Rita stated, Amy praised the mentors' supportive, facilitative and catalytical attitude [as well as effectiveness of the whole structure of the programme they used] noting "I [she] was absolutely gutted by the really down-to-earth, relaxed and unbiased attitude and robustness of their agenda" she had observed throughout the entire study that she believed "had a huge part in the success of this whole work" in general. She argued this was even felt by the students despite their limited actual contact with the mentors as well as during the presentations at the conference by the goers during sessions where they had a chance to send and receive tributes and references to the mentors. As Fletcher and Mullen (2012) also suggest, she pointed to and praised the 'incredibly democratic coaching attitude beyond a classic mentor-mentee relationship' the mentors adopted that was even interesting and ironic more so in an environment where PD was mandated.

More recently, the world of education, much later than the fields of sports and business management surprisingly, is finally beginning to acknowledge the difference between mentoring and coaching. Mentoring is perhaps a structured educational or training-related relationship between a mentor – the more experienced, skilled or crafted master – and mentee – apprentice – that flows in an uneven course often to the mentor's – advantage. As Amy perhaps also insinuated, coaching is very different from mentoring in that it provides the person being coached with a much more even playing field in which they retain full control, say and involvement in decision-making and future planning even though the discussion is often still initiated or led by the coach. Unlike mentoring, it is not based on performativity or employability but mutual understanding, respect and true

collaboration and team-work in identification and tackling a problem or setting goals free from judgments and hierarchy (2014, Coaching vs. Mentoring, The Guardian).

5.2.4 Collegiality and Cooperation among colleagues. Though it was mandated, all three of the teachers time and again praised the long-running PD culture and tradition at the institution as being positive, supportive thus facilitative. They all underlined the fact that this kind of setting is motivating and conducive of [if not also challenging] change and progress no matter how much pressure is mounted from time to time.

Collegiality and a progressive inset culture and tradition have often probably been of the utmost importance for programme leaders planning to initiate a PD platform (Little, 1982) at an institution irrespective of line of work. They often always strive and sometimes with difficulty and against resistance to create such an environment where teachers could be motivated intrinsically to develop naturally

Hanks (2015b) suggests, as part of its seven core principles (see Allwright & Hanks, 2009; Hanks, 2015b & 2017), EP has perhaps certainly always been aware of the criticality of collaboration and collegiality within an inset environment – though perhaps not just limited to it – and positioned itself to claim to naturally insert the two into the setting equipping its participants – teachers and learners often working together as co-researchers – with the right pedagogic tools and perspectives in the right environment to investigate to reach a deeper analysis and understanding of a problem or puzzle of their own.

Both Gwen and Amy noted during the pre-interviews that, as they were both only at the post for a limited time, they still remembered their job application process and how they were asked in front of the managerial board alongside a prerequisite written task many questions in an effort to assess their perceptions to PD in general as well as their history in that. Amy noted she had remembered discussing this aspect of the school with other candidates – one of them would ironically be her old friend and future colleague there Gwen that she had met after a long time but neither knew about it then of course – in the waiting room whilst they were waiting for their turn for a job interview. Note:

> …we were all waiting in that meeting room for our turn then as we did, we were all asked to pick two strips of paper from a transparent jar which contained questions regarding PD nearly without an exception for us all. That of course told all of us wonders about PD situation here…

Gwen indicated she was really impressed but worried at the same time as she remembered feeling a strong anxiety for achievement even before being appointed into the post as she knew there were clearly some high standards and expectations and she "would need to live up to them." On the other hand, she asserted she still remembers feeling really impressed even in her first official week when a general plenary induction and PD week was organised by the school as every year and that it felt more like a "funfair."

They both reported this very same and genuine progress culture (Sergiovanni, 1992) they had observed to be still prevalent even long after the core groups had begun to work separately and that it was not only limited to their group. Referring the structured PD scheme at the institution and the PD Fridays and inset days, Gwen said the following during her exit interview:

> …what was even more interesting to see was the fact that the clearly visible PD culture and traiditon at the school was not only limited to teacher induction week at the start of the first term or our baby EP group. It was always around in the corridors during almost all the academic year. This was a real big shock for me...

When later asked specifically about EP's impact in terms of collegiality and collaboration Amy said "…I'm not too surprised EP is well working here and already fitting into the institutional PD scheme perfectly. It should perhaps be tried at institutions like my old institution where PD was an unworking mechanism thus seen mostly as burden by most."

For Rita, the case was different again since she had been working at the institution for much longer as one of the founding teachers within a much smaller group that widely changed over time. As mentioned before, she was also a surrogate

leader or critical friend though never officially. She explained this culture and environment of collegiality was regardless positively feeding the institutional PD drive. She reported she witnessed first hand that it took really long to establish and more importantly to sustain yet was working greatly. She interestingly noted "EP was definitely the perfect choice for their climate" and said "it provided teachers particularly the novice teachers with such a perfect environment and a natural proposition that they would all have to engage in PD and to network and cooperate (Hargreaves, 2000) and really strive and rethink good practice and dissemination of it through pedagogy and collaboration." She also noted she did indeed observe over time how some teachers for whom PD perhaps was not a priority and maybe even a burden had to either choose to change their perspectives or the work place.

Perhaps the recent mandated compelling nature of PD at the institution was slightly less visible among EP group as it was much smaller and being piloted for the first time thus everything was perhaps much more relaxed as the participants also agreed and all this maybe naturally gave way to further motivation and excitement on the part of the annual international ELT conference not only because did some of the students work in the conference organising committee voluntarily but this also created a virgin territory for some teachers like Gwen and Amy who had never had such an opportunity before.

5.3 Implications

Implications shall be suggested as recommendations from the perspectives of institutions and administrators, teachers and teacher trainers/mentors as well as further recommendations for similar future studies.

5.3.1 Implications for institutions and administrators. As Day and Sachs (2005) state, CPD is perhaps undoubtedly necessary for any professional [as it is for teachers] in the current climate yet certainly need not be mandated in order that it might yield better results. PD programmes, inset training and perhaps more importantly an educational setting at an institution that mandate their teachers do something against their will for instcance undertake CPD no matter what are

probably to generate nothing but new or further problems only since they fail to capture a very important aspect of both organisational and human behavior and nature, that is free will and democracy (Dewey, 1935), which are merely essential for a undesirable change and development. As mentioned before, Borg (2015) bitterly claims such programmes are generally just nothing but a huge "waste of time!"

Across the world, many institutions and managers' take on CPD is often quite different from that of teachers'. Managerial professionalism, as mentioned above, often adopted expediently in lieu of democratic professionalism, dictates CPD is necessary, but more importantly, should perhaps be mandated in order that it shall be easier to ensure it is carried out much more widely at an institution (Brennan, 1996). Of course one common yet controversial way of ensuring this is to sync it with appraisal systems and oblige teachers (Simmons, 2002) to continue to do it to be able to keep their jobs. On the other hand, again as mentioned above, democratic professionalism, which interestingly had come into view older than its counterpart, believes it should not be in an institution's best interest to compel their workforce to something extra for instance to engage in CPD to develop professionally, though it still does view it as a necessity likewise, and promote it as an only viable means of progression (Apple, 1996) since any initiative as such will consequently probably be doing so without the teachers' full unfettered backing or consent thus is possibly deemed to have no or limited impact.

As the participating teachers all pointed out, so also Smith (2015c), Richards and Farrell (2005) and Borg (2003) do, an educational and working environment where PD is seen necessary but not mandatory and perhaps more self-directed is perhaps much more conducive of it. A lot of schools, as we know it, invest substantial and finite resources such as time, money and labour into ensuring their teachers do develop themselves professionally and personally but only a handful do indeed succeed and more importantly succeed in rendering humane examples and provide their teachers with more freedom and variety for their wellbeing. It may often take for a certain institution to have to wait for years before there grows and sustains a genuinely natural culture and tradition of PD. Nonetheless, this automaticity will never grow yet they need to start somewhere somehow regardless.

Perpetuating the same proposition that teachers often develop more and further when they are given options and not required yet rather allowed to choose to do so to develop professionally or as part of their appraisal the latter of which is often seen by teachers as gatekeeping or (re)hiring and firing. This [hiring and firing] might be potentially detrimental for an institution as after a while teachers [or any professional] start and maybe tend to go through the motions or put on an extra show (Malderez, 2009) to appease the management but perhaps still collect the necessary points and manage to keep their jobs somehow. Casey et al. (1997) posit in parallel to Oh and Lewis (2009) regarding performance appraisal schemes that they may mostly be at fault at best since, based on a set of criteria, their sole purpose is often to appraise thus assess their professionals only, however, teaching is probably one of the hardest professions for this with lots of different elements often at work together not to even mention the unquantifiable interactional and communicative part of it. They continue appraisal schemes might be useful only when they are used for the fact that teaching is a profession really susceptible to burn-out so teachers do need structured and systematic and positive mentoring/coaching and support as well as an appraisal scheme where they are not only assessed by the aggregate they have collected somewhat in a given academic year or discuss future aspirations and set goals but also receive positive constructive and individual critique that will most likely help them grow more.

Richards and Lockhart (2007) discuss student teachers or qualified but less experienced teachers should nevertheless be supported but given room and personal space as well for self-directed learning to expand and grow at their own rate and style. They argue this kind of PD is undoubtedly a more sustainable and efficient one.

Still, a lot of institutions may still be spoon-feeding their teachers – just like so many teachers do spoon-feed their learners – lest the whole scheme of PD cannot do without a robust framework and supervision for smooth running and better outcomes. Yet it should let or support them to become more independent and their PD more self-directed and/or started. As Sinclair (2001) et al. suggest, referring to teacher autonomy beyond the classic scope of it in which it is thought to render

teachers immune and empowered against external control and intervention only, schools or any institution seeking to ensure PD of their personnel should perhaps fully liberate them and make it rather optional to better assess who really is ready for and wants it thus genuinely employable with intrinsic motivation (Stipek, 1993). They even suggest using self-assessment/evaluation in this regard to ensure construction of self-concept and criticism/reflection as more sustainable, informative and fair means of evaluation. Little (1995) highlights the importance of teacher autonomy also beyond borders arguing learner autonomy, as a highly desirable behavioral change of a practitioner and system output, is dependent very much so on teacher autonomy accordingly.

Alternatively, Suell and Piotrowski (2007) suggest for schools trying alternative teacher education programmes (ATEPs) where the whole input and instruction and output and assessment even as well as certification take a whole new shape. They argue this way teachers could learn and even do PD more independently and freer from inhibitive affects creating what they call as learning networks – a similar CPD concept mentioned by Borg (2015) as planned learning networks (PLNs) – online or in groups around where they live. This way they will be engaged in a continuous learning process that is adaptable, self-directed and sustainable. Though not abundant in educational practices as of now yet, Massive Open Online Courses or MOOCs might be a very good alternative means of PD both for student teachers and more experienced ones for them to engage in CPD at their own pace and their best convenience.

Davis (2015, *Alternative PD*, Edutopia) points to a different access to PD at schools which is self-directed, and preferably self-initiated and controlled, and preferably if not fully at least partially, self-assessed too, in which teachers have options and do not feel mechanised or threatened. She adds this threat-free and friendly environment perhaps means levering things slightly less formal and official especially by reducing paperwork and formalistic procedural rules and perhaps more importantly the general workload of teachers – as all three participating teachers pointed out as well – making more room for real interaction, collaboration and share. Millin (2015, Alternative PD, sandymillinwordpress) and Bringle and Hatcher

(1996) also support using alternative and less formal concepts such as “brown bag seminars” or “CPD and a cup of tea” or “open space” activities and sessions – as done in many North American higher education educational institutions – where participating teachers much less formally gather during lunch time or out-of-class hours to present discuss and debate and share issues agendas, ideas or doctrines or using online platforms such as LMS systems and discussion forums/boards where impact of contextual constraints, stress and peer or managerial pressure is minimised.

Having been scrutinised so far, EP as a form of reflective practice and/or teacher research, which combines teaching and research/classroom investigation, reflection, collaboration and context-specific implementations and/or interventions (Hanks, 2015a & 2017) can be used for learning-centred/focused PD with true impact on classroom pedagogy. Because it all happens in the class with the teacher and learners and that it is small-scale and teacher [and/or learner] led, it does not require the institutions to fund an extra but often irrelevant and questionable fund to cover the cost of a external PD effort.

As can be clearly seen in Rita’s case at most, a teacher’s reaction to the whole concept of PD and its necessity and/or benefits changes depending on the institution’s stance thus there is much for decision-makers to take on board here. She had boldly pointed out, she was much more keen and productive when she was not mandated to. Overall, maybe as she slightly humorously and wryly but still very much aptly stated, “…you can lead a horse to the water but you cannot make them drink it.”

5.3.2 Implications for teachers. Amy had interestingly pointed out during the pre-study interview that though in theory she was not averse to the idea of PD [or EP] and its sheer essence yet did not really see the overarching reason as to why they were doing it all at the same time on top of their already busy agenda; that is teaching, investigating/researching and academic dissemination of it in the same breath. Rita had even further intensified it souring at the fact that if it is mandated, it is also heavily ‘politicised’ in a way by the management so not yielding her too agog. Remember the mentors had tried and taken advantage of the first couple of group

input sessions to try to explain to the participants briefly the possible necessity for PD in general and how EP might be facilitative of it without sounding patronising or pedantic often referring to the works and arguments of the many authors used in this research study.

Allwright (2001) critically notes about PD and teachers' progression of good practice – particularly teacher research and its very forms such as EP where loci are not just on reflection but on pedagogy too – it craftily combines and realises research and teaching with a genuine emphasis on pedagogy and this is very important for teachers who are by nature busy, need to professionally develop and academically and pedagogically constantly question so investigate. However, this is probably not possible without a sincere and ongoing attempt for change. Blanchard (2010) made about change the following important note:

> People often resent change when they have no involvement in how it should be implemented. So, contrary to popular belief, people don't resist change -- they resist being controlled (p. 213).

Here he places the core of his argument in the heart of change management and leadership perhaps implying though change is inevitable and must be led/controlled, it should ideally be identified and started and maintained by the fellow members of the very workforce themselves altogether in an organisation. The scope here is then bottom-up rather than top-down through self-leadership and change management, its personal realization implementation and looming implications.

Amy confessed lightheartedly during both the pre and post-study interviews that EP had deceptively seemed really easy to her at the beginning particularly when introduced by mentors at the plenary PD meetings and that that was part of the reason why she picked it. She noted she suspected it was the case for most teachers in the group with lots of teaching and other administrative duties. Notice:

> ….to confess, with several of my colleagues, we said to each other during introductory plenary PD sessions we should definitely go for EP for it was

small-scale, intimate and less complicated procedure-wise and settle more comfortably on top of our many duties. However, after a couple of input workshops, we quickly knew then we were definitely wrong…

She conceded as the work progressed she thought it to be as extremely demanding besides tricky to implement given it had to blend naturally with the programme and agenda particularly in terms of implementations of PEPAs. As she said, however, this was also somewhat her most favourite part as she noted it was this part mostly, during which she believed she greatly improved "my [her] teaching skills."

As mentioned above, of all the teachers, Gwen had suffered from this same problematic part of the study most and as mentioned above needed and asked for a lot of support constantly revising her procedure. She remarked she found this part of the study "extremely treacherous" thus challenging and demanding. She interestingly noted she benefitted a lot from mentors but perhaps even more so from the more experienced colleagues such as Rita who acted more than just a critical friend and maybe more as an "elder sister" who was "always there for us [them]". She said this was particularly notable and vital for there probably always has to remain a certain level of formality and distance between mentors and mentees due to indestructible nature of hierarchy and ranking and support should not be just one-way.

She also importantly added, in parallel with Richards and Farrell (2005) note and example of it, she had many a critical moments [incidents] along with moments of epiphanies during the implementation of her study – particularly during the implementations of PEPAs as she noted – just like she always does every week or month. Nevertheless, because she was more critical and reflective this time, she said she felt this EP study did really contribute to the development of her professionally. When asked to give one such example, she gave her favourite. Notice:

…When I asked the students to form and work in small groups of 3s or 4s to debate and discuss their findings regarding the problem. A good number of them stopped momentarily then looked at each other and away without saying a word. I suddenly somehow felt they would sooner want to do this stage as

> plenary since it was the crunch where they will be sharing their perspectives finally before transferring them on to their posters. I hastily changed my instruction accordingly and caught many smiles beaming with excitement. I mean I love this kind of momentous and powerful reflection and exchange…

Dar and Gieve (2013) and Hanks (2015b) all acknowledge planning and when need be restructuring PEPAs might be challenging but insist this part is definitely not 'set in stone' so should be taken perhaps a little more lightheartedly as it is at a teacher's discretion and judgment. Hanks (2017) also suggest implementation of PEPAs require careful and thorough planning since they both lead the research on in terms of its methodology and also impact the language classroom as language teaching is still continuing simultaneously regardless. She points here also to the importance of role of others as mentors, administrators or a unit that should be providing structured and systematic support for the implementing teachers in the research setting.

Rita asserted EP supports and caters for a real practice-into-theory quality teaching, notwithstanding, "it may not be everyone's cup of tea," particularly for more experienced teachers who seek for further and deeper and more doctrinal longitudinal study that is beyond one-shot or maybe hit and miss small-scale studies. She noted on the beginning of her most recent study experience that it was easier and clearer no matter how less the help and support was. Then after a while as her interest and rigour in teacher research and research in general grew, she argued she began to find EP and particularly their wider and long-term research and pedagogic impact a little limited. Notice:

> …I now feel EP and similar teacher-research-related PD activities are perhaps excellent and more suitable for teachers who are either at the beginning of their career or hold much less tenure or experience and need initial furtherance of their teaching and learning. For others, I seriously suspect it might stop short of providing a wider and deeper research and learning environment and opportunity…

Defending EP's research impetus and rigour with regards to its usefulness and further purpose, Hanks (2015b) and Slimani-Rolls (2003) suggest underlining the non-solution-based progression of it that, after an EP study reaches a certain extent and when the researcher(s) are happy with the depth of their understandings and analyses, there is no reason why it should not further progress and evolve into then a solution-based similar form as AR, or, as more recently suggested by Smith (2016), into Exploratory Action Research, roughly speaking, a form that combines both to inform and focus on the intervention or a proposed solution to be researched then implemented.

5.3.3 Implications for mentors and teacher educators. As Rita implied during the ultimate exit interview that perhaps one of the hardest and most important duty of the mentors' practice is that they established and acknowledge that teachers have different needs expectations preferences and aspirations and they are all different individuals and that it is surely hard to reconcile these all with the programme that is most convenient to run or that is simply endorsed as well by the management.

In the light of this, first and foremost, as mentioned above, it might be extra difficult for a person in such a role to manage and mediate a PD scheme where it is mandated by the management. Whether a mentor, coach or an educator/trainer with substantial experience and necessary qualification, this will perhaps always be an issue for these professionals to absolve (Dikilitas & Mumford, 2017) in order that any PD initiative or scheme yields conclusive and effective results.

One advantage for the mentors in question in this study was the fact that though the study was being piloted and that they held relatively limited EP experience and knowledge both as a teacher and mentor, they took advantage of the climate they were trying to implement this study at where there were visibly high levels of PD culture and tradition and collegiality and collaboration. In an environment where this is yet non-existent or is still struggling, mentors would have serious difficulties in terms of teacher resistance (Malderez, 2009) against PD or change in general more broadly. They should then probably be much less ambitious

and take one step at a time much more slowly trying to ensure a climate as such is beginning to form and systematically reinforced supported first and foremost. They also took advantage of an ongoing project supported by the institution itself to professionally support and develop their PDU to exploit such an excellent opportunity as being sent to a local workshop and right after it was complete when procedural knowledge as somewhat practicum, doctrines and reflectiveness were all visibly still fresh and ablaze.

EP, as a PD activity or tool at the heart of this study, is certainly a viable and adaptable means of PD for teacher educators and teachers due to a number of its core principles outlined in details above and this far. For one, it champions QoL (see Allwright & Hanks, 2009; Hanks, 2015 and 2017) that is both critical for teachers and learners as well as teacher educators since it seeks to improve the beyond-basic conditions they are working in – as teacher researchers – thus they further their good practice altogether alongside the whole teaching and learning continuum.

This is further important for a school and their workforce to become independent, democratic professionalism to surface and even more so cherished and furthered creating in return an environment where all constituent will consciously and more explicitly be trying to excel (Scherer, 1999 and Lange, 2011) and exist through mutual respect and love thus much heightened satisfaction. Another, since it naturally and successfully integrates teaching and research with much less effort seamlessly (Allwright and Hanks, 2009) it surely provides the co-researchers with such an environment where experimenting with pedagogy is apace and aplenty. This is undoubtedly important, as discussed above, most PD effort by nature misses to connect themselves with then capitalise on the teachers' own contexts and problems. EP – and teacher research in general – captures and elaborates on this key stratum of PD almost effortlessly for teachers investigate to understand and perhaps intervene to resolve their own unique agendas and that in return shall have extra impact on their teaching skills and wider good practice around them.

However, as both mentors stated in their own reflections independently, conducting or leading an EP research group nonetheless fosters its own dilemmas

and challenges. As one of the mentors pointed out very critically, as EP places at its core pedagogy, there has to be plenty of planning and debriefing to go into the programme as teachers collect data using PEPAs, pedagogy itself. So, unlike other forms there will be ample stress on pedagogic activities and their careful planning and assimilation in order to understand a classroom puzzle or issue. Teachers will probably need a great deal of support and insight with planning before an implementation and reflective analysis after the implementation (Randall & Thornton, 2001). Therefore, teacher educators will need to provide much deeper help for novice teachers whose general practice of pedagogy might need so much integrity anyway. Nonetheless, this is possibly one of the strongest sides and benefits of EP at an institution to both provide such teachers with access to a catalogue of pedagogic activities as a professional from a vocational point of view whilst also giving them an opportunity to engage in research as an academic.

Also, as Gwen, Amy and Rita all mentioned, regardless of type of PD activity or scheme, professionals – in this case referring to mentors and teacher educators – who are in general approachable, genuinely supportive and trustworthy even if not very knowledgeable or experienced, there is always again much less resistance and prejudice and much more endeavour and improvement among the group dynamic.

The two mentors highly recommend – as they were also doing it – keeping a journal making systematic entries for unit-wise PD and reflection purposes as well as recording almost any exchange from interviews to debriefings and mentee tutorials. One of them interviewed after the whole study was over made the following reflection regarding achievements:

> …given the study was being piloted for the first time within a close group following the workshop we had attended over the summer holiday and that we were also continuing to conduct our studies we had started simultaneously thus held limited experience and knowledge as mentors too, it was not easy. However, I believe the whole study was still a success story despite the entire initial and perceived and later emerged-on-the-go handicaps. We really worked hard and pushed our limits and perhaps thus overcame the soft spots!

> The reaction, support and contribution were all well beyond our expectations at the start of it. Although we had some challenges throughout, it was really good to see most of the participants enjoyed it and gave very good feedback in general and that many also braved to present and share their studies with the wider ELT community. It was a hard but wonderful experience…

The other mentor underlined the high levels [and importance] of trust, partnership and collegiality observed among the participants throughout the entire study that was perhaps key to the whole success of it. He stated:

> …I think we were extremely lucky to have been piloting the study within a small group of teachers. The fact that we were also continuing our studies we began doing a couple of months ago should have really added to the tremendous levels of humility, partnership and the sense of equality among the group members. Compared to the other two groups and their members' feedback, we were probably the group with least negativity and conflict. Everyone had already been talking about the EP group since the start of the school and this was no different or even probably worse during the conference. I felt a little stressed out to be very honest particularly in the run up to the conference. Yet, this alone was a real big validation for me personally and I think next year we'll probably have a much bigger and more dynamic group…

Apart from the very well-structured group input and discussion meetings and self-study and one-to-one tutorials carried out with the participants, as too the two mentors agree, Portner (2008) recommends meeting regularly with everybody at least once a week no matter how hectic schedules might be at the school for a collaborative planning debriefing alongside reflection and liaising purposes that both insisted were perhaps all really key to smooth and productive running of the whole study initiative possibly overcoming and helping them offset their inexperience and relatively limited knowledge both in a mentoring role in general as well as starting and conducting and supporting an EP study from scratch. Both mentors also praised and paid immense tribute to their mentors at the local EP workshop for their ongoing

clinical and remedial support even after the workshop was well over. They emotionally noted this sense of genuine partnership, trust and support network was "just like in a real family" and institutions should try to ensure this first and foremost. Not only will this way organisations be ensuring a much more efficient PD and better self-directed learning environment but a great sense of belonging and commitment to the workplace.

5.3.4 Implications for further study. Borg (2010) asserts a good research is one that meticulously combines a number of critical aspects of it such as reliability, triangulation, and validation etc.

This qualitative research study originally intended to further and bridge in EP thus teacher research literature a gap between theory-informed practice and practice-informed theory and their sheer impact on teachers and their PD with all the necessary implications and ramifications. It perhaps incidentally identified another possible different impact area of EP and teacher research, apart from the already trodden path of teaching and learning, its relationship and influence on self and identity and teacher research in the light of and following the thorough analyses of three case studies. So, it hopes to have gone a way or two in doing so when its explicit and implicit and original/primary and incidental findings are taken into account and perhaps (re)interpreted and/or compared and contrasted with other similar or different but similarly designed studies.

The biggest limitation of this study is maybe the fact that it only used and tried to take advantage of qualitative data collection tools and research instruments thus arguably lacked the very argument of generalisability and reliability of quantitative or mixed method research. However, it still tried to do its best so and largely to overcome this by focusing at great depth and insight into three case studies that should help enhance, though mostly at anecdotal level, effect of qualitative research that beyond numbers and statistics give way to salience and power of thematic or recurring facts as well as opinions and their implications between the lines that is possibly not quite observable in a field as teaching where it is not always possible to be able to record for analysis the unconscious or subconscious of the

constituents, especially the unspoken, unheard or unseen that is perhaps beyond the assessment capacity of any recording and assessment mechanism but to trust the power and salience of teachers' narrative and the stream of consciousness – though possibly much less effective when not in written form – through which they re-reflect and re-identify their own practice and self and identity.

In order to further [or challenge] this study, apart from simply trying to adapt it into a mixed method research study by introducing a quantitative element in order to raise assessibility and generalisability, one might further look into different impact areas – different form the main ones detailed in this study – [of EP] in a similar or different context as this study admittedly had a more specific set of research questions so research scope and effect area. One may also want to try it with a different age group or educational context irrespective of the school's position on PD and see if the results or prenominations are similar or replicable within a wider range of learner group and their communities. It might also be interesting to increase the number of participants and maybe use instead of a collective case study approach a multiple case study one where participating teachers come from different institutions thus create a comparative cross-study. One could perhaps also choose to work with different participating practitioners with different specifications introducing a flat rate and extent of tenure, experience and knowledge at pre, mid and high levels all. It might even be interesting to try EP in an environment where there is no formal PD or a PDU and see the results and perhaps use it as an initial initiative for an early formation of a PD culture and dynamic or to raise general awareness of necessity of PD and assess teachers' resistance and/or appreciation.

As throughout the study three case studies and their careful analyses and interpretations shall be used to further encourage and disseminate the use of EP as teacher research and a PD tool at institutions where teachers and/or managers and educators are in search of a viable and trustworthy PD instrument with actual immediate short-term benefits possibly as well as perceived long-term ones.

5.4 Conclusions

The following conclusions have been gained in the light of this research study:

- Contrary to popular but largely false belief, teachers do not dislike engaging in PD activities; however, they do dislike the fact that it has to be mandatory and particularly with no options
- Teachers prefer bottom-up PD schemes and activities such as teacher research and IbPD – EP – over those of opposite nature
- EP can turn into an extremely empowering teaching and PD instrument when conducted and monitored/supported thoroughly – as in Amy and Gwen's cases
- EP does indeed have a really positive impact on teaching and learning and learner and teacher development; yet it may be limited for teachers that hold substantial expertise in teaching and [teacher] rserach – as in Rita's case
- EP yields a positive impact on teaching and learning process as well as learners and teachers/practitioners
- Teachers agree teacher research and PD activities as EP is beneficial and time-saving when compared to other similar forms since it provides them with the opportunity to practice and enhance both research and pedagogical skills simultaneously
- Presenting and writing up a study can be daunting and teachers should no way be coerced into it. However, they see this as a new challenging experience thus need systematic support and guidance particularly if they have not enegaed in such schemes before
- EP has an implicit impact on forming and/or developing a personal and professional/academic self and identity; it incidentally affects teachers' identity and self formation and development – as argued by Rita and implied by Gwen and Amy
- EP becomes a relevant PD instrument with its emphasis on seamless integration of research and pedagogy; as the participants' learners claim

- Teachers may need support particularly during selection and adaptation of PEPAs as they present a challenge
- EP shall perhaps turn into an AR or EAR – as all the teachers agree
- Facilitative and inhibitive parameters should be factored in carefully when designing an EP study
- Managements and supervisors should be ready to identify and acknowledge challenges and opportunities
- Learners can outperform their usual and routine achievements when given the right opportunity
- EP's non-solution-oriented nature may not necessarily present a problem for every particpant

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

CURRICULUM VITAE

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Surname, Name: Biçer, Kerim

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Date and Place of Birth: 28 April 1981, Ankara

Marital Status: Married

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EDUCATION

Degree	Institution	Year of Graduation
High School	Marmaris Sabancı Lisesi	1999
BA	Ege University English Language & Literature	2006

WORK EXPERIENCE

Year	Place	Enrollment
2015-	Cambridge English/Exams Turkey	Presenter/Trainer

CERTIFICATES

Diploma in English Language Teaching to Adults	London/UK